

Water on Earth

IT IS NO SURPRISE WE CALL THE EARTH “THE BLUE PLANET.” AFTER ALL, OVER 60 PERCENT OF ITS SURFACE IS COVERED WITH WATER.

It is water that gives Earth its beautiful blue color that we see in photographs taken from space. No other planet that we know of in the universe has so much water, that amazing element so essential to life.

Water goes through a cycle that never ends. It falls from the sky as rain and snow, sleet,¹ and hail.² On high mountains, **glaciers** melt and water flows from narrow streams and wide rivers into lakes and eventually into the seas and oceans. Then, through a process called **evaporation**, water rises from the seas to the skies where it turns into clouds. And the cycle begins again. Water can be liquid, solid, or gas; it can be gentle or rough; it can bring life or death.

¹**sleet:** a mixture of snow and rain

²**hail:** small, hard balls of ice that fall from the sky like rain

Water has power over us – maybe more than anything else on the planet! Without water, no human, animal, or plant could survive. Humans have long used water for washing, growing food, and raising animals. Water has also been used as a means of transportation, as a source of recreation, and as a household tool. Now, we also use water as an industrial tool and as a **source** of energy.

But too much water can be a bad and dangerous thing. Think of floods, for example. Fast-moving, deep water can drown³ people; it can sweep away vehicles and even buildings. Also, floodwater may contain bacteria that cause diseases and that can affect our drinking water.

Water gives us power, but it also has power over us.

³**drown:** die because you are under water and cannot breathe

Video Quest



Life Support System

Watch this video and say how you think water will be used in the future.