

# The water cycle

## Condensation

Water vapour rises into the sky and cools. It condenses back into liquid water droplets which form clouds.

## Evaporation

Water at the surface of seas, lakes, rivers, puddles and damp ground is heated by the sun and evaporates into water vapour, a gas.

## Precipitation and percolation

When the water droplets in a cloud get too heavy, they fall as rain, sleet or snow. This is known as precipitation. The water lands in rivers or lakes, or on the ground where it seeps underground. This is called percolation.

## Water purification

Southern Water collects the water and cleans it at a clean water treatment works for local people to use.

## Water treatment

Wastewater that people have finished using goes down the drain into a pipe. It is transported to a wastewater treatment works where it is cleaned using filters, microorganisms and chemicals.

## Accumulation

Once the wastewater is clean, it is returned safely to local rivers and streams. The rivers and streams run into estuaries, which empty into the sea where the water accumulates.

