

Water cycle meditation

Lesson plan

Learning intention

To introduce and develop an understanding of the water cycle through meditation, mindfulness, movement and relaxation activities.

Time to complete

40 to 50 minutes

Class size

Max 30

Vocabulary

Water cycle, evaporation, condensation, transpiration, precipitation, meditation, mindfulness, yoga.

Levels

Years 3 to 8

Learning areas

The Arts
• Drama
English
Health and physical education
The Humanities
• Civic and citizenship
Science

Capabilities

Critical and creative thinking
Personal and social

Equipment required

1. Water cycle poster (attached)
2. Water cycle yoga guide (attached)
3. Water cycle mindfulness colour-in sheet (attached)
4. Yoga mat (optional)
5. Eye mask (optional)



Teacher notes

Find a comfortable room (taking into account space, noise and temperature) where students can spread out. During the meditation, students should either sit cross legged with their spine straight, or lay flat. Encourage students to close their eyes and attempt to visualise the text, however not to fall asleep.

To minimise disruption during the meditation, ensure students are settled, hydrated and have visited the rest room before you start.

The experience is best if all students can remain quiet and still during the meditation (which is approx. 25min). For groups or individuals where this is not possible, we recommend you use the water cycle mindfulness colour-in sheet, to provide an activity that occupies their mind but maintains a quiet and still environment while the meditation text is being read.

Introduction – 5min

Resources: Water cycle poster

All life on Earth is dependent on water. From the smallest bacteria to the largest whale, we all need a constant supply of water to survive.

Ask students to list the beneficial uses for water, e.g. food production, cleaning, firefighting, hydration, enjoyment, transport, temperature regulation etc.

Mother Nature has a simple yet magical way of providing this life giving water - it's called the Water Cycle. The Water Cycle takes advantage of the properties of water to purify and move water around the globe. There are five main stages of water movement through the Water Cycle. They are: Evaporation, Transpiration, Condensation, Precipitation and Run-off.

What are the properties/states of water and how do they relate to the Water Cycle stages?

Use the Water Cycle poster to illustrate each stage. For junior year levels, a more detailed explanation and examples of how water evaporates and condenses may be necessary.



Evaporation -	Water heats up and changes from a liquid to a gas; water-vapour or steam.
Transpiration -	Tree roots take up liquid water from underground and lose water vapour through their leaves as they 'breathe'.
Condensation -	Water vapour travels high into the sky where it cools down, turning from a gas back into a liquid; tiny rain droplets that form our clouds.
Precipitation -	The tiny rain droplets combine to form larger drops that eventually fall back down to Earth due to the force of gravity. This can also be in the solid form; hail or snow.
Run-Off -	Rain gathers and flows downhill, forming streams and rivers on its way to the ocean.

The aim of this session is to become familiar with each stage of the water cycle and visualise water changing form and moving around the planet. Through yoga stretches and meditation, we will use our bodies and minds to learn how water moves from the ocean to the sky and back again.

Activity – 35min

Water yoga – 15min

Resources: Water cycle yoga guide

Use the guide to lead and demonstrate yoga moves and stretches. Use a combination of moves, depending on time and ability of students. Ensure each move is related back to a property of water or a stage in the water cycle.

Can students think of any other stretches/moves that can be related to water or the water cycle?

Water cycle meditation – 20min

Resources: Water cycle guided meditation script, water cycle mindfulness colour-in sheet.

Before commencing the water cycle meditation, ensure students are calm and either seated or laying on their backs.

If students are finding it difficult to settle, consider running the Mindful Breathing activity outlined in the Extension Tasks prior to the meditation session.

Provide students with short attention spans, or those who do not wish to participate, with the water cycle mindfulness colour-in sheet to prevent disruption during the meditation.

The meditation text is best read in a clear and gentle tone. Ensure adequate pauses throughout, to allow students to visualise and transition between phases in the text.



Closure – 5min

Direct students to slowly open their eyes and return to a seated position. Allow a minute or two for everyone to re-adjust to their surroundings (try to keep chatter and noise level to a minimum).

Discuss the session and the students' experiences by using the following prompts:

- *Where you able to visualise yourself as a water drop?*
- *How did you feel? Did you feel different during the different stages? (Hot/cold/heavy/light)*
- *When were you travelling fast, and when were you travelling slowly?*
- *What did you see under the ocean?*
- *What did you see high in the sky?*
- *Can you recall the different stages of the water cycle and what happens at each stage?*

Consider the creative writing extension task to reinforce learning.

Assessment

Teachers may wish to use the water cycle mindfulness colour-in sheet to indicate how much knowledge students absorb and retain from the session. Have the students fill in as much as they can pre-session, and then attempt to complete or correct any errors post-session.



Extension tasks

Mindful breathing extension: 10 – 15min

Dedicate further time for mindful breathing, utilising the mindful breathing guide attached.

Water yoga extension: 10 – 15min

Practice the water yoga moves, allowing students to take turns directing the group. Students may have other water related poses/moves that they wish to share with the group.

Meditation extension: 10 - 15min

Extend the meditation by including additional pathways, e.g. water absorbing into the underground water table, water being sucked up by tree roots and out through the leaves, water passing through an animal/human, water being frozen in a glazier etc.

Creative writing: 20 - 30min

Students write and illustrate creative pieces describing their journey through the water cycle.

- Where did you go?
- What did you see?
- Try to name the different stages of the water cycle. Describe how the water changes form.
- How did you feel through each stage?

Calming jar: 15min

A calming jar can be used to relieve stress, anger, frustration, anxiety, or simply to help settle and calm a busy mind. The objective of a calming jar is to re-focus the attention of the individual away from their thoughts and towards the peaceful and calming swirling of the water and glitter/sand.

Materials

- 500ml clear plastic bottle or jar (plastic is preferable to glass to remove the risk of injury if dropped).
- 2 tablespoons of glitter (add more for a longer effect).
- 1-3 drops of food colouring (if a colour background is preferred).
- Water.

Place glitter in bottle and top up with water. Add food colouring until desired effect is achieved. Shake the bottle and watch the glitter swirl around as it settles towards the bottom. Try to clear your mind of all negative thoughts.



Resources

Water cycle yoga guide

Water is flexible, free flowing and always moving, and just as water moves around the planet, water also moves around our bodies. Water is essential to keeping our blood flowing and our muscles moving. In fact, water makes up around 70% of our body mass. So let's put that water to work with some water cycle yoga.

The fluid and calming nature of Yoga is representative of water and how it makes us feel. Each yoga pose below symbolises a different stage in the water cycle. Try your best with each pose, always staying within a comfortable range of movement. If at any stage you feel you need to stop, simply stand up tall and straight and re-join the group when you can.

Water cycle yoga – The journey of water – 15min

Wave breathing - Standing straight and tall with legs close together, shoulders relaxed and one hand on your abdomen (eyes can be open or closed). Become aware of your breathing. Find and notice the natural rhythm of your breath. Breath coming in...breath going out. Notice your belly rising and falling with your breath, just like waves at the beach. Breath coming in, wave coming in...breath going out, wave going out. Become comfortable with your breath. In and out...in and out. Throughout this session try to maintain this fluid rhythm in your breathing...in and out, in and out. Continue for 5 more breaths.

We will now transition to the Sunshine pose.

Sunshine (Sun salutation) - Bring your arms forward and up, stretch your hands above your head as high as you can and tilt your head back, looking through your hands. The sun is an important part of the water cycle, driving the movement of water with heat. Visualise the heat from the sun on your face. Hold the pose for 5 more breaths.

We will now transition to the Evaporation Pose

Evaporation (Malasana Pose) - Move to a squat position. Standing with feet wide apart, arms in prayer, back lengthened and bottom as far down as is comfortable. Hold at the bottom, feeling the heat from the sun pass down through your legs, visualise the sun warming the water in the ocean, turning it to water vapour. Hold the pose for 5 more breaths.

We will now transition to the Condensation Pose



Condensation (Horse Pose) - Visualise the water vapour raising as we slowly come half way up (slight bend in knees). Maintain feet wide apart, place your arms at t-shape with elbows bent and palms facing up. Chest open and lifting, spine tall and long. Like a cloud, feel your body becoming heavier, your muscles working to hold the raindrops in your outstretched arms. Move your body weight slightly from one leg to the other, like a cloud moving in the wind. Hold the pose for 5 more breaths.

We will now transition to the Precipitation Pose

Precipitation (Face Tapping) - Raise up, standing tall with eyes closed. Gently tap the tips of your fingers on the crown of your head moving down to the sides of face and jaw. Relax your facial muscles, enjoying the sensation. Visualise the rain falling from the sky and gently landing on your face. Feel the cool effect of the water on your skin, enjoy the feeling of playing in the rain. Continue for five more breaths.

We will now transition to the Run-off Pose

Run-off (Pushing Water) - Standing with feet apart, knees slightly bent and arms held out in front. Eyes open or closed. Keeping both arms together, slowly push your hands through the air from side to side, shifting your weight in line with the motion.

Visualise the rain flowing down the mountain, becoming a river and winding through the forest back to the ocean. Continue for 5 more breaths. Come back to a standing position with arms by your side. (Repeat from start if time permits).



Circular yoga (for younger groups) – 15min

Complete the Water Cycle introduction to ensure students are familiar with the stages of the water cycle. Explain how each pose relates to the water cycle.

Arrange students in a large circle, leaving an arm's length gap between each person.

Sun salutation - Standing straight and tall, with legs close together and arms by your side. Bring your arms forward and up, stretch your hands above your head as high as you can and look between your hands.

Imagine the heat from the sun on your face and body. Hold the pose for 5 breaths.

Water-vapour rising - Bend your knees, dropping down as far as you can go whilst keeping your spine straight. As you raise up, pushing through your legs, hold your arms out in front and wiggle your fingers. Stretch up as high as you can go, finishing with your hands high above your head.

Imagine water in the ocean evaporating and the water-vapour raising up into the sky. Repeat move 5 times.

Thunder claps - Place both hands out to the side with your palms up. Your left hand under your partner's right hand. One person begins by moving their right hand across their body and on to the top of their partner's left hand. This triggers the next person to do the same, and the clap continues around the circle. Multiple claps can be started from different parts of the circle (try to synchronise the claps to make one loud thunder clap).

Imagine the clouds getting bigger and darker, heavy with rain. Hear the rumble of thunder (ask some students to rumble as the clap moves around the circle) and the sudden claps of lightning. Continue for 5 rotations of the circle.

Rainbow stretch – Turn to your right and face the back of your partner. With your arms high above your head, bend forward at the waist to form an arc (rainbow). Place your arms on your partner's back.

Imagine a beautiful rainbow after a light drizzle. Hold the pose for 5 breaths.

Wave – Students stretch their arms out to the side at shoulder height and hold hands (may need to move further apart and make the circle wider). Teacher leads the wave by raising and lowering their right hand, allowing the wave motion to move across their right arm, through their torso and on to their left arm, with the next person continuing the motion, and so on as the wave moves around the circle. Once the motion is fluid, begin additional waves at opposite ends of the circle.

Imagine water flowing through a river on its way back to the ocean. Continue for 5 rotations of the circle.

If time allows, repeat, or ask students to suggest other moves.



Water Cycle guided meditation script

Lay down on your back with your feet slightly separated, arms by your side and palms facing up. Feel your spine long and comfortable. Feel your whole body relaxing on the floor. And now say to yourself 'it is time to be still and quiet.' Of course if you need to fidget or move slightly in our meditation that's ok, but when we move we take ourselves away from our relaxed place, so try to be still and quiet.

Start by slowing down your breathing. Take deep breaths in and slow breaths out. Breathe in again long and deep and breathe out slow and long, letting go of all the tension in your body, letting your body relax. And again, breathe in a big deep breath and then slowly breathe out a long slow breath. Every breath relaxing more and more, relaxing more and more. Just let your breath find its natural rhythm.

In this meditation I want you to relax but also stay focused on my voice. Whenever you notice your mind thinking and being distracted by thought, bring your focus back to your breathing. Chest rising breath coming in, chest dropping breath going out. Noticing the rise and the fall of the body as the breath comes in and out. And relaxing more and more with each breath.

And now move the focus away from your breath and onto your whole body. Notice the back of the body and where it contacts the ground. The back of the heels, the back of the legs, middle and upper back. The backs of the hands and arms and the back of your heavy head. Notice the feeling of the body resting on the floor and then let go of that feeling. Allow your body to sink into the earth. Let go and relax. Connect with the feeling of gravity, feel the pull drawing your body down. Body becoming heavy and relaxed. Body heavier and heavier, relaxing more and more with each breath. Your whole body heavy and relaxed, with the feeling of gravity. And now allowing that heaviness to change into a feeling of weightlessness, of freedom. Imagine your body floating in water –maybe in the ocean or a swimming pool, and feel the weightlessness and warmth of the water. Let your body be light and free.

I'm going to count backwards from 5 and I want you to imagine that each number relates to a level of relaxation, so each time I say a lower number feel yourself relaxing down even more. 5,4,3,2 and 1.

There's nothing that you need to do, nowhere that you need to be and nothing that you need to think about – give yourself permission to relax more and more, relax more and more.

And now that we are relaxed, it's time to go on an adventure. You are always safe in this journey, and if at any time you feel uncomfortable, just return to your breath and join us again when you can.



Imagine yourself at the beach, sitting down near the water's edge, watching the waves gently coming in and out, feel the tips of your toes being tickled by the water as the waves come creeping in. Can you hear the sounds of the waves? Maybe you can smell the salty air? Can you hear the seagulls or feel the sun warming your back?

You look down at the water around you and feel at ease, peaceful. The water glistening and sparkling on the surface, the deep blue colour below drawing you in. You slowly feel yourself melting away into the ocean around you, feeling safe in this new world you allow yourself to relax and melt into the water.

You feel your whole body becoming a water drop – one hundred per cent water. Free, flexible, adaptable and peaceful. Your water drop body feels so relaxed. In the distance you can still hear the seagulls overhead and the crashing waves.

You feel your water drop body being gently moved by the waves – being drawn in and pushed out. Just like your breath going in, coming out, water rolling in and out. You are an individual drop of water but you are supported and surrounded by millions of other drops around you, and you are all floating in.... and out, in and out.

You slowly get drawn out to the sea as the tide changes and takes you further out into the deep ocean. It's a safe and normal place to be for a water drop, and you feel relaxed, peaceful and free to explore your surrounds.

You plunge down into the deep ocean. Looking around you, you see all the beautiful friendly sea creatures of the deep ocean – colourful fish, and beautiful coral... you look around, what else do you see? As you plunge deeper you hear the distant calls of whales...a safe feeling comes over you as you know whales are peaceful gentle animals. You notice the temperature is cooler down on the ocean floor. What beautiful surrounds. You look around, knowing that you are completely safe, and only friendly animals are around you. What an amazing sight.

You slowly start to drift upwards, caught in a raising current of warmer water. You feel your body getting lighter and lighter as you move up. You can see light now, the sun penetrating through the water, warming your body as you follow millions of other water drops moving towards the surface of the ocean. You reach the surface and feel your body warming in the full sun, warmer and warmer, warmer and warmer.

As you warm you start to feel lighter and lighter, lighter and lighter, and you feel yourself spreading out as your liquid body turns to steam, or water vapour. You notice the salty taste in your mouth is suddenly gone, you now feel fresh, clean and pure, as you start to rise above the ocean. This change from a liquid to a gas is called **evaporation**.



Leaving the ocean, you float up higher and higher, becoming lighter and lighter. Feeling safe and peaceful you let yourself float and continue to travel higher and higher. You look down and see the ocean below and notice that you are a long way up. You can see land now and trees, tiny trees, the houses getting smaller and smaller, as you float up into the atmosphere.

You feel light and carefree, rolling around in the weightless atmosphere, enjoying the freedom of flight. You start to feel cold now as you pass through a large cloud. You feel the mist on your face, the cooling effect on your whole body. You notice that your body is starting to change again as the temperature around you drops and drops, colder and colder. As you slowly cool you feel yourself changing form again, this time from a gas to a liquid, from warm to cold, turning into a tiny rain droplet high in the sky. This change is called **condensation**. All around you, millions of rain droplets are condensing, forming a large cloud as they float around together. And you are part of this large fluffy cloud, feeling light and relaxed, free and floating.

In your big cloud, you start to move. You are feeling light and fluffy, and supported by all the other raindrops. You feel yourself gently moving across the sky, allowing the wind to blow you high above the world below. You look down and watch the land as it passes by. You see the tall buildings, houses and parks of a city. What else can you see? Perhaps children playing or people walking their dogs? Feeling light and free you pass over without effort.

The wind continues to blow and you move over a forest of endless green mountains. You can smell the fresh air and feel a sense of wonder and happiness at Mother Nature's beauty. Rivers cut deep into hills, moving water from the mountains to the city, providing life to everything along the way. What a wonderful journey across the world from the view of a cloud.

As you travel in your cloud, more and more raindrops come to join you. Your cloud becomes bigger and bigger. As other raindrops push up against you, you feel your body expanding, getting bigger and bigger, bigger and bigger. You join with other raindrops and continue to grow. Breathe in, feel yourself expand and grow. Breathe out, feel yourself relax. Breathe in, growing big, breathe out, relaxing.

As you grow, your cloud starts to become grey and you start to feel heavier and heavier...heavier and heavier. You start to feel yourself leaving the cloud and travelling safely down to earth. Letting gravity pull you down, you know you are safe and well and enjoy the feeling of the air rush by your face. You continue to fall, surrounded by hundreds of other rain drops, you allow yourself to rain down. Water falling back down to Earth is known as **precipitation**.

You land on the soft forest floor, amongst tall trees, ferns and grasses. You find yourself half way up a hill, on the water-soaked ground. As more and more rain drops join you, you start to slowly move downhill. Moving along the ground you come together to form a stream.



You start to travel faster and faster, still feeling safe that as water you are fluid, flexible and able to move around objects without bumping into them. You enjoy the feeling of moving fast, rushing forward without effort, without worry.

Moving along quickly, you move around rocks, under fallen branches and over waterfalls, always moving forward and downhill...safe and secure surrounded by other water drops. Such a good lesson we can learn from water about how to be in our own life. Adaptable, flexible, overcoming obstacles with the support and help of those around you. Breathe in and feel the relief, breathe out and let your tension go, in and out, in and out.

As you travel along, the stream joins a larger river and you start to slow down. Slowing down, you have a chance to look around the surrounding forest and enjoy the view. You can see all the different trees and the sunlight shining through their leaves. Can you hear birds calling around you, and see the colourful flowers on the forest floor? Smell the fresh air, in and out, in and out. What a lovely place to be!

The river slowly passes out of the forest and continues towards the ocean. You feel sad that your Water Cycle journey is coming to an end, but happy at the amazing things you have seen and experienced.

As the river feeds into the ocean, you taste the salt water once again on your lips. Feeling the pull of the tide gently rolling you in and out of the beach where you first started, pushing you in and pulling you out. Peaceful, free, powerful and adaptable. Flowing in and out, in and out. Such an incredible journey, from the deepest ocean to the highest sky; floating, falling, flowing...what a wonderful adventure water takes through the water cycle.

And now, noticing the breath in your physical body, notice your chest moving up and down as you breathe, up and down, up and down – gentle and rhythmic, just like the waves at the beach. Slowly wiggle your toes and fingers. Keeping your eyes closed, feel your body around you. Notice your slow and relaxed breathing. When we come out of relaxation it is very normal to feel sleepy or disorientated and need a couple of minutes to come back.

So slowly, when you are ready and gently, come up to a comfortable seated position and open your eyes.

End of meditation



Mindful breathing guide

Mindful breathing is a calm, non-judgmental awareness. Focusing on our breathing, we allow thoughts and feelings to come and go without getting drawn into them.

The benefits of regular mindful breathing include improved emotional happiness and stability, along with reduced feelings of anger, sadness and anxiety.

Once the technique is established, mindful breathing can be practiced anywhere and at any time, for as little as five minutes. Regular repetition can lead to positive changes in performance, behaviour and mindset.

- Sit comfortably, with your eyes closed and your spine straight (try to stay focused so as not to become sleepy).
- Bring your attention to your breathing; the sound, the feeling, the repetition.
- Imagine you have a balloon in your tummy. Every time you breathe in, the balloon inflates. Each time you breathe out, the balloon deflates. Notice your breath and the sensations in your belly as the balloon inflates and deflates. Your abdomen rising with the in-breath and falling with the out-breath.
- Thoughts will come into your mind, and that's ok, because that is what the human mind does. You don't have to follow those thoughts or feelings. Don't judge yourself for having them, or analyse them in any way. Just notice the thoughts and let them drift on by, bringing your attention back to your breathing.
- If you notice your attention has drifted off and is becoming caught up in thoughts and feelings, simply note that your attention has drifted and gently bring it back to your breathing.
- It is natural for thoughts to enter into your awareness. No matter how many times this happens, just keep bringing your attention back to your breathing.
- The more you practice the better you will become at letting the thoughts flow while remaining focused on your breathing.

