unit 5D

The rain cycle in a bag

Show the whole rain cycle taking place in a sandwich bag on your window.

In the classroom

What you need

A little water, a transparent sandwich bag and some clear sticky tape.

What you do

Choose a sunny window.
Pour a little water into the bottom of the bag.
Fold the top of the bag over several times to seal it.
Tape the top of the bag to the window.
Leave the bag for a couple of hours.
When ready to talk about the activity, tell the class that you think that it is looking cloudy somewhere in the room.
Draw their attention to the plastic bag.

What happens

A 'cloud' forms in the bag, although some water remains in the bottom. In effect, 'rain' is forming at the top of the bag. Occasionally, it drips and collects again at the bottom.

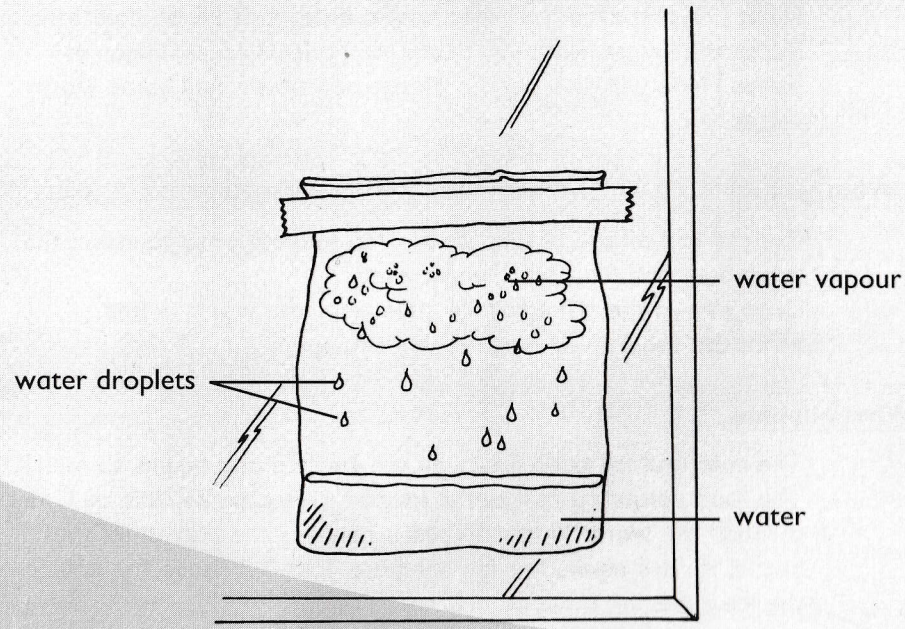
Background information

Why it happens

The heat from the Sun causes some of the water in the bag to evaporate. The evaporated water forms a cloud of water vapour in the bag. Some water vapour then condenses on the bag. When a drop has reached a certain size, it *precipitates* – that is, it drips. It's raining!

By the way

Make sure it is a really sunny day or the water won't evaporate and form a cloud.



Curriculum links

KS2 Sc3 2e. QCA SoW 5D Changing state
Envtl St/Science/E&S/CM/Level C/Target 4