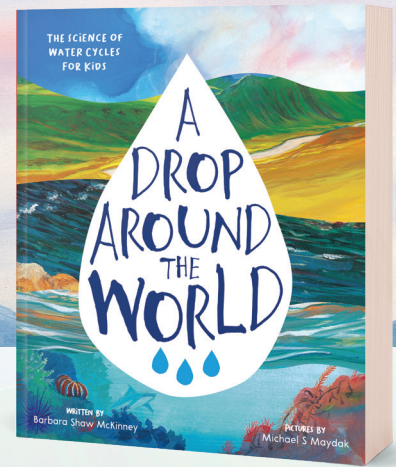


# AN EDUCATOR'S GUIDE FOR A DROP AROUND THE WORLD

BY Barbara Shaw McKinney ILLUSTRATED BY Michael S. Maydak



Discussion & Activity Guide for Grades 2, 3, 4 and 5  
Prepared by We Love Children's Books

## ABOUT THE BOOK

Follow a drop of water on its natural voyage around the world, in clouds, as ice and snow, underground, in the sea, piped from a reservoir, in plants and even in an animal. Poetic verse and the science of the water cycle come together in this unique story and leave readers with a sense of connection to all living creatures.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**BARBARA SHAW MCKINNEY** is a teacher as well as a poet. She was inspired to use the magic of children's literature to spark her students' curiosity about the wonders of water. She vowed to "turn a drop of rain into a drop of life, astounding children by its eternity."

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

**MICHAEL MAYDAK** is a professional artist who is passionate about nature—especially the riparian environments that he loves so much as a fly fisherman. Mike is an art graduate of San Jose University and has been a professional artist since 1976, with his studio at his home in Cool, California.

## PRE-READING QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

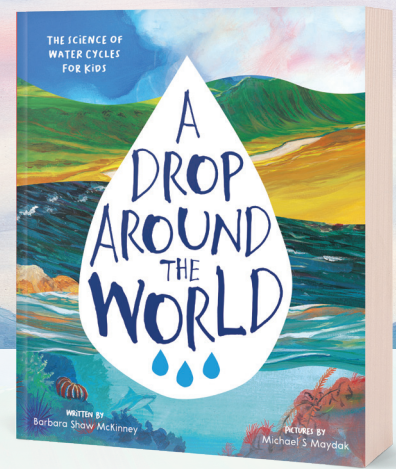
Water is essential to life. How do students encounter water in their daily lives? How do they interact with it? Did they ever think about how the water they drink is the same water that rains down from the clouds?

This book is a fictionalized journey following a drop of water through the water cycle, also called the hydrological cycle. It shows how water moves around the planet, turning from liquid to gas to solid. It also illustrates what water does to make life possible, the roles it plays in our lives, and that everyone and everything on Earth shares the same water supply. Familiarize students with the water cycle. When you read the story, display a visual aid showing the water cycle, and/or provide handouts to students.



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## VOCABULARY

Many words used in this book have specific meanings related to the water cycle. Using context and the dictionary, collect the domain-specific words the class identifies and make a thematic glossary for *A Drop Around the World*. When working with older students, have the class think of other words with similar meanings that could have been used. Do any of these other words fit the rhythm and rhyme of the poetry in this book?

## POST-READING QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

### IMPORTANCE OF WATER

This book shows many ways that life on our planet depends on water. As a class, create a list of ways shown in this book that water impacts people, animals, and the environment on Earth. Are they all helpful?

### PICTURE, PICTURE

Break students into groups and assign each a two-page spread for closer study. Can students locate Drop on their pages? Have older students identify Drop's state (liquid, vapor, or solid) and if it changes from one form to another. What causes it to change? What is the water doing on this page? Is a plant, animal, or person using it for something? What other details are there in the picture about Drop's role in our lives and in nature?

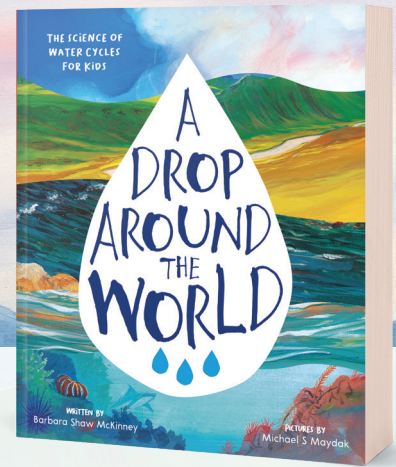
### WHERE IN THE WORLD IS DROP?

The illustrations in this book really set the stage for Drop's travels. Look at the pictures without reading the text. What can students tell about where Drop is from the illustrations? What does the text say that helps students know exactly where Drop is? Go through the book and identify all the places Drop travels and mark them on a map. Once you are done, use the icons from the book to identify what Drop is doing in each location, and how Drop gets around the world. How does telling the story of a single drop circling the globe communicate the idea that the entire Earth shares the same water supply?



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## ICONS IN ACTION

The text in this book is marked with icons, showing the state that water is in and what role it is playing in each specific part of the story. The back of the book has a guide to what these icons mean. For example, the icon of the balloon is used to show when clouds full of water vapor are blown by the air. Before you read the book, first go through these icons with the class and provide a reference (for example, a poster or handouts) that shows the icons with brief explanations of what they represent. As you read the book, have the class review what icons are on each page, and what part of Drop's story they represent.

## POETRY SLAM

This book is written in verse, which means that the lines have a specific pattern of accented and unaccented syllables, and the words at the end of each line rhyme. Assign each student a section of the book to read aloud. Have students practice reading the text with the right rhythm and emphasis to really make it sound like poetry. Ask for volunteers to read their section aloud.

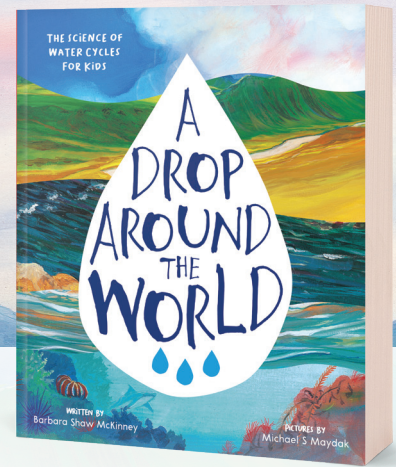
## FIGURES OF SPEECH

*A Drop Around the World* is written as a long poem. One of the features of poetry is the use of figurative language. Explain metaphors and similes, and how they are used. Break students into groups and have them find three examples of metaphors or similes used by the author. How do these figures of speech help convey the author's ideas? After they are acquainted with these figures of speech, have each student make up a metaphor or simile to describe what is going on in one of the scenes in the book. Have volunteers share their creations with the class. Encourage students to incorporate figures of speech in their own creative writing going forward.



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## NEW ILLUSTRATION

This book shows a variety of forms water takes and ways it impacts our lives. Have students think of a way they experience water in their own lives and illustrate it. Be sure to include Drop in the picture! With adult help if necessary, have them write two rhyming lines that describe their drawing. Create an in-class gallery of their work and have a "Grand Opening" where students tell their classmates about their illustrations and rhymes.

## CLOUDY

There are many different kinds of clouds. In the back of the book, under the header "Cloud Maker" the author lists several types of clouds that play a role in the story of Drop. Break students into groups and assign each a type of cloud to research. What does their cloud look like? What sort of weather does it indicate? Where does it appear in the book? Share what they have learned with the rest of the class. Have students ever seen these types of clouds in the sky where they live?

## GETTING THE FACTS

*A Drop Around the World* gives the reader a great overview of the water cycle, and some of the important things water does. Break students into groups and have each prepare a presentation on a different section of the book. Working with an adult as needed, have them use internet and library resources to research their topic and prepare visual aids to help with their presentations. Topics could range from water purification to monsoons to how a cow produces milk! Have each group present what they have learned and use their visual aids to decorate the class during this unit.

## WATER CONSERVATION

The book ends with Drop making a wish: "Let the children take care of the water on Earth, conserve it, protect it, and value its worth." Working with an adult as necessary, have students research water conservation. What do students already do to conserve and protect water in their day-to-day lives? Brainstorm as a class to come up with other ways the class could help conserve water and work locally to keep the global water cycle pollution free. Have students make posters illustrating these ideas and share them with the rest of the school.

