

Water
evaporates from
lakes, rivers, and
oceans into the
air.

Water vapor cools and condenses to form clouds.

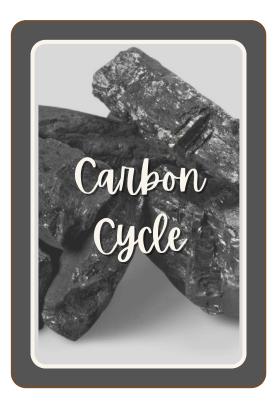
Water falls back to Earth as rain, snow, or other precipitation. Water flows over the ground into rivers, lakes, and oceans.

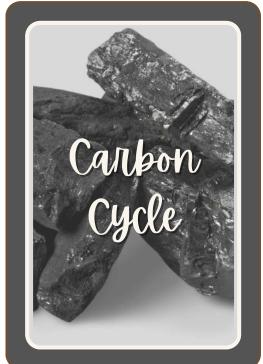
Some water soaks into the ground to become groundwater.

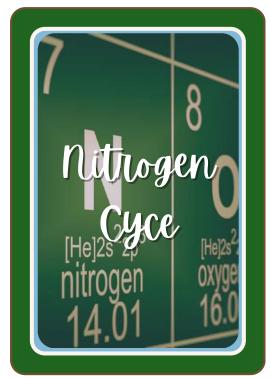
Plants absorb carbon dioxide from the air during photosynthesis.

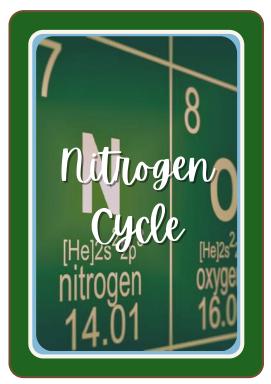
Animals eat plants and use the carbon for energy.

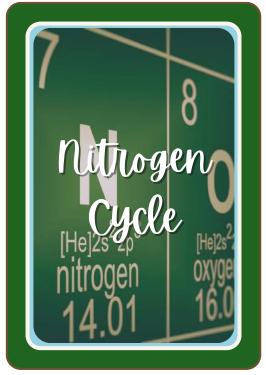
Animals release carbon dioxide back into the air when they breathe.

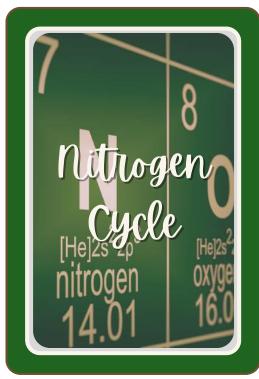


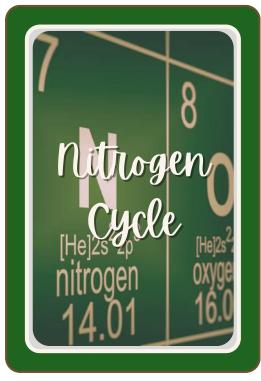












When plants and animals die, carbon returns to the soil.

Carbon is released into the air from burning fossil fuels.

Bacteria in the soil release nitrogen back into the air.

When plants and animals die, nitrogen returns to the soil.

Animals eat plants and use the nitrogen to build proteins.

Plants absorb nitrogen from the soil to grow.

Bacteria in the soil change nitrogen gas from the air into a form plants can use