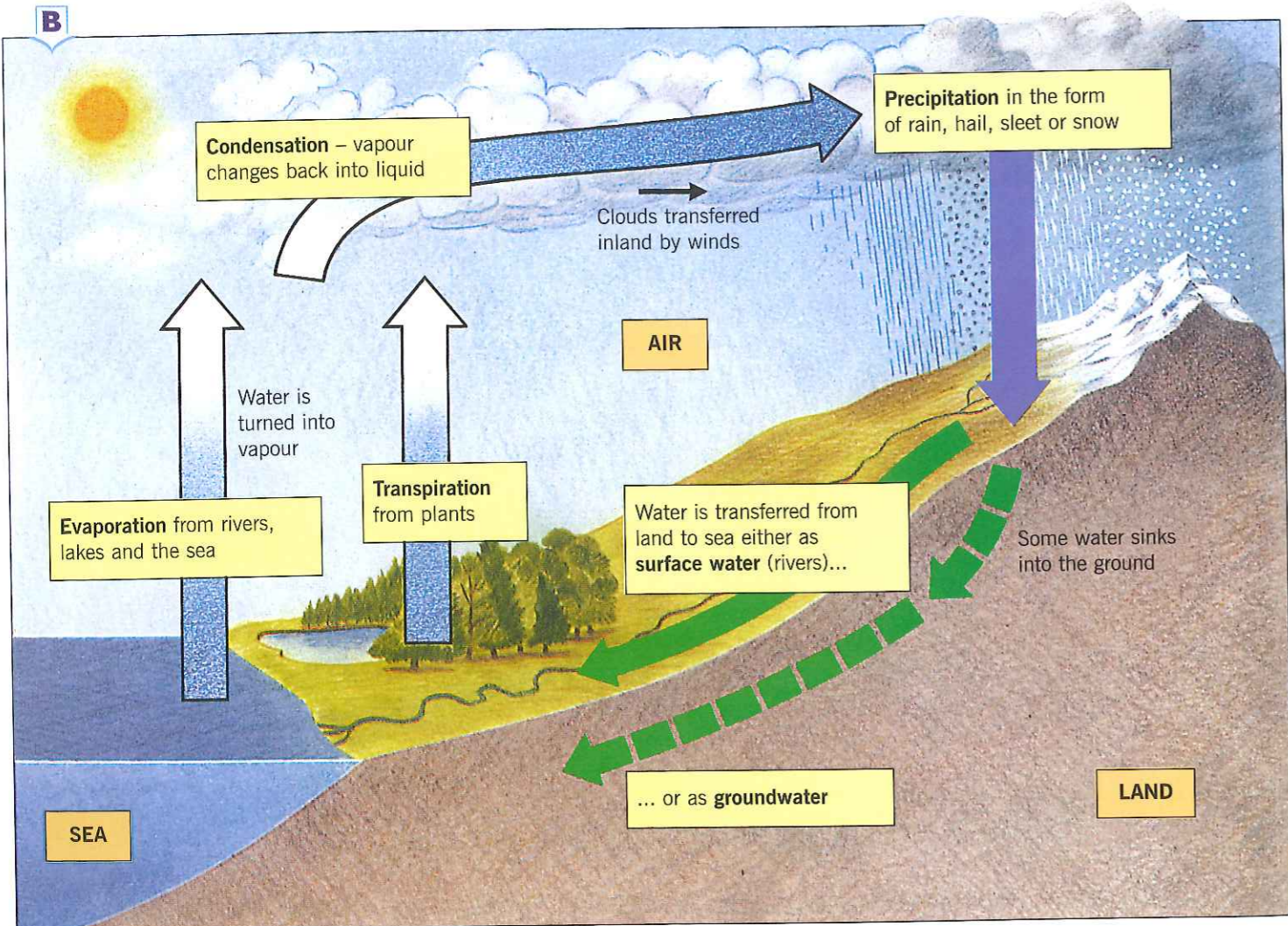
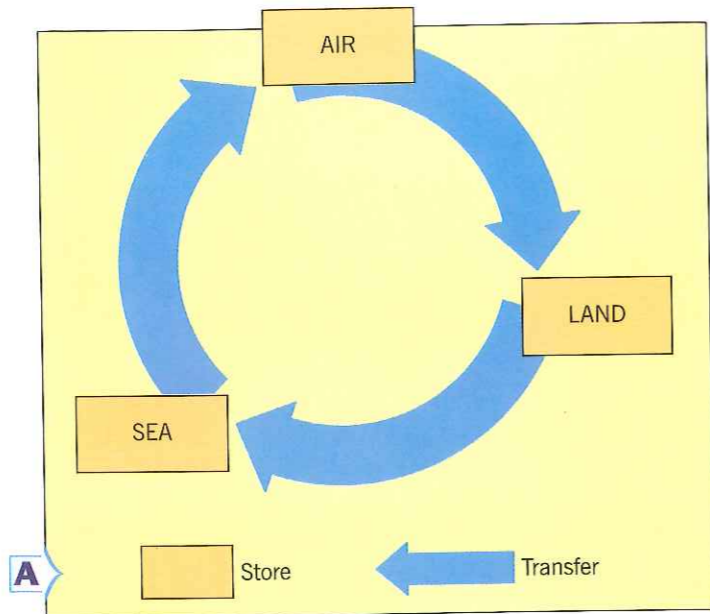


How does the water cycle work?

Rainy days are annoying and a nuisance to most of us. Yet rain is very important to our world as it is part of a never-ending cycle in which water is used over and over again. This cycle is called the **water cycle**. The amount of water in the cycle always stays the same. Some of the water may be **stored** in the sea, in the air or on land. Later, some of this water will be moved or **transferred** around the cycle. The main **stores** and **transfers** in the cycle are shown in diagram A.

The water cycle can be very complicated but its main features are shown in diagram B. Notice that the water can be moved in different forms – as vapour, rain, snow or hail. Some of the geographical terms used on this diagram are long and will be new to you. Chart C on the next page explains what these words mean.



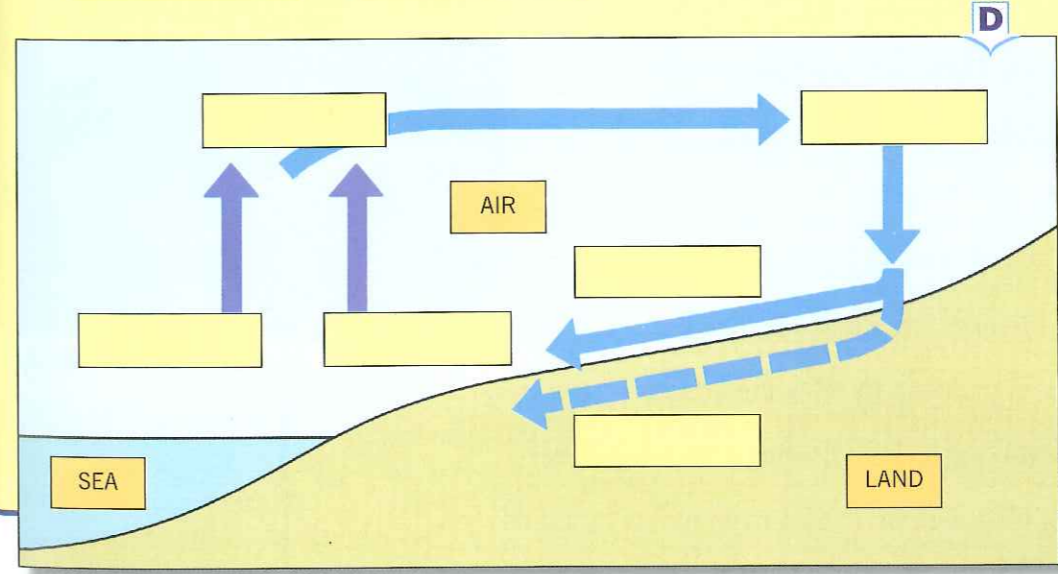
Evaporation		The transfer and change of water from the ground into water vapour in the air. Water vapour is an invisible gas.
Transpiration		The transfer and change of water from plants into water vapour in the air.
Condensation		Water vapour in the air changes back into a liquid. It forms small droplets which are visible as cloud.
Precipitation		The transfer of water from the air to the land. Water can fall to earth as rain, hail, sleet or snow.
Surface water		The transfer of water back to the sea over the ground surface. It is called surface run-off. It is easiest to see where it forms rivers.
Groundwater		The transfer of water through the ground back to the sea.

Activities

1 Diagram D shows part of the water cycle. Draw the diagram and complete the boxes. Choose your answers from the following:

- condensation
- evaporation
- groundwater
- precipitation
- surface water
- transpiration

2 What would happen to surface water (the river) if there was:  
a an increase in rainfall  
b a decrease in rainfall  
c a lot of snow which did not melt  
d a lot of snow which melted very quickly?



**Summary**  
Water can be stored in the sea, in the air and on land. The water cycle is the never-ending transfer of this water between the sea, the air and the land.