**Cycles of Nature Notes**

**Water Cycle:**

**1.** During EVAPORATION, the sun’s heat causes water to change from LIQUID to VAPOR.

**2.** In the process of CONDENSATION, the water vapor cools and returns to a LIQUID STATE.

**3.** The water that falls from the atmosphere to the land and oceans is called PRECIPITATION.Rain, snow, sleet, and hail are all forms of precipitation. Most precipitation falls into the ocean.

**4.** The precipitation that falls on the land and flows into streams, rivers, and lakes is called RUNOFF.

**5.** GROUNDWATER is precipitation that seeps into the ground and is stored between or within rocks. Groundwater slowly flows back into the soil, streams, rivers, and oceans.

**Carbon Cycle:**

**6.** The exchange of carbon between the environment and living things is known as the CARBON CYCLE.

**7.** During PHOTOSYNTHESIS, plants use carbon dioxide from air to make sugars. Through photosynthesis, carbon from the environment becomes a part of living organisms.

**8.** Most animals get the carbon and energy they need by eating plants. Plants and animals break down sugar molecules to release energy in a process called RESPIRATION*.*

Respiration uses oxygen and releases carbon dioxide and water back into the environment.

**9.** The breakdown of substances into simpler molecules is called DECOMPOSITION.

**10.** COMBUSTION is the process of burning a substance, such as wood or fossil fuels. Combustion of organic matter releases carbon.

**Nitrogen Cycle:**

**11.** The movement of nitrogen between the environment and living things is called the NITROGEN CYCLE.

**12.** Bacteria in the soil are able to change nitrogen gas into forms that plants can use. This process is called NITROGEN FIXATION. Lightning causes some nitrogen fixation.

**13.** Other organisms get the nitrogen they need BY EATING PLANTS OR ANIMALS that eat plants.

**14.** LIVING ORGANISMS play a part in each of the cycles.