Name _____ Date _____

The Water Cycle and Earth's Water: Why Is Rain Not Salty?

Directions: Read about Mateo's day at the beach. Then answer each question.

Fresh Rain from a Salty Sea

At the beach, a wave splashed Mateo, and the water tasted salty. Then rain began to fall, and the raindrops did not taste salty at all. How can rain be fresh when much of it comes from the ocean?

About 97 percent of Earth's water is in the salty ocean. Most of the rest is frozen in ice or is under the ground. Only a tiny part is in lakes, rivers, and the air.

The Sun warms the ocean, and some water evaporates. It rises as water vapor, a gas you cannot see. The salt stays behind. High above the ground, the air is usually cooler. There, the vapor can **condense**, or turn into tiny drops of liquid water. Some turns into bits of ice instead. Huge numbers of these drops and bits of ice form a **cloud**, so a cloud is not water vapor. When they grow heavy enough, they fall as **precipitation**, such as rain or snow.

1. According to the passage, what is a cloud made of?

A. Water vapor, a gas you cannot see
B. Steam that is hotter than boiling water
C. Tiny drops of liquid water or bits of ice
D. Smoke that rises from the warm ocean

2. Use the word bank to finish the sentences about the rain that fell on Mateo.

Word bank
condenses • melts • evaporates • freezes

Water from the ocean _____ and rises as water vapor. High in the sky, the vapor gets cooler and _____, forming tiny drops.

3. Why did the rain taste fresh, even though much of it came from the salty ocean?

A. When ocean water evaporates, the salt stays behind in the sea.
B. Clouds filter the salt out of the water vapor.
C. Rain comes only from lakes and rivers, which are fresh.
D. The salt melts away when the water gets cold high in the sky.

4. In the passage, what gives ocean water the energy to evaporate?

A. The salt in the ocean
B. The Moon pulling on the ocean
C. Warmth from the Sun
D. The cool air high in the sky

5. According to the passage, where is most of Earth's water?

A. In clouds and the air
B. Frozen in ice
C. In the salty ocean
D. In lakes and rivers

6. Where is most of the water that is not in the ocean?

A. Inside plants and animals
B. In clouds
C. Frozen in ice or under the ground
D. In lakes and rivers

7. Which of these is an example of precipitation?

A. Dew forming on grass in the morning
B. Fog sitting over a lake
C. Snow falling from a cloud
D. Water vapor rising from the ocean

8. What would happen if the tiny drops in a cloud kept joining together and growing bigger?

A. They would turn back into invisible water vapor.
B. They would rise higher and higher until they left Earth.
C. They would get heavy enough to fall from the cloud.
D. They would turn back into salt water.