



Measuring precipitation – rain gauge activity

A rain gauge is weather instrument used to measure the amount of rainfall each day.

Preparing the Activity

Set up the rain gauge outside and in the open. Keep off the ground by securing the gauge to a fence or post and clear from anything that could block the rain or cause artificial precipitation such as sprinklers. Make sure the top of the rain gauge is level.

As it rains, it will fill up the tube. On the side of your gauge, you will see markings that indicate the amount of rain within.



Looking at the level of water collected in the rain gauge daily, we can measure how much rain has fallen.

To read the rain gauge, you will notice the rainwater appears curved, this is called a meniscus, which is caused by the liquid meeting the sides of the tube.

Be sure to read the measurement closest to the lowest point of that curved surface.



Class Activity

Use the rain gauge to measure the amount of rain that falls on each day for one week. Record it in the table below. Tip out the water in your cylinder in preparation for the next day's reading. Try and measure and record at the same time each day.

Write your observations below:

Day of the Week	Amount of Rainfall collected (cm)
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Total readings	
Average rainfall	



From your data

- Which day of the week had the most rainfall: _____
- Which day of the week had the least rainfall: _____
- How much rain fell in total for the week: _____ cm
- Find the average rainfall (add up the total weekly rainfall divided by the number of days collected)
The average rainfall for the week is: _____ cm

Think and wonder

- Why do you think collecting rainfall data over time is important?
- How is rainfall data useful?
- How could this data be used by you and your community?
- How is rainfall data important to a water utility?

Did you know?

Icon Water uses daily, monthly, and seasonal rainfall data as part of our planning and operations in the security of our water supply to the daily operations at our treatment plants.

