

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2: The Hydrosphere

Water is the most abundant substance at the earth's surface. Almost all of it is in the oceans, which cover 70% of the surface area of the earth. However, the amounts of water present in the atmosphere and on land (as surface runoff, lakes and streams) is great enough to make it a significant agent in transporting substances between the lithosphere and the oceans. Water interacts with both the atmosphere and the lithosphere, acquiring solutes from each, and thus provides the major chemical link between these two realms. The various transformations undergone by water through the different stages of the hydrologic cycle act to transport both dissolved and particulate substances between different geographic locations.

[2.1: Water, Water Everywhere...](#)

[2.2: The hydrosphere and the oceans](#)

[2.3: Chemistry and geochemistry of the oceans](#)

[2.4: Chemical budgets of oceanic elements](#)

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