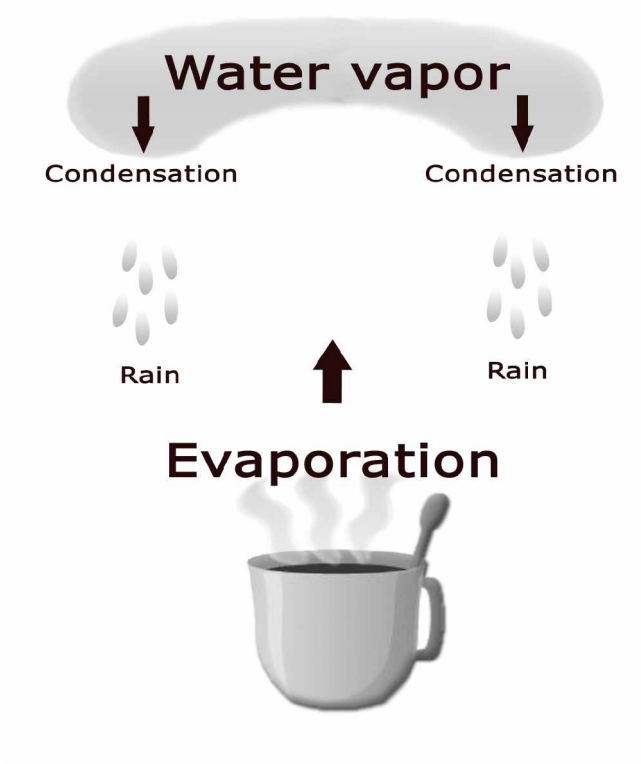


### "A spoon in a cup"



Dimension does matter if one considers the effect of stirring the soup in a bowl with a spoon. In oceanic terms, the enclosed seas of Northern Europe represent only 0.2% of global sea surface and a mere drop with respect to the total volume of the seas around the world (0.0026%). Nevertheless, they play a crucial role as their size represents roughly one-third of North-western Europe. As for the effect of the 'turning about' of the sea areas, their depths are of considerable importance. In the North and Baltic Seas, depth is not an impressive figure i.e. an average of mere 50 meters. In comparison, Mediterranean Sea has an average depth of 1,500 metres and sunrays warm the sea even in wintertime. Battleships in those days had an

average size of about 35,000 tons, a draught of 10 metres and a speed of 32 knots (approx. 60 km/h). Battleships accompanied by a number of escort destroyers across the seas turned huge water areas around. Suddenly, there were thousands of naval ships out on sea, hunting enemies or being hunted from shore, air, surface ships or submarines.

### Naval Fleets

By December 1939, the number of main naval ships belonging to Germany, Great Britain, France, Italy, the Soviet Union and Italy amounted to more than 1,000 vessels (including submarines, torpedo boats, etc.), with a total tonnage of 2.8 million plus at least another thousand smaller vessels and boats serving as mines sweepers, etc.

**Great Britain:** 250 big naval vessels (183 destroyers and bigger vessels) and approx. 57 submarines;

**Germany:** 30 big naval vessels (21 destroyers and bigger vessels) and 57 U-boats.

Remember that these figures indicate the navies' size on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 1939, because thereafter new naval ships came into service almost every day.