



What Are Clouds?

Clouds are made up of tiny droplets of water.

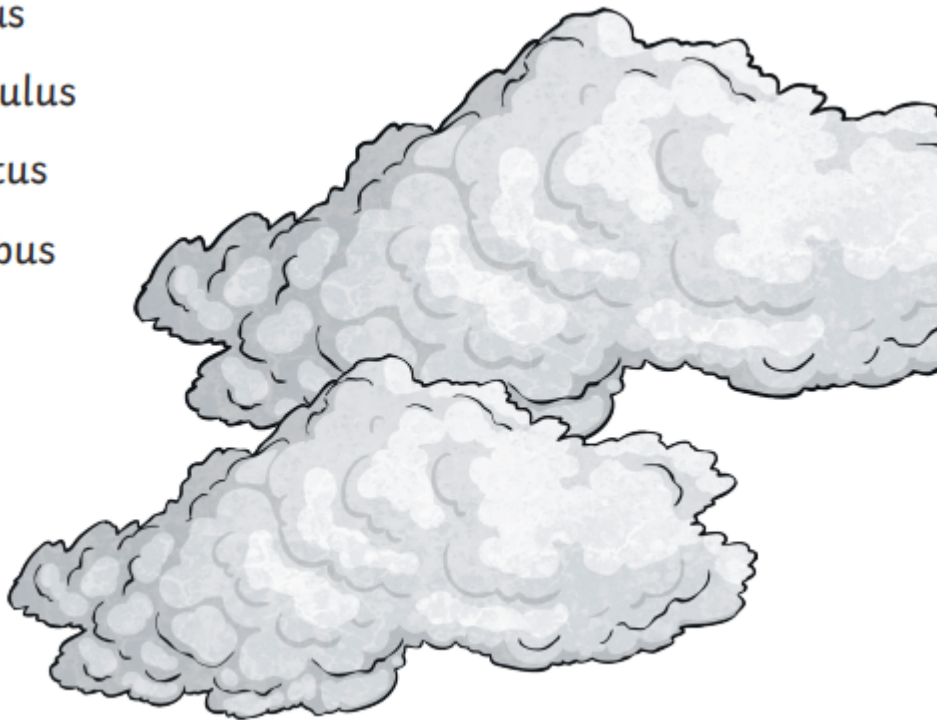
In the highest clouds, these tiny droplets change to ice crystals.

What Clouds Tell Us

Different types of clouds tell us different things about the weather.

We are going to look at four types of clouds:

- cirrus
- cumulus
- stratus
- nimbus



Cirrus Clouds

Cirrus clouds are the highest form of cloud - above 18,000 feet.

They look like wispy paintbrush strokes across the sky.

They are made up of ice crystals.

They are normally white and predict pleasant weather.



Cumulus Clouds

Cumulus literally means a heap or pile. They are fluffy and tend to be seen on a sunny day.

Cumulus clouds are known as fair-weather clouds. Most forms of cumulus clouds will not produce any rain or snow.

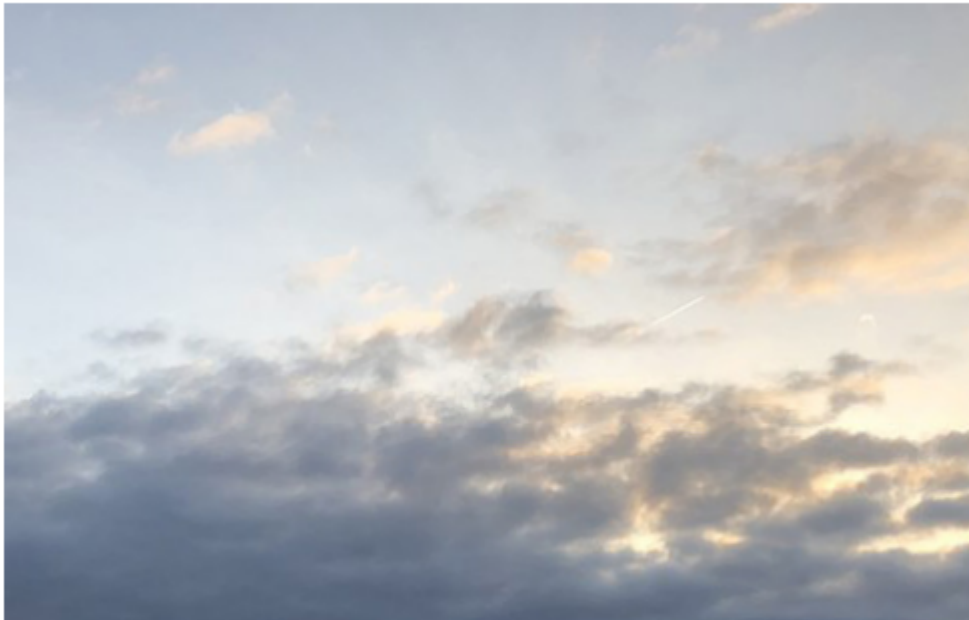
Larger cumulus clouds can produce some rain showers but these tend not to be heavy.



Stratus Clouds

These are the most common form of clouds in Britain. They are low layers of clouds and tend to act as a block to the sun. They are found up to 6500 feet from the ground.

They can be any shade from white to dark grey. They often mean rain!



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Nimbus Clouds

Nimbus is a word which can be added to the other types of clouds, e.g. cumulonimbus.

Nimbus clouds bring rain and snow.



Cumulonimbus Clouds

Cumulonimbus are storm clouds. They can reach enormous sizes. The rain they produce comes suddenly and dramatically.

They can also produce snow or hailstones and cause thunder and lightning storms.



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