

## Clouds Types

Clouds are a collection of very small droplets of water or ice crystals. These droplets are so small, and so light, they can float in the air. Clouds look different and have different names depending on how high or low they are in the sky.

There are three main groups. High clouds (18,000m+) are called Cirrus; Middle clouds (6,000 to 18,000 m) are called Altocumulus; Low clouds (below 6,000 m) are called Stratocumulus. Clouds that are very flat, having vertical length, are called Stratiform or Cumulonimbus.

**Directions:** Read the descriptions of the different types of clouds. Draw a sky scene that shows each type of cloud and where it would be positioned in the sky.

**Cirrus clouds:** composed of ice, they are thin and wispy, long and white.

**Cirrocumulus clouds:** thin, sheet-like high clouds so thin that the sun and moon may be visible through them. Often they cover the entire sky.

**Cumulus clouds:** small, rounded, white puffs that form in sunny skies, resembling high peaks.

**Altocumulus clouds:** grey or bluish grey composed of ice crystals and water droplets, usually covering the entire sky.

**Altocumulus clouds:** made of water droplets appearing in groups as puffy grey masses. Seeing these in the morning may indicate thunderstorms later in the day!

**Stratus clouds:** greyish clouds that often cover the entire sky, resembling fog. Sometimes mist or rain may be falling.

**Stratocumulus clouds:** low, puffy grey clouds forming in rows with blue sky peeking through. Rain is not usually associated with these clouds, however they turn into nimbostratus clouds.

**Nimbostratus clouds:** dark, grey, and wet looking accompanied by continuous, moderate-to-light rain or snow.

**Cumulonimbus clouds:** white, puffy clouds that resemble pieces of cotton. Their base is flat and their tops are rounded.

**Cumulonimbus clouds:** thunderstorm clouds, flat on the bottom, tall, and possibly flat on the top, like an anvil. These clouds are associated with heavy rain, thunder, lightning and tornadoes.