

Clouds

There are three main forms of clouds: cirrus, cumulus, and stratus. All other cloud names are combinations of these basic names. These names came from weather studies conducted by Luke Howard. He used these names to describe the main forms of clouds and presented his names and writings to the science community before other scientists.

Cirrus clouds are the high wispy clouds that are formed of ice crystals. They usually signal a change in the weather. Cumulus clouds are the fluffy clouds we see during fair weather. Sometimes they look like animal shapes in the sky. When they become flat on the bottom and dark, they signal rain or storms. We call storm clouds cumulonimbus. They can build into massive mountains of dark clouds. Stratus clouds are low and gray. They form a layer of cloud cover that sometimes sits on the ground as fog.

Scientists can use clouds to forecast the weather since some clouds are only seen during certain conditions. Become a Cloud Watcher and see if you can find the patterns of clouds giving clues to the weather that follows.

Part 1: Cloud Journal

Date	Cloud type	Location	Current Weather	Next Day's Weather

What did you notice about the clouds you saw during this week?

Did you notice a pattern of weather and clouds?

Part 2 Forecasting with Clouds

Now try your hand at watching the clouds and see if you can notice the pattern of the cloud formation and the weather you see the next day or so.

Date	Cloud type	Location	Current Weather	Prediction of Next Day's Weather	How did you do?

What did you find out as you watched the clouds and predicted the weather?

Are cloud observations enough to accurately predict weather conditions? What would help your accuracy?