

## Clouds

Clouds come in all shapes and sizes. Some clouds look like cotton balls in the sky. Some clouds look dark gray and stormy. They can tell us much about the weather and are fun to watch. When you gaze up at the clouds, you can see pictures in the sky.

What is a cloud? A cloud is a group of tiny water droplets or ice crystals. The droplets are so small they can float in the air. When billions of droplets get together, you see a cloud.

There are four types of clouds. Cumulus clouds are puffy and piled upon each other high in the sky. They are full of water droplets that will turn to rain. When Cumulus clouds are white, they are called “fair weather clouds.” This means that rain is not coming right away. These clouds grow dark as they fill up with more water droplets until they become so heavy that they turn to rain.

Stratus clouds mean rain or snow is coming. They look like a giant gray blanket hanging low across the sky. When Stratus clouds are very low to the ground, they are called fog. Some fog is very thick and hard to see through. Airplane pilots and car drivers must be very careful when driving through fog.

Nimbus clouds are rain clouds. They are very dark and usually bring thunder and lightning. Sometimes you can see the rain falling far in the distance. When you see Nimbus clouds, you should go indoors right away.

Cirrus clouds are white and wispy and move very high across the sky. They are sometimes called “horse tail clouds” because they look like a cotton ball pulled apart and stretched into wisps of cotton. Cirrus clouds look so thin because they are made of ice particles instead of water drops.