



Cirrus

Cirrus clouds are feathery, wispy precipitation clouds. However, the precipitation evaporates quickly. They are considered the prettiest cloud form and are milky-white in color. These clouds are made of ice crystals since they are formed high in the sky, but they can appear as fog in very cold weather. They often appear with cirrocumulus clouds.



Cirrostratus

High cirrostratus clouds usually are the result of cooling produced by air moving over a warm front. These clouds have little form and look like a veil of ice crystals across the sky. They cover a large area and appear thin, but they can actually be quite thick. Halos in cirrostratus clouds warn of thickening and lowering clouds, which means rain will fall in 1-2 days.



Cirrocumulus

Cirrocumulus clouds are high-layered heap clouds. They usually do not cover the entire sky and are often seen with cirrus clouds. They are less puffy than altocumulus clouds and form high in the sky. These clouds show that changing air is present and that it will probably rain later.



Altostratus

Altostratus clouds are mid-level, layered clouds that are primarily formed by air cooled as it glides over the surface of a warm front. They often cover the entire sky, completely blotting out the sun, and can even cover an entire state. They look gray because they are formed of large water droplets. They are usually seen before nimbostratus clouds, which suggests that it will probably rain later.

Instructions:

1. Print out the first two pages on card stock. Pages 1 and 2 are the card faces with cloud pictures and descriptions.
2. Turn the printed pages over and insert them into the printer. Pages 3 and 4, the backs of the cards, should print on the other side of the paper.
3. Laminate the pages and then cut out the cards.



Alto cumulus

Alto cumulus clouds are mid-level, layered, and puffy clouds with many convective cells. They have thin regions where there is lowering air and thick regions where there is rising air. They can cover the sky or form in small groups. These clouds form where a more stable upper layer holds lots of moisture and unstable air below. When they are seen in the morning, they often lead to afternoon thunderstorms.



Stratus

Stratus clouds are poorly defined, low clouds with ragged edges. They are wider and thinner than heap (cumulus) clouds. They also have less rising and sinking air than heap clouds. Ground Fog is a stratus cloud that has formed near the ground.



Nimbostratus

Nimbostratus clouds are precipitation clouds that produce steady rain or snow. They can be so big that they cover one or more states at a time. These clouds form from a mass of warm, moist air that rises over a warm front. Nimbostratus clouds are thick clouds with a dark gray color.



Stratocumulus

Stratocumulus clouds are layers of low, clumpy clouds. They are often mixed with cumulus clouds and have both thick and thin areas. These clouds form when stable layers of air slow down vertical motion, channeling it into horizontal development. This means that more of the cloud grows out than up.



Cumulus

Cumulus clouds are puffy clouds that can form at many levels in the sky and resemble cotton balls. Parcels of relatively warm air rise, and as they cool they condense. Somewhat flat bases are formed as the water vapor in the cloud condenses. Cumulus clouds are vertical development clouds because they can grow very tall.



Cumulonimbus

Cumulonimbus clouds are the most energetic of all the heap clouds. They can be very large and often produce heavy, localized rain. They can also produce hail, lightning, thunder, and tornados. Their tops can reach the stratosphere and turn to ice crystals, making them look stringy or spiky.



