

Eye-Catching Clouds

Become an expert on the three main types of clouds and use your knowledge to make unique cloud art!



Background

Clouds are formed at many different altitudes, but they are all formed by moist air rising. Water vapor turns into liquid droplets that form on miniscule particles, creating the clouds that we see. All clouds are a variation of one of the following three types: Cirrus, Cumulus, and Stratus. It's important that we are able to identify and learn from clouds because they can help us understand climate and weather patterns. We also are then able to formulate better predictions!

Types of Clouds

Name	Definition	Picture	Identifying Words
Cirrus (high altitude level clouds)	These clouds are made up of ice crystals and usually indicate fair weather. The cloud patterns vary greatly and are designated by wind speed/air temperature.	 A photograph showing thin, wispy white clouds against a clear blue sky.	Feathery, airy, thin, wispy
Cumulus (low altitude level clouds)	These commonly seen clouds grow upwards and indicate fair weather. However, they can turn into Cumulonimbus clouds - which are common storm clouds.	 A photograph showing large, puffy white clouds with dark bases against a blue sky.	Fluffy, puffy, like cotton
Stratus (low altitude level clouds)	Formed by large air masses that rise and condense, these thin cloud layers blanket the sky. They also can include mist or fog that we commonly see at ground level.	 A photograph showing a thick, uniform layer of gray clouds covering the sky, with a dark horizon line at the bottom.	Layered, uniform in color (gray), thick

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Observation Activity

For one week, spend 15 minutes outside looking up at the sky. Use the chart to track your observations. Include words to describe the weather (as well as the temperature) and see if you notice any patterns. At the end of the week you can make a graph showing off your data or use it as inspiration for your art activity!

Day	Clouds Observed	Weather Observed	Temperature
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			

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Art Activity

Using the clouds as your subject, create a visual representation of what you see! You can use some of the following ideas as starting points when collecting materials. This art activity can be done with just a pencil and paper, or even recycled objects.

There's no right or wrong way to create cloud art!

- Blue paper and white crayons
- Cotton balls/Q-tips
- Watercolor paints
- Glitter
- Egg cartons
- Putty/Clay

Guiding Questions

1. Which types of clouds do you see most frequently?
2. How do clouds play a part in the water cycle?
3. What type of clouds are associated with inclement weather? What about natural disasters such as tornadoes or hurricanes?
4. Why do meteorologists care about clouds?
5. What other words can you think of that help you memorize the different cloud types?

Extensions

- Sing along with the [3 types of clouds](#) song to memorize the information!
- Read Eric Carle's "Little Cloud" to fuel some imagination when looking up at the sky
https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0399230343/ref=as_li_tf_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=sewlibe-20&linkCode=as2&camp=217145&creative=399369&creativeASIN=0399230343
- Make your cloud observations 3 times a day- morning, afternoon, and evening. Did you observe any changes throughout the day? Observe 3 times a day for a week. Do you notice any patterns? Are there any patterns related to the temperature? How might temperature affect clouds? Can you make a graph showing the data you gathered?