

Clouds



Fun Fact: Contrails are narrow clouds formed as jet exhaust condenses in cold air at high altitudes.

KEY

NASA estimates that around 67% of the earth is covered by clouds.

Clouds

Cumulonimbus 'King of the Clouds'

Low → 16km high
(Stormy)

Cirrus

High level wispy clouds
Ice crystals (no rain)

Cirrostratus

High level sheet—ice—may produce halo.

Cirrocumulus

High level—rippled—ice crystals.

Altostratus

Mid-level layered clouds, generally white. (may produce showers)

Altostratus

Mid-level grey sheet.

Cumulus

Low level puffy clouds,
Individual cells.

Stratus

Low level layer or mass, grey, uniform base.

Nimbostratus

Thicker, darker, low sheet of cloud. (heavy rain or snow)

HIGH

6km → 12km

MID

2.5km → 6km

LOW

Surface → 2.5km

LATIN MEANING

Cumulus 'heap'

Stratus 'spreading out'

Cirrus 'curl/ringlet'

Nimbus 'rainstorm'

Alto 'high'

A typical raindrop is 2mm in diameter.

The largest raindrops recorded were between 8.8mm and 1cm.

Fun Fact - Contrails are narrow clouds formed as jet exhaust condenses in cold air at high altitudes

Clouds

NASA estimates that around 67% of the earth is covered by clouds!

a typical cloud droplet is 20 microns in diameter

Cumulonimbus
The King of the Clouds.

low → 16km high.

stormy

Cirrus

High level wispy clouds. Ice crystals. (no rain)

Cirrostratus
High level sheet - ice - may produce halo

Cirrocumulus
High level - rippled - ice crystals.

Alto cumulus

mid-level layered clouds generally white. (may produce light showers)

Altostratus

mid-level grey sheet

Cumulus

low level puffy clouds, individual cells.

Stratus

low level layer or mass, grey, uniform base. (drizzle)

Nimbostratus

thicker darker lower sheet of cloud. (heavy rain or snow)

HIGH

6km - 12km ↑

MID

2.5km - 6km

LOW

surface - 2.5km

LATIN MEANING

Cumulus 'heap'
stratus 'spreading out'
Cirrus 'curl/ringlet'
Nimbus 'rainstorm'
Alto 'high'

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