

The Story of Clouds



Have you ever looked up and wondered how clouds float above us? Clouds begin their journey when the Sun heats Earth's surface, causing water to **evaporate** into the air. As this warm, moist air rises, it begins to cool. Cooling makes the invisible water vapor **condense** onto tiny particles like dust and salt. This process forms billions of tiny water droplets or ice crystals, which we see as clouds.

Different cloud types form at different heights. **Cirrus clouds** appear high in the sky, thin and wispy, made mostly of ice. **Stratus clouds** sit low, like gray blankets that sometimes bring drizzle. **Cumulus clouds** are puffy and white, often seen on sunny days. But when they grow taller into **cumulonimbus clouds**, they can unleash thunderstorms. By learning to recognize cloud types, we can often predict what kind of weather might come next.

1. What role does the Sun play in cloud formation?
2. Why do water droplets need dust or salt particles to form clouds?
3. Which cloud type looks like a gray blanket in the sky?
4. What kind of weather can tall cumulonimbus clouds bring?
5. How can learning about clouds help us predict the weather?