

TYPES OF CLOUDS

Types of Clouds

Clouds are all around us, we see them every day in the sky. Sometimes they are bright like balls of cotton wool and other times they are dark, almost black. The different types of clouds in the sky can tell us a lot about the type of weather to expect.

What are Clouds?

Clouds are generally made up of tiny droplets or frozen crystals of water. Clouds are formed when warm air rises and then cools down. The water vapour in the warm air then turns into tiny droplets of water or ice. As the droplets come together, they form a cloud.

Cloud Levels

Clouds are generally categorised by their level of elevation or how high they are in the sky. There are three main levels of cloud: High, Middle and Low level clouds. Some clouds can be Vertical, meaning that they can span many of the levels.

High Level Clouds

These type of clouds are generally found above 20,000 feet. These types of cloud tend to be made from ice crystals as it is colder higher up in the sky. Examples are Cirrus, Cirrocumulus and Cirrostratus.

Middle Level Clouds

These type of clouds are generally found between 6,500 and 20,000 feet. They can be made from water droplets or ice crystals. Examples are Altostratus, Altocumulus and Nimbostratus.

Low Level Clouds

These type of clouds are generally found below 6,500 feet. They are mostly made up of water droplets. Examples are Stratus and Stratocumulus.

Vertical Clouds

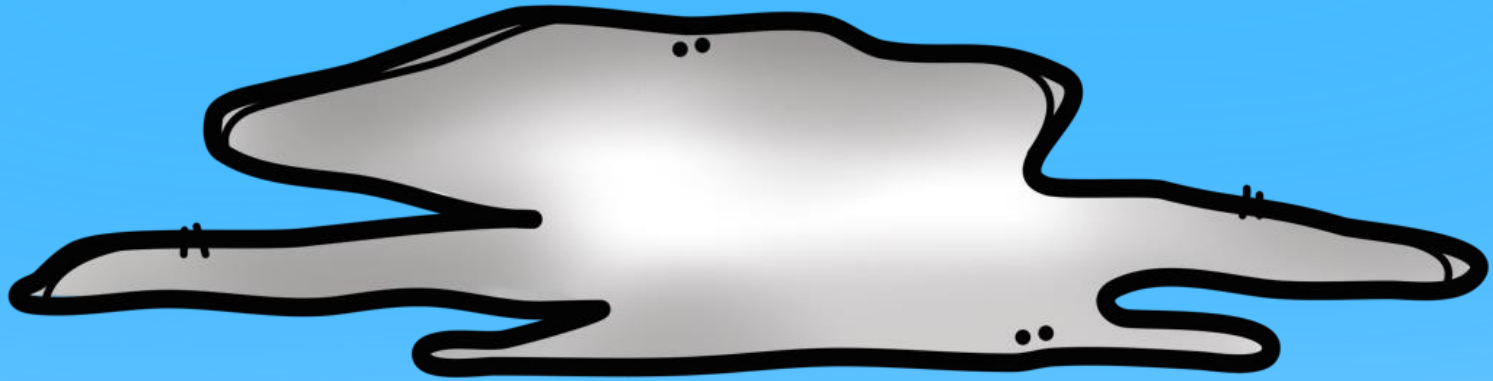
Vertical clouds can span many of the different cloud levels. Examples are Cumulus and Cumulonimbus..





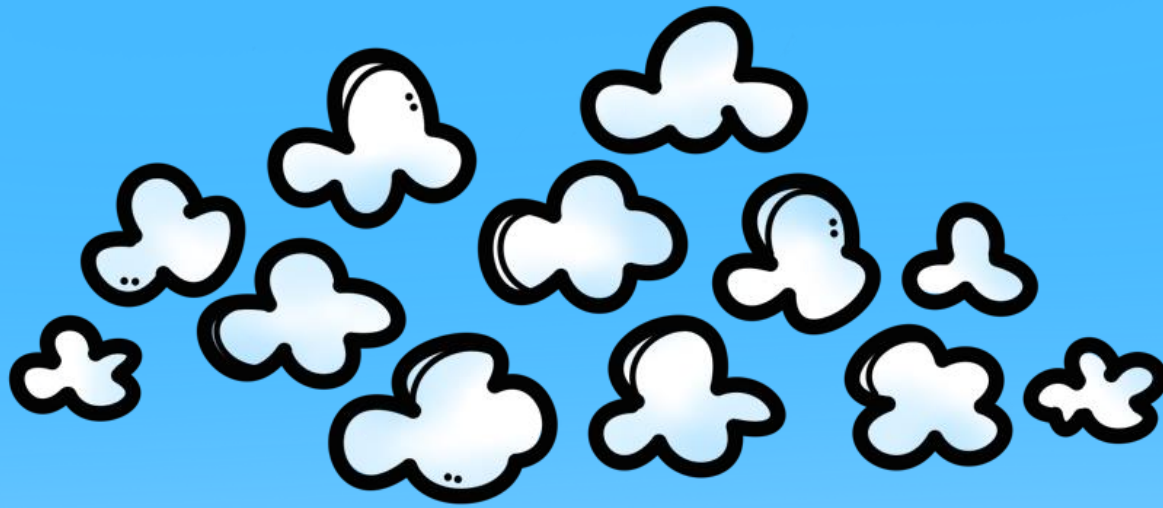
altocumulus

These are middle level clouds that are small, white, and puffy.



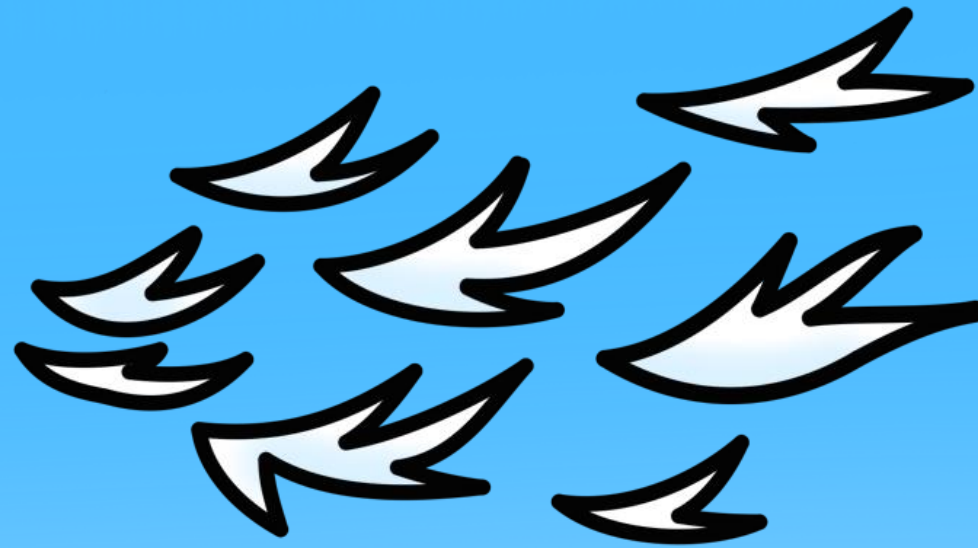
altocumulus

These are middle level clouds that are darker and are usually a sign of rain.



cirrocumulus

These are high level clouds that are like balls of cotton wool.



cirrus





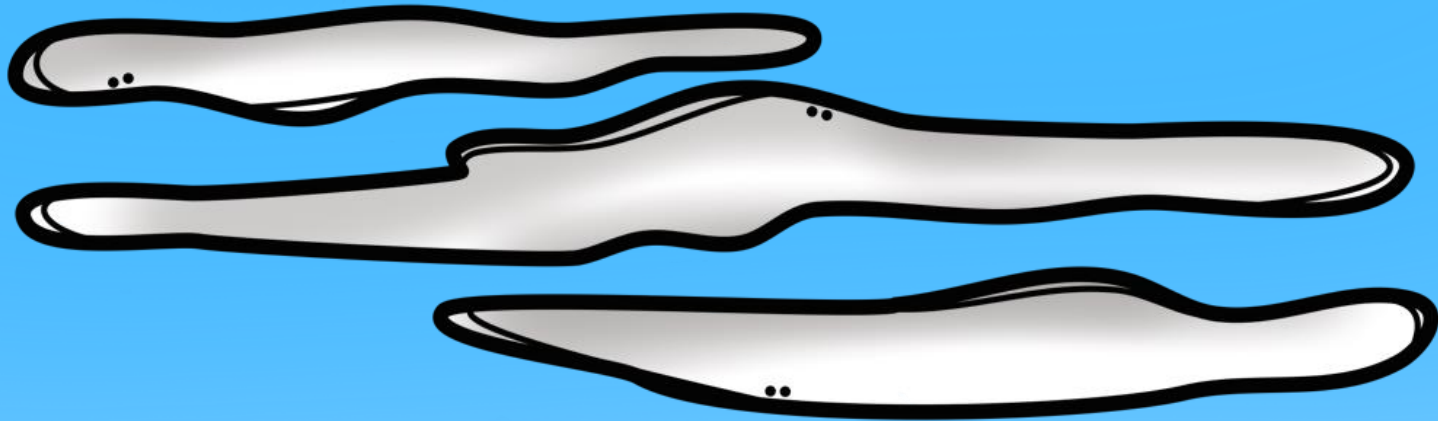
cumulonimbus



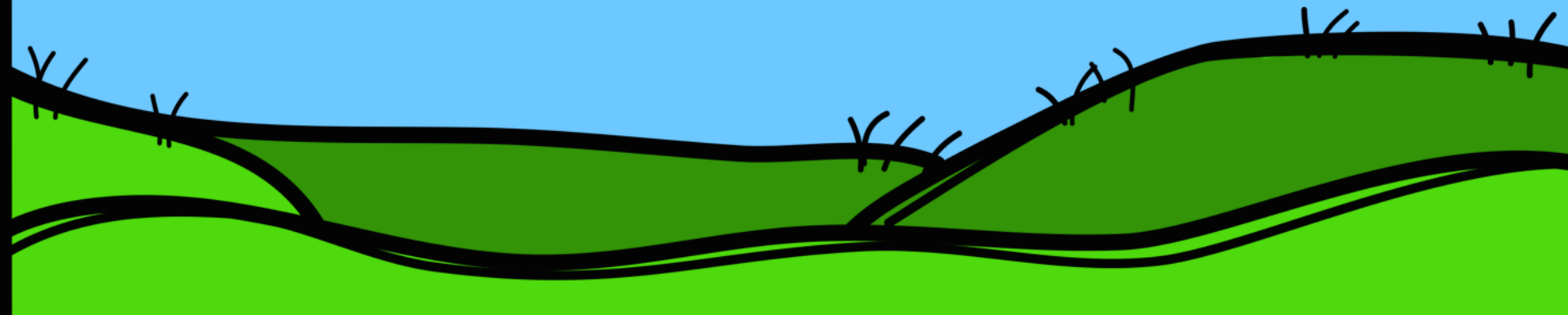
cumulus



stratocumulus



stratus



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