

## cloud

The general term for a visible mass of condensed water vapor. At cold temperatures may include ice crystals and near the surface may be fog. Sometimes produce precipitation. Come in many different sizes and shapes.

## altocumulus cloud

Mid-level, grayish-white, piled clouds, with one part darker than the other. Form in groups about one kilometer thick. May indicate afternoon thunderstorm.

## altostratus cloud

Mid-level, gray or blue-gray clouds that usually cover the sky in layers. The Sun or Moon may shine through, but appear fuzzy. Become nimbostratus if rain hits the ground.

## cirrocumulus cloud

Small curly, high-level piled puffs appearing in long, high rows. Usually white, but may appear gray. Can look like fish scales, creating a "mackerel sky." Common in winter. Indicate fair, cold, weather.

## cirrus cloud

Made of ice crystals. Long, thin, wispy, high-level, curly white streamers. Shaped like horse tails, so called "mare's tails." Seen during fair weather. If they build over time and are followed by cirrostratus clouds, there may be a warm front on the way.

## cumulonimbus cloud

A dense pile of towering vertical cloud associated with precipitation and atmospheric instability, forming from water vapor carried by powerful upward air currents.

## cumulus cloud

## stratocumulus cloud

## stratus cloud

<p>Fluffy, flat-based, pile of low-level clouds that frequently form cumulonimbus clouds.</p>	<p>Large dark, heaped, rounded masses, usually in groups, lines, waves, or layers, the individual elements being larger than those in altocumulus clouds.</p>	<p>Low-level, horizontal layered cloud.</p>
<p><u>ceiling</u></p>	<p><u>overcast</u></p>	<p><u>ceilometer</u></p>
<p>Measurement of cloud base height relative to the ground.</p>	<p>The condition when clouds obscure the sky.</p>	<p>A device that uses a laser or other light source to determine the height of a cloud base.</p>
<p><u>mammato cumulus cloud</u></p>	<p><u>nacreous cloud</u></p>	<p><u>noctilucent cloud</u></p>
<p>A piled cloud with pouch-like structures on its underside.</p>	<p>Iridescent cloud in the winter polar stratosphere.</p>	<p>Tenuous, night, shining cloud that is the edge of a much brighter and pervasive polar cloud layer called polar mesospheric clouds in the upper atmosphere, visible in a deep twilight. They are made of crystals of water ice.</p>

## nimbostratus cloud

## cirrostratus cloud

## precipitation

Low-to-middle layered rain-forming cloud with considerable vertical and horizontal extent, and which produces precipitation over a wide area.

High-level, thin, curly, uniform, layered cloud, composed of ice-crystals. Difficult to detect and capable of forming halos when the cloud takes the form of thin cirrostratus nebulosus.

Water that falls to the ground as rain or snow.

### Cloud clues:

alto = mid-level

cirrus = curly, high-level

cumulo = heap, pile

lucent = shining

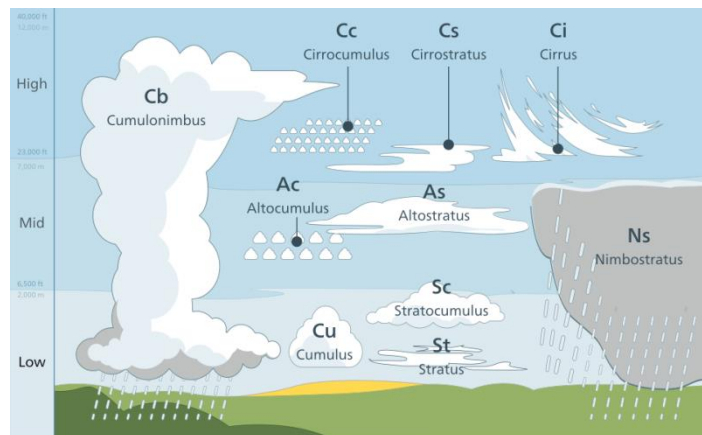
mamma = pouch

nacre = iridescent

nimbus = rain-forming,  
precipitation-related

nocti = night

stratus = layered



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### Clouds on other planets:

Venus: thick, stratiform clouds composed of sulfur.

Mars: cirrus, cirrocumulus and stratocumulus composed of water-ice have been detected mostly near the poles.

Jupiter and Saturn: outer cirriform cloud deck composed of ammonia, an intermediate stratiform haze-cloud layer made of ammonium hydrosulfide, and an inner deck of cumulus water clouds.

Uranus and Neptune: similar to those on Jupiter and Saturn, but composed of methane.