

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

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

cirrostratus cloud

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.

precipitation

Water that falls to the ground as rain or snow.

Cloud clues:

alto = mid-level

cirrus = curly, high-level

cumulo = heap, pile

lucent = shining

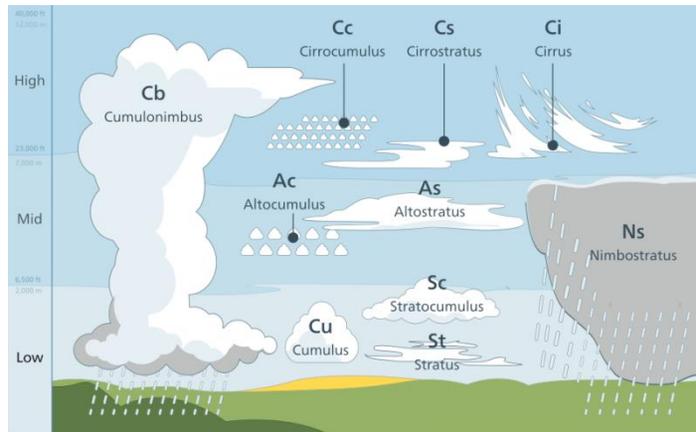
mamma = pouch

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.