



<p>Cirrus</p> <p>High1</p> <p>Cirrus: Straight, nearly straight, or curved filaments, strands or hooks.</p>	<p>Cirrus</p> <p>H2</p> <p>Cirrus: Dense white puffs with wispy edges.</p>	<p>Cirrus</p> <p>H3</p> <p>Cirrus: Dense, anvil-shaped remains, which were originally the upper parts of Cumulonimbus.</p>	<p>Cirrus</p> <p>H4</p> <p>Cirrus: Filaments, strands or hooks, increasing in coverage and generally thickening as a whole.</p>	<p>Cirrostratus</p> <p>H5</p> <p>Cirrostratus with or without Cirrus: Increasing density and coverage, but coverage does not reach midway above the horizon.</p>	<p>Cirrostratus</p> <p>H6</p> <p>Cirrostratus with or without Cirrus: Increasing density and covering much of, but not the entire sky.</p>	<p>Cirrostratus</p> <p>H7</p> <p>Cirrostratus: Veil covering the whole sky, sometimes a halo around the sun or moon is present.</p>	<p>Cirrostratus</p> <p>H8</p> <p>Cirrostratus: Veil not covering the whole sky nor increasing in coverage.</p>	<p>Cirrocumulus</p> <p>H9</p> <p>Cirrocumulus: Thin white ripples or small puffs, which may be accompanied by some Cirrus/Cirrostratus.</p>
<p>Altostratus</p> <p>Mid1</p> <p>Altostratus: Full or nearly full sky cover that is gray, shapeless and translucent; produces no halo.</p>	<p>Nimbostratus</p> <p>M2</p> <p>Altostratus: Thick opaque coverage, no precipitation, or Nimbostratus: during precipitation or virga.</p>	<p>Altostratus</p> <p>M3</p> <p>Altostratus: Translucent bands or patches in a relatively continuous layer.</p>	<p>Altostratus</p> <p>M4</p> <p>Altostratus Lenticularis: Lens or almond shaped, often formed by air moving over hills or mountains.</p>	<p>Altostratus</p> <p>M5</p> <p>Altostratus: One or more layers of translucent or opaque bands.</p>	<p>Altostratus</p> <p>M6</p> <p>Altostratus: A result of the spreading tops of Cumulus or sides of Cumulonimbus.</p>	<p>Altostratus</p> <p>M7</p> <p>Altostratus: In one or more opaque layers, sometimes with Altostratus or Nimbostratus.</p>	<p>Altostratus</p> <p>M8</p> <p>Altostratus: Small towers, which can be similar to small Cumulus with wispy trails of virga.</p>	<p>Altostratus</p> <p>M9</p> <p>Altostratus: Chaotic sky with multiple layers and kinds of Altostratus at several altitudes.</p>
<p>Cumulus</p> <p>Low1</p> <p>Cumulus: Thin and ragged with continuously changing edges; forms during fair weather by daytime heating.</p>	<p>Cumulus</p> <p>L2</p> <p>Cumulus: Moderately tall with rounded puffy tops; may occur with Cumulus/Stratocumulus (L4).</p>	<p>Cumulonimbus</p> <p>L3</p> <p>Cumulonimbus: Very tall summits, which lack sharp outlines and are not anvil-shaped.</p>	<p>Stratocumulus</p> <p>L4</p> <p>Stratocumulus: Spread out Cumulus when vertical development stabilizes; sometimes can occur along with Cumulus.</p>	<p>Stratocumulus</p> <p>L5</p> <p>Stratocumulus: One or more layers, not resulting from spreading Cumulus.</p>	<p>Stratus</p> <p>L6</p> <p>Stratus: In a continuous layer, or Stratus fractus: In ragged shreds, or both, without precipitation.</p>	<p>Stratus</p> <p>L7</p> <p>Stratus- or Cumulus-fractus: Ragged shreds during precipitation, usually seen below Altostratus or Nimbostratus.</p>	<p>Cumulus / Stratocumulus</p> <p>L8</p> <p>Cumulus/Stratocumulus: Stratocumulus not from spreading Cumulus, with Cumulus base at a different level.</p>	<p>Cumulonimbus</p> <p>L9</p> <p>Cumulonimbus: Very tall summits with anvil-shaped upper part.</p>

NOAA Cloudwise

There are ten basic cloud types arranged in three divisions based on the altitude at which they form. Low level clouds are Cumulus, Cumulonimbus, Stratus, and Stratocumulus. Middle level clouds are Altostratus, Nimbostratus and Cirrostratus. Precipitation primarily occurs from Cumulus, Cumulonimbus and Nimbostratus.

These ten clouds are further divided into 27 classifications. Many of these classifications represent the same basic cloud type (or combinations of clouds) but in various stages of development, opacity, or sky cover.

Learn more about clouds at www.weather.gov/jetstream

www.noaa.gov/education www.weather.gov

Sky cover

The percent of sky covered by clouds. Clouds near the horizon appear to be lower, more numerous and closer together.

Sky Clear	Few	Scattered	Broken	Overcast
0%	1 - 25%	26 - 50%	51 - 99%	100%

Other Cloud Phenomena

<p>Mammatus: Small pouch or pocket-like clouds sinking into drier air and often seen near thunderstorms.</p>	<p>Fog: A cloud on the ground which lifts from the surface and becomes Stratus or dissipates with heat from the sun.</p>	<p>Wall Cloud: Rotating, lowered, rain-free base of thunderstorm in area of strongest updraft, under which a tornado may form.</p>	<p>Shelf Cloud: Forms in a gust front from a squall line or thunderstorm.</p>	<p>Asperitas: Long waves that ripple through the base of the cloud near the dry/moist air boundary of a thunderstorm.</p>	<p>Virga: Precipitation that evaporates before reaching the surface.</p>
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