

GET YOUR HEAD IN THE CLOUDS

Do you ever watch clouds drift across the sky and notice their different shapes and textures? Have you wondered what clouds are made of and how they form? Let's talk about clouds and then go outdoors to use what you learn here.

Clouds are made up of water droplets or ice crystals that are so small and light they are able to stay up in the air. Nevada skies aren't always filled with clouds because our high desert environment doesn't have much moisture available to create them. But when conditions are just right, you can see all sorts of interesting clouds right overhead.

Climatologists and meteorologists are two types of scientists who study weather patterns and their effects on humans and the environment. Meteorologists focus on short-term weather and climatologists are interested in long-term climate conditions. Nephologists are meteorologists who study clouds.

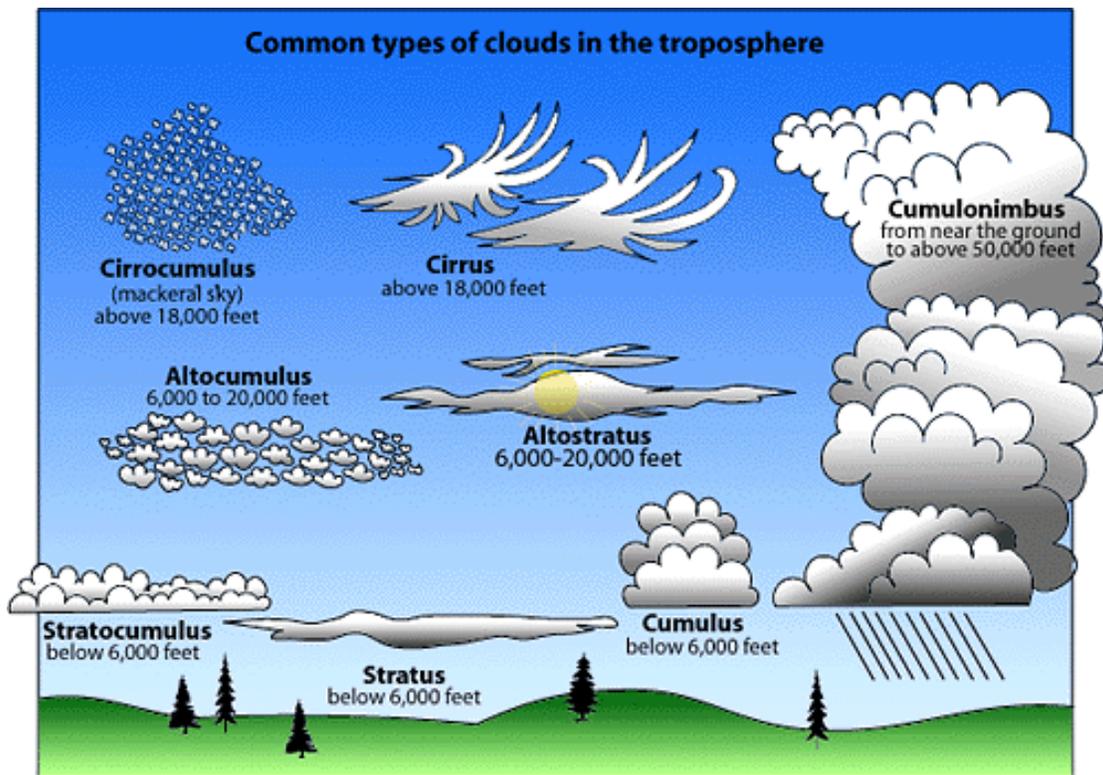
In 1802 Luke Howard, an English scientist, first described the shape and texture of clouds and named the different cloud types using Latin names. Howard had been interested in weather and clouds since he was a small boy and built his own weather station.

One of the more unusual cloud types seen in our area is the lenticular cloud. They are sometimes called "UFO clouds" or "flying saucer" clouds because their shape is similar to alien spacecraft seen in old science fiction movies.



When you notice clouds in the sky, sit outside for a bit and look closely. Use your powers of observation. You might want to take some drawing paper and pencils or crayons to capture what you see. You can also take photos to help with identification and to keep as a record of cloud conditions.

There are many different types of clouds, each with a unique shape and location in the sky. Use this graphic to help you identify cloud types:



Credit: University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR)

You can also print out this cool Cloud Finder from Scholastic, available for free on their website:

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/lessonrepro/reproducibles/profbooks/cloudkey.pdf>

Using cotton balls and glue, see if you can create a few of the different cloud types you have identified.

Here are some instructions to get you started: <https://classroomcentral.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/2018-2019-Weather-Clouds.pdf>

Do you like to look up and imagine what those shapes look like – a dragon, a dog, or maybe a fish? Draw what your imagination comes up with or write a story or poem describing the shapes you see.

For more ideas, activities and information, visit these links:

<https://scied.ucar.edu/learning-zone/clouds/how-clouds-form>

<https://scijinks.gov/clouds/>

<https://www.sciencenewsforstudents.org/article/cool-jobs-head-clouds>

https://www.nasa.gov/pdf/312992main_CombinedCloud2.pdf

<https://blog.sciencemuseum.org.uk/the-man-who-named-the-clouds/>