

# Types of Clouds

■ **High-Level Clouds** are formed in altitudes above 20,000 feet. Because the temperatures are so cold at this elevation, these clouds are formed from ice crystals.



Cirrus Clouds



Cirrostratus Clouds



Cirrocumulus Clouds

■ **Vertical Clouds**



Cumulonimbus Clouds

20,000 ft

■ **Mid-Level Clouds** are found in altitudes between 6,500 to 20,000 feet. They are formed mainly of water droplets, but can also be made up of ice crystals when the temperature is cold enough.



Altostratus Clouds



Alto cumulus Clouds

6,500 ft

■ **Low-Level Clouds** are found below 6,500



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clouds that are blown by high winds. They usually mean the day will have fair or pleasant weather, and follow the direction that the air moves at the altitude they are found at.

**Cirrostratus clouds** are like very thin sheets of clouds that cover large parts of the sky.

**Cirrocumulus clouds** look like small round puffs in the sky. Sometimes they are called mackerel clouds because they look similar to fish scales.

■ **Vertical Clouds**

**Cumulonimbus clouds** can take up several miles across the sky and can reach elevations of 39,000 feet or higher because of very strong updrafts in the atmosphere. Low level cumulonimbus clouds are made up of water droplets, but at higher elevations, they consist of ice crystals. Cumulonimbus clouds are the type of clouds that bring lightning, thunder, violent tornadoes and other intense weather situations.

**Cumulus clouds** are also called fair weather clouds and look like floating cotton. They have very flat bases and are not very tall clouds. When cumulus clouds are first formed from droplets, they have very distinct edges, but as they move through the sky, air causes the edges to appear more ragged and broken apart.

ice crystals and water droplets. They can cover the entire sky and form before rain storms.

**Alto cumulus clouds** are composed of water droplets and are gray and puffy. These clouds are usually seen on warm and humid summer mornings and are usually a sign that thunderstorms will follow later in the day.

clouds that produce falling rain or snow.

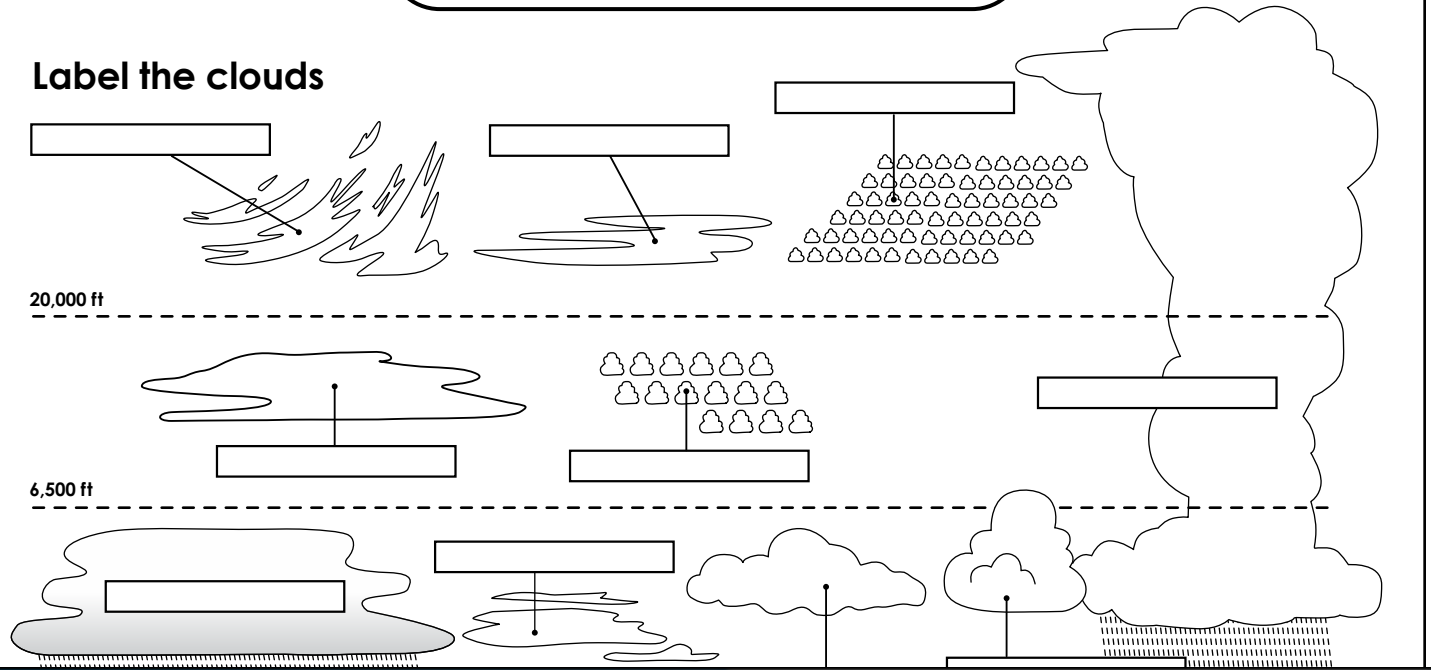
**Stratus clouds** are among the low-lying clouds. They are gray clouds that cover the entire sky and can be the result of very thick fog lifting in the morning.

**Stratocumulus clouds** are low, lumpy, and gray. They are the most common clouds. Often they do not produce precipitation. When they do it's light rain or snow.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Types of Clouds

Label the clouds



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sometimes called mackerel clouds?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Name two types of clouds that are between 20,000 and 6,500 feet in the air.

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Which type of clouds brings lightning, thunder, and tornadoes?

\_\_\_\_\_

and cirrocumulus clouds made of?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What type of cloud is the most common?

\_\_\_\_\_

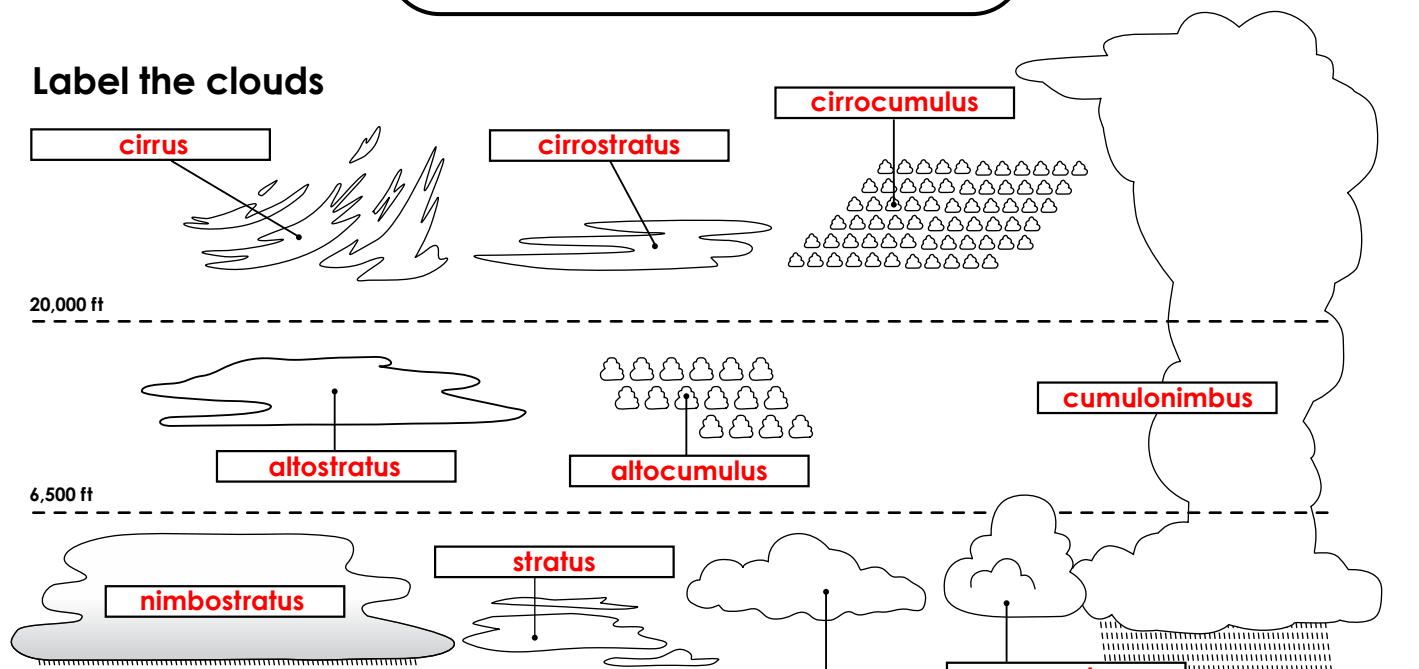
8. What type of clouds are called "fair weather clouds" and look like floating cotton?

\_\_\_\_\_

# ANSWER KEY

## Types of Clouds

Label the clouds

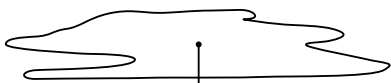


**cirrus**

**cirrostratus**

**cirrocumulus**

20,000 ft



**altostratus**



**altocumulus**

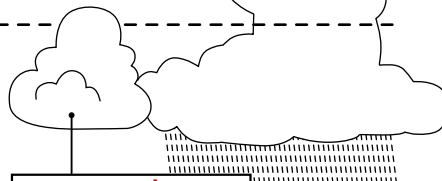
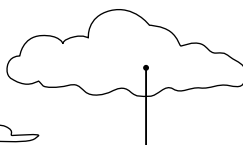
6,500 ft

**cumulonimbus**



**nimbostratus**

**stratus**



# Preview

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sometimes called mackerel clouds?

**They look like fish scales.**

3. Name two types of clouds that are between 20,000 and 6,500 feet in the air.

**altocumulus and altostratus**

4. Which type of clouds brings lightning, thunder, and tornadoes?

**cumulonimbus**

and cirrocumulus clouds made of?

**ice crystals**

7. What type of cloud is the most common?

**stratocumulus**

8. What type of clouds are called "fair weather clouds" and look like floating cotton?

**cumulus**

*Note: Cirrus clouds often mean fair weather too, but they do not look like cotton.*