




# National Weather Service



-  High Clouds  
16,500 - 60,000 feet
-  Middle Clouds  
6,500 - 25,000 feet
-  Low Clouds  
Up to 6,500 feet

Cutout



# CloudSpotter

National Weather Service

*Building a Weather-Ready Nation*

[www.weather.gov/jetstream](http://www.weather.gov/jetstream)

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Cutout

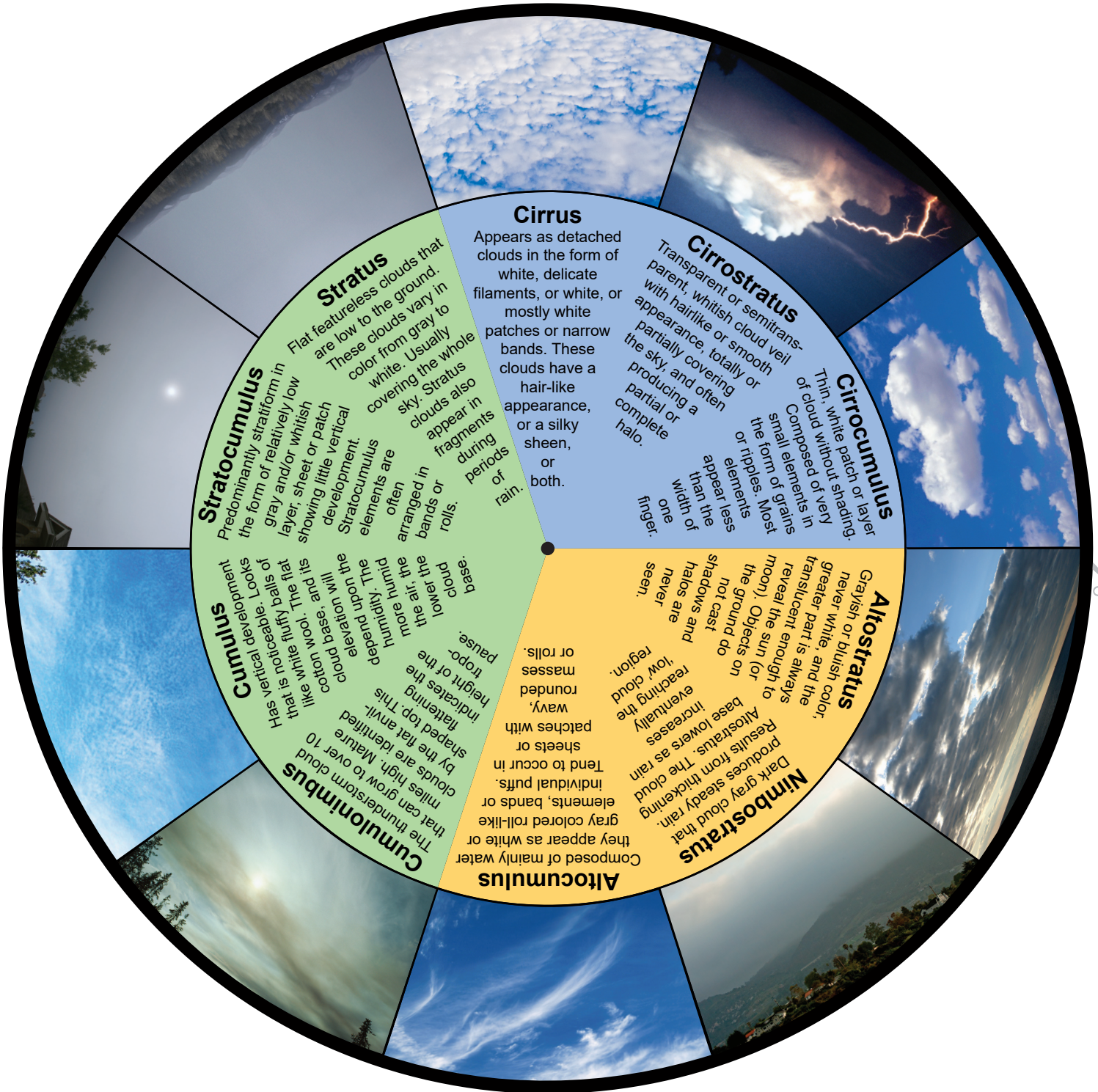


**Lesson plan: Head in the clouds.** Cut along dotted lines and make a small hole in the center of both wheels. Attach wheels together using a brass fastener. Record cloud observations onto a cloud observation form. Complete lesson plan and PDF versions of wheels/forms are located at...

[https://www.weather.gov/jetstream/ll\\_headclouds](https://www.weather.gov/jetstream/ll_headclouds)

There are over 35 lesson plans in the National Weather Service education website JetStream - An Online School for Weather, a free resource at [www.weather.gov/jetstream](http://www.weather.gov/jetstream).





**Cirrus**

Appears as detached clouds in the form of white, delicate filaments, or white, or mostly white patches or narrow bands. These clouds have a hair-like appearance, or a silky sheen, or both.

**Cirrostratus**

Transparent or semitransparent, whitish cloud veil with hairlike or smooth appearance, totally or partially covering the sky, and often producing a partial or complete halo.

**Cirrocumulus**

Thin, white patch or layer of cloud without shading. Composed of very small elements in the form of grains or ripples. Most appear less than the width of one finger.

**Altostratus**

Grayish or bluish color, never white, and the greater part is always translucent enough to reveal the sun (or moon). Objects on the ground do not cast shadows and halos are never seen.

**Nimbostratus**

Dark gray cloud that produces steady rain. Results from thickening of Altostratus. The cloud base lowers as rain increases eventually reaching the low cloud region.

**Alto cumulus**

Composed of mainly water they appear as white or gray colored roll-like elements, bands or sheets or rounded masses or rolls.

**Stratus**

Flat featureless clouds that are low to the ground. These clouds vary in color from gray to white. Usually covering the whole sky. Stratus clouds also appear in fragments during periods of rain.

**Stratocumulus**

Predominantly stratiform in the form of relatively low layer, sheet or patch showing little vertical development. Stratocumulus elements are often arranged in bands or rolls.

**Cumulus**

Has vertical development that is noticeable. Look like white fluffy balls of cotton wool. The flat top is not above the cloud base, and the elevation will depend upon the humidity. The more humid the air, the lower the cloud base.

**Cumulonimbus**

The thunderstorm cloud that can grow to over 10 miles high. Mature clouds are identified by the flat anvil-shaped top. This flattening indicates the height of the tropopause.

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