



# CLOUD CHART

**SKY COLOR** When there are more aerosols in the atmosphere, the sky appears lighter.



DEEP BLUE



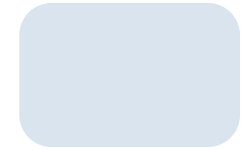
BLUE



LIGHT BLUE



PALE BLUE



MILKY

## CUMULUS

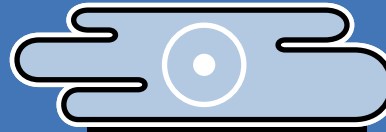
## STRATUS

## CIRRUS

HIGH



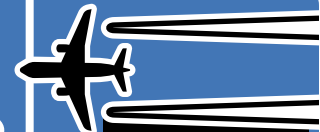
CIRROCUMULUS



CIRROSTRATUS



CIRRUS

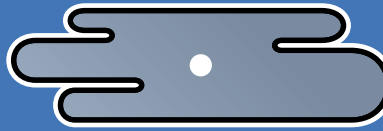


CONTRAILS

MID

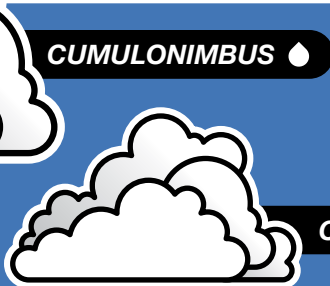


ALTOCUMULUS



ALTOSTRATUS

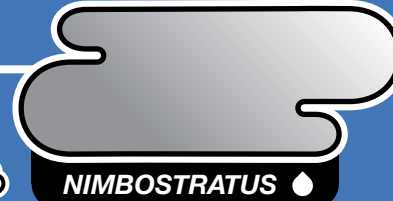
LOW



CUMULONIMBUS



STRATOCUMULUS



NIMBOSTRATUS



CUMULUS



STRATUS



Cloud height refers to the altitude of the **base** of a cloud.

Cumulonimbus clouds are considered low clouds despite how tall they can grow.

The way the Sun looks behind stratus changes depending on the cloud height.

Thick, low-level stratus may completely block the Sun, while a halo often appears around the Sun behind cirrostratus. *Remember to never look directly at the Sun!*



**OBSCURATIONS** Obscurations block your view of the sky. Some obscurations, like heavy rain and snow, are produced by clouds.



SMOKE



DUST



SAND



HAZE



SEA SPRAY



VOLCANIC ASH



HEAVY RAIN



HEAVY SNOW

# What's in a name?

Clouds are named based on their height, shape, and whether or not they produce precipitation. Their names are derived from Latin.

## CLOUD SHAPE

Clouds fall into three main categories based on their shape.

### **Cirrus** (*means hair-like in Latin*)

These are high-altitude clouds that appear thin, wispy, and feathery. These clouds form in the upper troposphere, where fast-moving winds stretch them into long, thin streamers.



### **Cumulus** (*means piled in Latin*)

These are large, puffy clouds that often look like floating cotton balls or heads of cauliflower. Their bases are typically flat, while the tops form rounded towers that make them appear heaped or piled up.



### **Stratus** (*means layer in Latin*)

These are uniform clouds that spread across the sky like a gray, flat blanket. They tend to cover large portions of the sky in a smooth, even layer.



## PRECIPITATION

Rain, snow, and hail are examples of precipitation.

### **Nimbus** (*means rain in Latin*)

Clouds that produce precipitation have nimbus in their names. For example, nimbostratus clouds produce precipitation.

## CLOUD HEIGHT

Cloud height refers to the altitude of the cloud base.

### **High-Level Clouds**

These clouds typically form at an altitude of 6 km or above. They have the prefix *cirro-*. For example, cirrocumulus are high-level cumulus clouds.

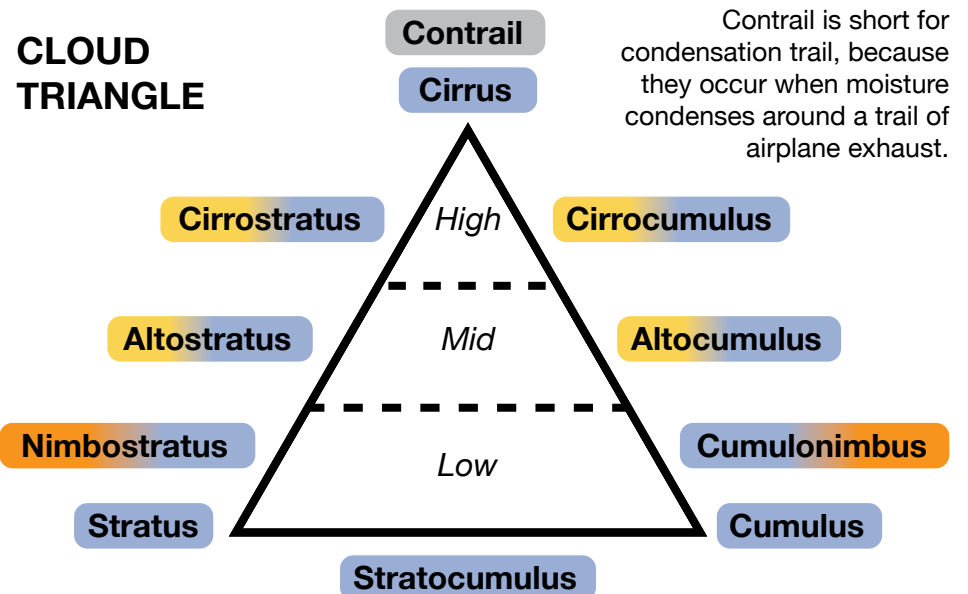
### **Mid-Level Clouds**

These clouds typically form between 2 and 6 km. They have the prefix *alto-*. Alto means high in Latin, but we use alto to describe mid-level clouds. For example, mid-level stratus clouds are called altostratus.

### **Low-Level Clouds**

These clouds form below 2 km. Low-level clouds don't have a prefix. Cumulus and stratus are examples of low level clouds.

## CLOUD TRIANGLE



Stratocumulus is a combination of two cloud shapes: cumulus and stratus.