

# Vocabulary



**cirrus cloud** a high, feathery cloud made of ice crystals

Cirrus clouds mean fair weather for now, but perhaps a change within a day.

**cloud** a mass of water droplets or ice crystals that have clustered in the atmosphere

Clouds form when water vapor high in the air cools and condenses on dust particles.

**cumulonimbus cloud** a huge, vertical cloud that can produce a thunderstorm and hail

Cumulonimbus clouds are also called thunderheads.

**cumulus cloud** a puffy, white cloud with a flat bottom

Cumulus clouds are also called fair-weather clouds.

**fog** a stratus cloud that forms next to the ground

Fog forms when warm, moist air comes in contact with the cool ground.

**nimbostratus cloud** a low, gray cloud that produces rain or snow

Nimbostratus clouds are so thick and dark that they can block sunlight.

**rain** liquid precipitation that falls from clouds

Raindrops are 1–3 mm in diameter. Drops of drizzle are less than 1 mm in diameter.

**rain gauge** an instrument used to measure rainfall

Rainfall is measured in inches in the United States.

**stratus cloud** a flat, gray, layered cloud that covers the sky

Stratus clouds mean rain or drizzle is likely.