

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

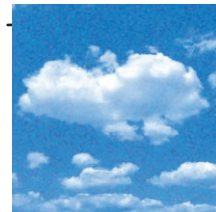
■ **Mid-Level Clouds** are found in altitudes between 6,500 to 20,000 feet. They are formed mainly of water droplets, but can also be made up of ice crystals when the temperature is cold enough.



Altostratus Clouds



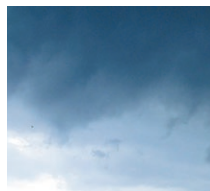
Altocumulus Clouds



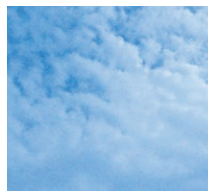
Cumulus Clouds

6,500 ft

■ **Low-Level Clouds** are found below 6,500 feet and although they are mostly made up of water droplets, they can also be composed of ice particles and snow in very cold temperatures.



Nimbostratus Clouds



Stratus Clouds



Stratocumulus Clouds



■ High-Level Clouds

Cirrus clouds are thin and wispy 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.

■ Mid-Level Clouds

Altostratus clouds are made up of ice crystals and water droplets. They can cover the entire sky and form before rain storms.

Altocumulus 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.

■ Low-Level Clouds

Nimbostratus clouds are dark gray 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.

■ Vertical Clouds

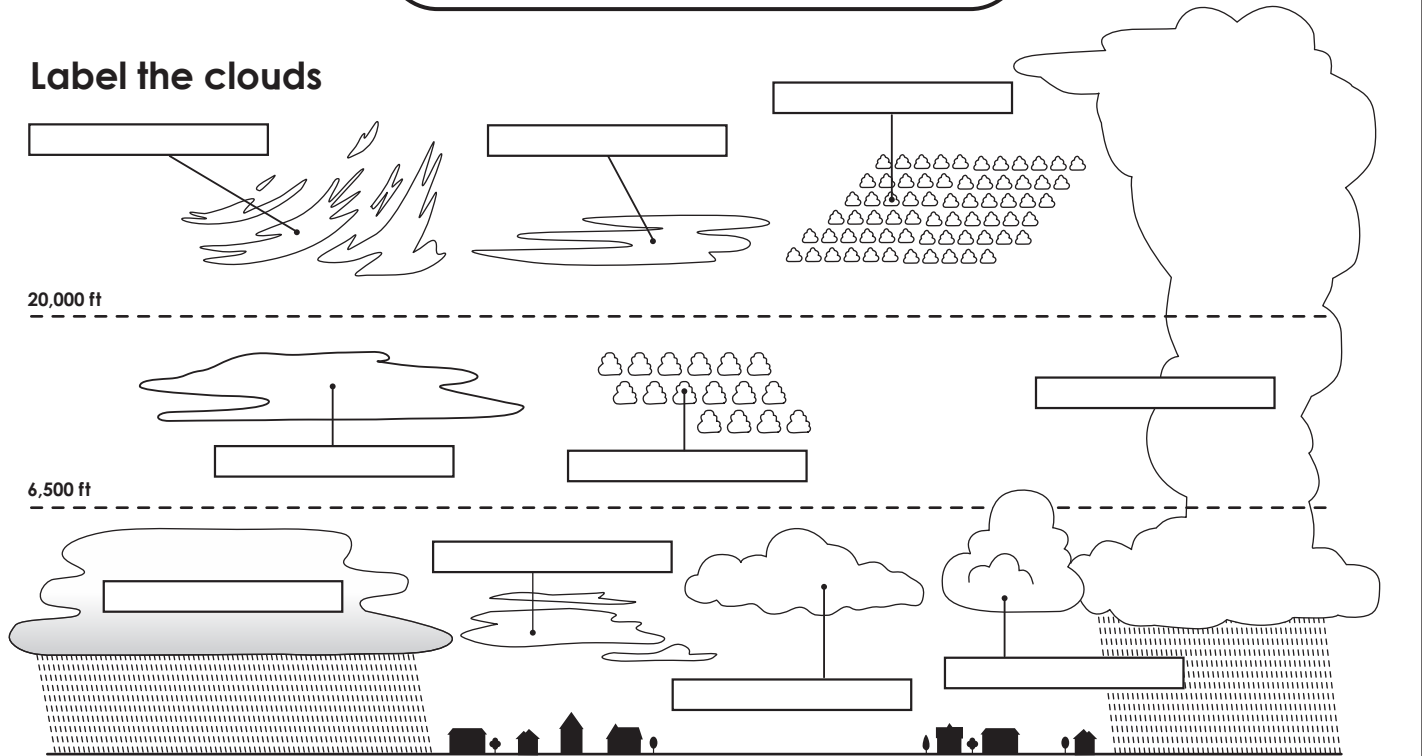
Cumulonimbus clouds can take up several miles across the sky and can reach elevations of 39,000 feet or higher because of very strong updrafts in the atmosphere. Low level cumulonimbus clouds are made up of water droplets, but at higher elevations, they consist of ice crystals. Cumulonimbus clouds are 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.

Name: _____

Types of Clouds

Label the clouds



1. Name the three types of low-level clouds.

2. Why are cirrocumulus clouds 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?

5. Are stratus clouds or cirrus clouds found closer to the ground?

6. What are cirrus, cirrostratus, and cirrocumulus clouds made of?

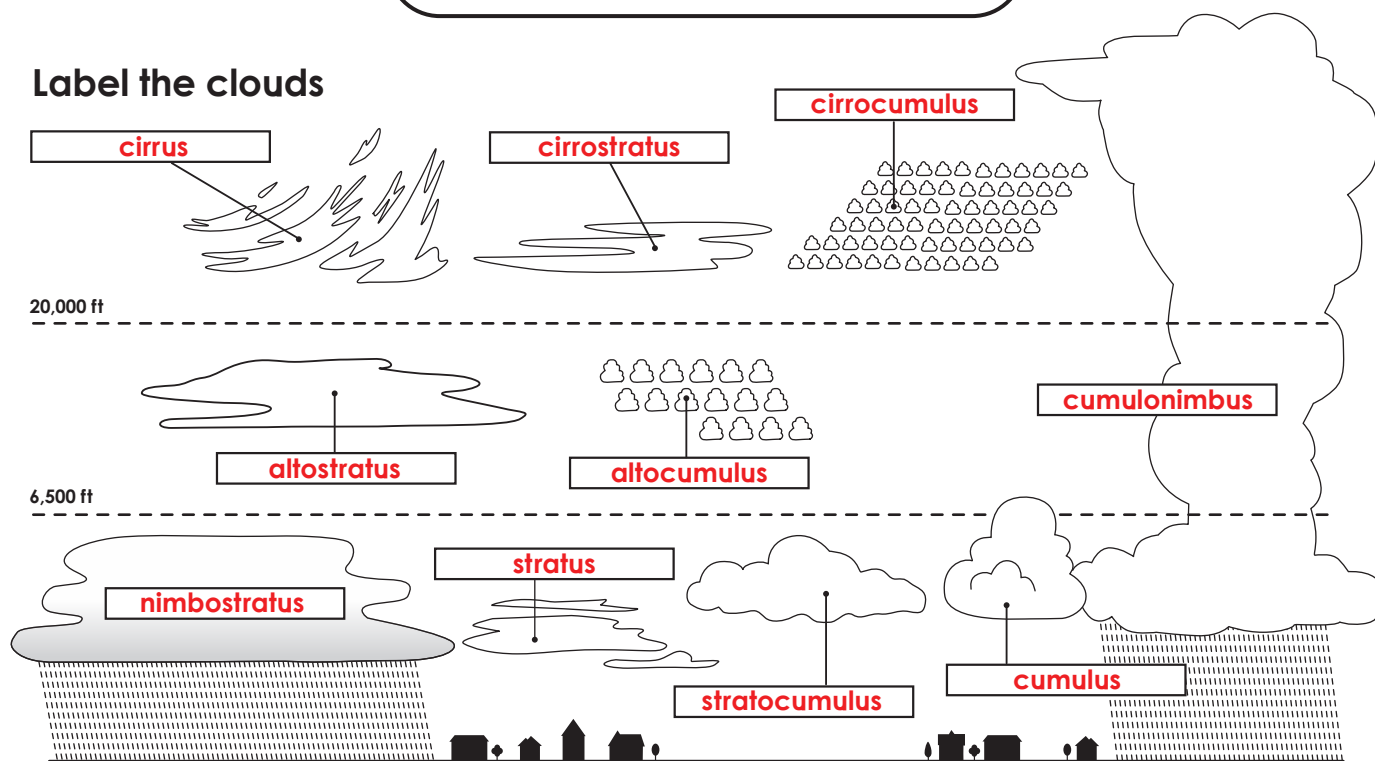
7. What type of cloud is the most common?

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

ANSWER KEY

Types of Clouds

Label the clouds



1. Name the three types of low-level clouds.

nimbostratus, stratus, and stratocumulus

2. Why are cirrocumulus clouds 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

5. Are stratus clouds or cirrus clouds found closer to the ground?

stratus

6. What are cirrus, cirrostratus, 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.