

ELEMENTARY CLOUD IDENTIFICATION

Field Observation Guide

Cirrus

Draw Wispy Strands Here

Thin, wispy clouds made of ice crystals. They look like white feathers or "mare's tails."

ALTITUDE: HIGH (ABOVE 20,000 FT)

Cumulus

Draw Fluffy Puffs Here

Fluffy, white clouds that look like cotton balls with flat bases. Usually means fair weather.

ALTITUDE: LOW (BELOW 6,500 FT)

Stratus

Draw Flat Layers Here

Uniform grayish clouds that often cover the entire sky like a heavy blanket.

ALTITUDE: LOW (BELOW 6,500 FT)

Cumulonimbus

Draw Tall Tower Here

Tall, dark, and dense towers. These are thunderstorm clouds that bring heavy rain.

ALTITUDE: VERTICAL (SPANS ALL LEVELS)

Alto cumulus

Draw Small Patches Here

Mid-level clouds that look like small gray or white round patches or "sheep's wool."

ALTITUDE: MID (6,500 - 20,000 FT)

Observation Notes

DATE / TIME / LOCATION