

Clouds Forecast the Weather by Sheila Stone Dill

When I look up at the big Nevada sky, I would rather see clouds than blue skies. Blue skies are beautiful and usually mean a nice sunshiny day without much wind. With blue skies, I can use my skateboard, or go to the playground, or play soccer. Maybe I can even wear shorts and sandals.

But on a cloudy day, the sky is like a story I can read to myself. White fluffy clouds may become polar bears, or snowpersons, or angels, depending on the weather or my mood. Other formations may make the sky look like it's covered with feathers or lacy curtains. Clouds make my imagination come alive.

Most clouds that float across the sky are filled with tiny droplets of water, called vapor, and tiny ice crystals. Weather forecasters watch the clouds to predict the day's weather.

Clouds form at different heights in the air—low, middle, and high. The highest clouds of all are cirrus and there are about ten different types. They are always composed of ice crystals and often produce solar or lunar haloes around the sun or moon. When you see cirrus clouds, it probably means a rainstorm or snow is on the way.

Middle level clouds are altostratus and altocumulus. Altostratus clouds are gray and can be thick enough to mask the sun. Altocumulus clouds are full of water droplets but rarely cause rain that reaches the ground.

Among the lowest clouds we can see are the cumulus. Of these, billowing cumulus clouds that look like marshmallows or vanilla ice cream or mashed potatoes are commonly seen. Or sometimes they look like whatever you decide them to be. One time I saw a cloud that looked like the Sleeping Beauty castle at Disneyland.

Stratus clouds also hang lower in the sky. Stratus clouds are full of water droplets and are common along the coastlines and bay areas. Fog is actually a type of stratus cloud reaching to or forming on the ground.

But my favorite cloud of all is the thunderhead. It is a giant nimbus-type cloud that extends for miles into the atmosphere. Thunderheads announce that a thunderstorm is brewing. They also lead to lightning strikes, hail, or tornadoes. They can be spectacular.

Constructed Response
"Clouds Forecast the Weather"
CR Question, Rubric and Samples from Torrey Palmer, 6th grade teacher

Constructed Response Question: Based on the passage describe three categories of clouds. Then, using details from the passage, name and describe your favorite type of cloud and why you like it.

3	The response completely answers both parts of the question. It describes three categories of clouds and describes the reader's favorite cloud, using details from the passage.
2	The response shows some understanding of the passage. It may describe the three categories of clouds using minimal detail or it may not use details from the passage to describe the reader's favorite cloud.
1	The response demonstrates limited understanding of the passage. It may list the clouds or briefly describe one of the clouds.
0	The response is off topic, does not include details, or includes false information.

Sixth Grade Student Samples:

Sample #1:

Thunderhead: This cloud is very big and nimbus shaped, it also warns you when a thunderstorm is coming. This cloud is my cloud because it makes the days seem shorter and darker. It also rains & and bright lights come from the sky.

Sample #2:

There are many different types of clouds to describe. Altocumulus clouds are middle level clouds that are full of water droplets but rarely cause rain that reaches the ground. The lowest clouds are called cumulus clouds. These clouds can look like marshmallows or vanilla ice cream or mashed potatoes. Stratus clouds also hang lower in the sky. These clouds are full of water droplets and are commonly on bay or beach areas. These are the different types of clouds in the blue sky.

I have one favorite cloud of all the shapes and sizes. My favorite cloud is the Cumulus cloud. These clouds can look like marshmallows, Vanilla ice cream or mashed potatoes. They are the lowest clouds and low level clouds. I like the Cumulus clouds because it hangs low over pretty and petite little towns and cities. It reminds me of Hot Chocolate with giant fluffy marshmallows. It doesn't matter what size or shape or even brightness It is how beautiful or kind and gentle looking it is. That is why the Cumulus cloud is the best for me. Low hanging cloud so petite and fluffy. This is my favorite cloud and out of all the shapes and sizes this is my favorite.

Sample #3:

Cirrus, altocumulus, and stratus clouds are three different types of clouds. The highest clouds are cirrus clouds and there are about 10 different kinds. They are always made of ice crystals and often create solar or lunar haloes around our sun or moon. The middle level clouds are altocumulus clouds. Altocumulus clouds are filled with droplets that rarely rain that will touch the ground. Stratus clouds are the lowest clouds of all. They are full of water and commonly are found around Bay areas. But all of these clouds are different in shape, size and what they're made of. As you can see there are many different kinds of clouds.

Out of all the clouds I think my favorite cloud is the thunderhead. A thunderhead is a giant nimbus cloud that stretches for miles into the atmosphere. Thunderheads tell that a storm is coming. They also head to lighting, hail, and tornadoes. Now you know all about clouds and my personal favorite cloud the thunderhead.

Sample #4:

Stratous: This cloud hangs lowest in the sky. And is like fog and is full of water.

Thunderhead: This cloud is a big nimbus type shape, it tells you when a thunderstorm is brewing. Cumulus: The cumulus cloud is a marshmallow shape, it is one of those clouds you'd see on a perfect day.

Sample #5:

Thunderhead: This cloud is very big and nimbus shaped, it also warns you when a thunderstorm is coming. This cloud is my cloud because it makes the days seem shorter and darker. It also rains & and bright lights come from the sky.

Sample #6:

Clouds are the most wonderful things on earth. There are So many Of them I can only name three. Highest in the sky is the cirrus cloud. Cirrus Clouds are made of ice crystals. When you see a cirrus cloud it means there will be a snow storm. Second are the Altostratus clouds. There big gray clouds that normaly cover up the Sun. Last but not least is the Stratus clouds. There over filled with water and are normaly found in beache's and coastlines. My Favorite cloud is The cirrus because they make snow strom's and I love snow! There are So many clouds I don't know what we could do without them.

Sample #7:

There are a lot of different types of clouds. Clouds are very interesting. The thunderhead cloud stretches miles into the atmosphere. Fog is really just the stratus cloud. The cumulus cloud can change into any shape. This is three different types of clouds.

This is my favorite type of cloud and details about it. One reason I like the stratus cloud is that it is the lowest type of cloud and I am one of the shortest kids in my class. Stratus clouds are usually along costal lines. Fog is just a type of stratus cloud that is forming on the ground. Stratus clouds are mostly made up of water. My favorite type of cloud is the stratus cloud.

Sample #8:

My favorite cloud is the tunderhead cuses it's tells you when a storm is coming.

1. Thunderhead helps you by a warning.
2. Altostratus coulds can mask the sun easaly.
3. cirrus cloud means Rain storm or snow is coming.

The thunderhead is my favrite because it warni everybody and hleping us By warning us. I don't like thunderstorms cause thunderstorm causes litening strikes, hail or torndoes.

Sample #9:

Here are the different categories of clouds. Middle level clouds are called altostratus and altocumulus clouds. Altostratus clouds are thick and gray and could mask the sun. Altocumulus clouds are full of water and they can't reach the ground. The lowest clouds are cumulus and stratus clouds. Cumulus clouds are the clouds that look like marshmallows and vanilla ice cream. Stratus clouds are filled with water and you will usually see them near an ocean. The highest clouds are cirrus clouds and they usually bring rainstorms or snowstorms. And these are the different clouds

Sample #10:

Categories: Blue skies are beautiful and usually nice and sunny. There are three different categories of clouds. There are many different types of clouds actually there are ten. Clouds can form at several different heights like high, middle and low. Clouds are also filled with ice crystals. These ice crystals hold solar and lunar haloes. There are things inside clouds, many different types of clouds and areas where clouds can be.

My favorite cloud: My favorite type of cloud is the Thunder Head. The Thunder Head looks like a tall cinder block or even a Nimbus type cloud. If you ever see a Thunder Head then you'll know there's storm on its way that's my favorite part. The scariest part is when it leads to hail storms, tornadoes or even lightning strikes. Also a Thunder Head is like a cloud that extends for miles in the atmosphere. This is why my favorite cloud is the Thunder Head.

Sample #11:

When you look up at the sky, what do you see? Blue skies clouds? Each type of option tells a story of what kind of weather is probably going to come. If you see blue skies it most likely means good weather, if that's true then you can play soccer, go biking, hiking, you name it! If you see mid sky clouds that are grey (altostratus cloud) then you are in for an overcast day but usually no rain. If you look outside and can't even see your hand in front of your face then you are seeing fog.

Fog is my favorite type of cloud! I like it because its so much more complicated and different then the others. And differences is what makes things so interesting! Also when I was moving from Las Vegas to Reno it was either a horror movie coming to life or fog. In Las Vegas it is never foggy, so it was like mother nature saying, "No, don't leave!"

So the next time you are lying down looking at the clouds you can picture a little more then what the cloud is shaped like.

Sample #12:

This is my favorite cloud and why. My favorite cloud is called the cumulus cloud. The cumulus cloud are a low hanging cloud in the sky. Most cumulus clouds often look like vanilla ice cream, mashed potatoes, and marshmallows. Cumulus is one of the fluffiest clouds. Sometimes cirrus clouds make your imagination come alive. Most of all, I like cumulus clouds because they're poofy, and they look like marshmallows. That is why the cumulus cloud is my favorite type.