

CLOUDS TYPES

Priprema za TOEFL

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Cloud Types and Atmospheric Layers

Most weather phenomena that affect our daily lives take place in the lowest layer of Earth's atmosphere, known as the troposphere. This layer extends from the Earth's surface up to about twelve kilometers and contains almost all atmospheric water vapor. Because clouds are formed from this moisture, nearly all cloud types develop within this region.

Meteorologists classify clouds according to their altitude and shape. Based on altitude, clouds can be divided into three main groups: high-level, mid-level, and low-level clouds. High-level clouds usually form above six thousand meters and are composed mostly of ice crystals. The most common example is the cirrus cloud. Cirrus clouds are thin, white, and feathery in appearance. Although they rarely produce precipitation, they often indicate that a change in weather is approaching, such as the arrival of a warm front.

Mid-level clouds, such as altostratus and altocumulus, form between two and six kilometers above the surface. These clouds are made of both water droplets and ice crystals. Altostratus clouds typically appear as a gray or bluish-gray layer covering the sky and may signal widespread rain or snow. Altocumulus clouds, on the other hand, appear as rounded patches or rolls and can be a sign of atmospheric instability.

Low-level clouds develop below two kilometers and consist mainly of water droplets. Stratus clouds form a uniform gray blanket and often bring light rain or drizzle. Cumulus clouds, which have a puffy, cotton-like shape, usually indicate fair weather. However, when vertical air movement becomes strong, these clouds can grow into towering cumulonimbus clouds.