

# Rampion Weather Watch – Clouds



## Clouds

To measure clouds, we need to know how much cloud there is in the sky, what height these clouds are at and what type of clouds these are.

## Types

Clouds are categorised according to height and shape. The different categories of clouds are then given names. Most of our names for clouds come from Latin:

**Stratus** = flat/layered and smooth

**Cumulus** = heaped up/puffy, like cauliflower

**Cirrus** = high up/wispy, a tuft

**Nimbus** = rain-bearing cloud



Cloud type names can be combined to describe typical examples of clouds. Cirrostratus, for example, looks like a layer of wispy, thin cloud that makes the sky look hazy.



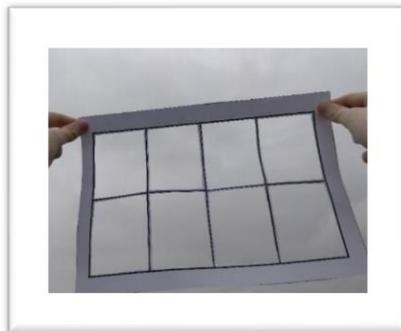
You could try to make different types of clouds using cotton wool and sticking them to paper. Is it easy to make a cumulus?

## Height

Clouds can also be separated into three broad categories according to the height of their base above the ground: **high** clouds, **medium** clouds and **low** clouds. Make a note on your [weather watch chart](#) of how low/high the clouds are.

Cloud cover is measured in units called oktas. Each okta represents one eighth of the sky covered by cloud.

You can make a simple device to help you estimate the cloud cover. You need to divide the sky into eight boxes, which is easy to do if you cut out the grid below. You then put the cut-out okta grid close to your face so the sky you see is divided into 8 parts. The number of boxes filled with cloud is how many oktas of cloud there are. Print the grid on card or thicker paper if possible. If all eight boxes are completely full then the sky is overcast, if all eight boxes are empty then the sky is clear. Cloud amounts are generally rounded up to the next okta.



You only need to cut out the 'insides' of the boxes so the sheet of paper ends up looking like 8 little windows.

Record the results on your [Weather Watch Chart](#).
