

Cumulus clouds

Cirrus clouds

CHAPTER 2

Water in the Air

SOMETIMES WE CAN SEE WATER IN THE AIR – AND SOMETIMES WE CAN'T.

There is a lot of water in the air. Think of clouds, for example. A cloud is a group of very small drops of water. The drops are so small that they float³ in the air.

There are different kinds of clouds. Cumulus clouds are big and fluffy.⁴ Cirrus clouds are very thin and long. When cirrus clouds are in the sky, it means the weather is going to change soon.

Cumulus and cirrus clouds are white. They are white because the drops of water are not very close together. Gray clouds have more water, and the drops are very close together. These are rain clouds, or nimbostratus clouds.

³float: stay in the air or on the top of water

⁴fluffy: soft and light

Fog is also a cloud. But it is not up in the sky. It is down on the ground where we walk.

Fog can be beautiful, but it can also be scary.⁵ Fog stops you from seeing or hearing things well, so most people don't feel safe when it's very foggy. That's why there is often a lot of fog in scary movies.



Fog in London

London is famous for its fog. In old movies with detectives like Sherlock Holmes, the streets of London are often full of fog. But that wasn't really fog. It was smog!

When fog mixes with smoke in the air, it makes smog. Smog isn't healthy for people to breathe.⁶ Today, there isn't as much smog in London as there was in the days of Sherlock Holmes. The air is much cleaner, but it's still often foggy in London.

⁵scary: makes you feel afraid or unsafe

⁶breathe: take air into your body and let it out again



APPLY

Look outside. Are there any clouds in the sky? What do they look like? What kind of clouds are they?