



Alto cumulus

Altitude

mid level

Characteristics

- Lots of puffy clumps close together in a large group
- Can look like many rows of clouds
- You can see blue sky between clouds

Color and Opacity

- Usually white
- Opaque (can't see through the cloud at all)





Altostratus am 18.10.2016.jpg by GerritR / CC BY-SA 4.0

Altostratus

Altitude

mid level

Characteristics

- Layered, with flat bottoms
- No clear form or shape
- Totally or partially covers the sky

Color and Opacity

- Bluish or gray
- Translucent (can see a bit of sunlight through the cloud)
- Unlike cirrostratus, does not have a halo





Cirrocumulus

Altitude

high level

Characteristics

- Slightly wispy around the edges
- Small, individual clouds grouped closely together
- Groups may look like rows of clouds
- Often looks like one textured cloud
- You can see blue sky between and around the clouds

Color and Opacity

- White
- Transparent (can see easily through the cloud) or translucent (can see some sunlight through the cloud)





Cirrostratus

Altitude

high level

Characteristics

- Very thin layer of cloud
- Shapeless, likely covers most of the sky
- Blue sky is usually visible through the cloud

Color and Opacity

- White
- Transparent (can see easily through the cloud)
- A halo (circle of rainbow or light) is often visible





Cirrus

Altitude

high level

Characteristics

- Very wispy
- Sometimes called *mares' tails*, these look like curls of hair
- You can see lots of blue sky between the clouds
- Often mean the weather is going to change soon

Color and Opacity

- White
- Transparent (can see the sky or sun easily through the cloud) or translucent (can see some sunlight through the cloud)





Contrails

Altitude

high level

Characteristics

- Trail of condensation created by the exhaust of an airplane
- Can be a long, short, or double line
- May be clear or broken
- Mostly seen with blue sky or cirrus-type clouds

Color and Opacity

- White
- Opaque (can't see through the contrail at all)





Cumulonimbus

Altitude

low level

Characteristics

- Very large clouds stacked up in tall piles
- Can look like thick whipped cream
- Often means extreme weather, like thunderstorms, hail, or tornadoes

Color and Opacity

- White on top, but often gray, black, or even green underneath
- Opaque (can't see through the cloud at all)





Cumulus

Altitude

low level

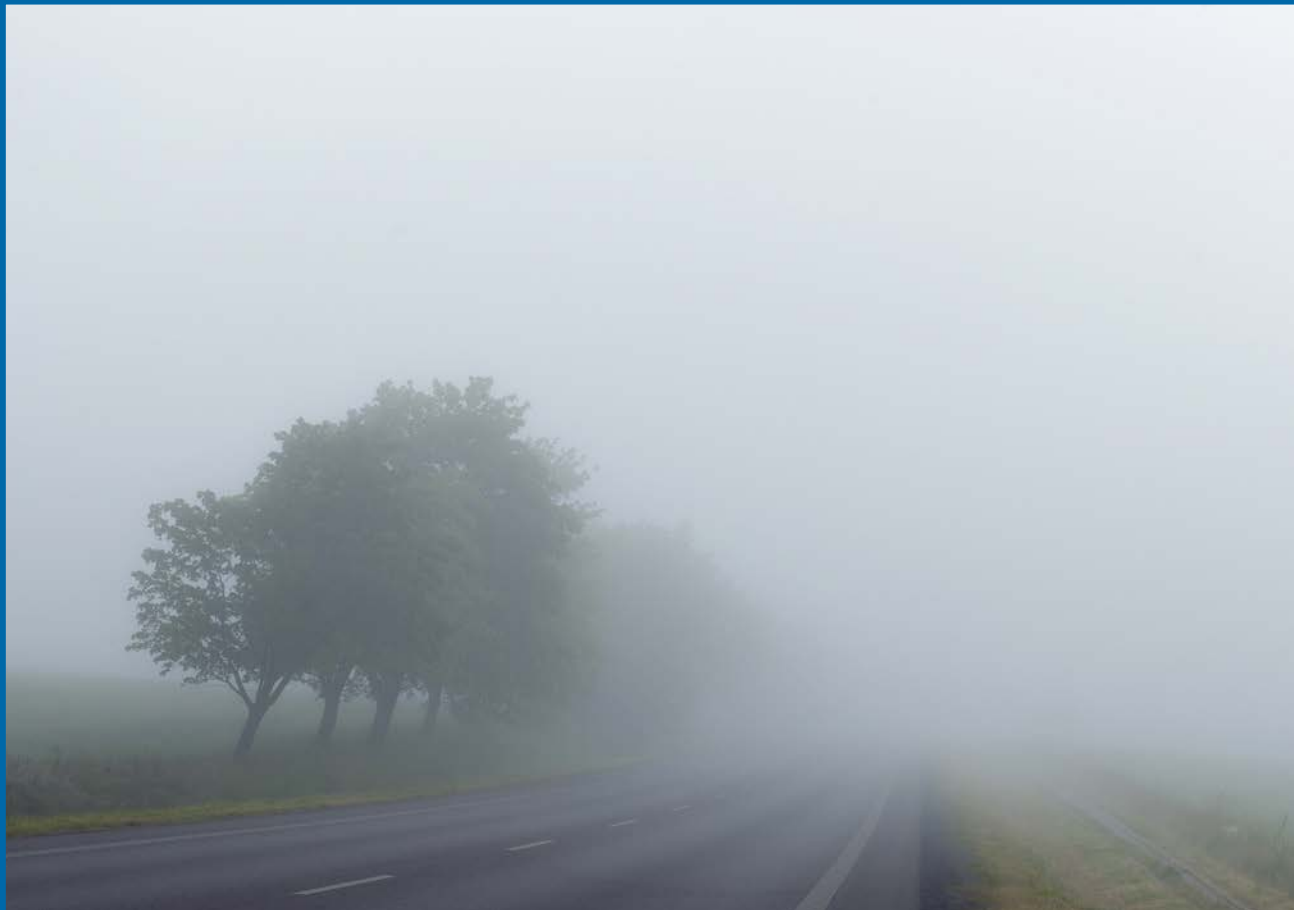
Characteristics

- Puffy, sometimes flat bottoms
- Usually spread out
- Great for imagining funny shapes (like animals and faces)
- Sunny weather and lots of blue sky

Color and Opacity

- White
- Opaque (can't see through the cloud at all)





Fog

Altitude

very low level

Characteristics

- Not technically a cloud, but seems like one
- Soft layer close to ground
- Makes the air feel damp and cool

Color and Opacity

- White or pale gray
- Usually translucent (can see a bit of sunlight shine through), but can be transparent or even opaque





Nimbostratus

Altitude

low level

Characteristics

- Layers may be visible, but no clear form or shape
- Can seem to look heavy
- Totally or partially covers the sky
- Usually means precipitation (rain or snow)

Color and Opacity

- Gray
- Opaque (can't see through the cloud at all)





Stratocumulus

Altitude

low level

Characteristics

- Puffy tops with flat bottoms
- Individual clouds that look like they are all one layer (at the same height and close to each other)
- You can see some blue sky between clouds

Color and Opacity

- White
- Sometimes gray on bottom
- Opaque (can't see through the cloud at all)





Stratus

Altitude

Low level

Characteristics

- Shapeless
- Layered clouds covering most of the sky
- Often brings rain or snow

Color and Opacity

- Gray to dark gray
- Opaque (can't see through the cloud at all)

