



Thunder Storms

For Preview Only



The Start of a Storm



Thunderstorms come from a violent mixing of air, water vapour, water droplets, and ice crystals inside cumulonimbus clouds, the biggest clouds on Earth.

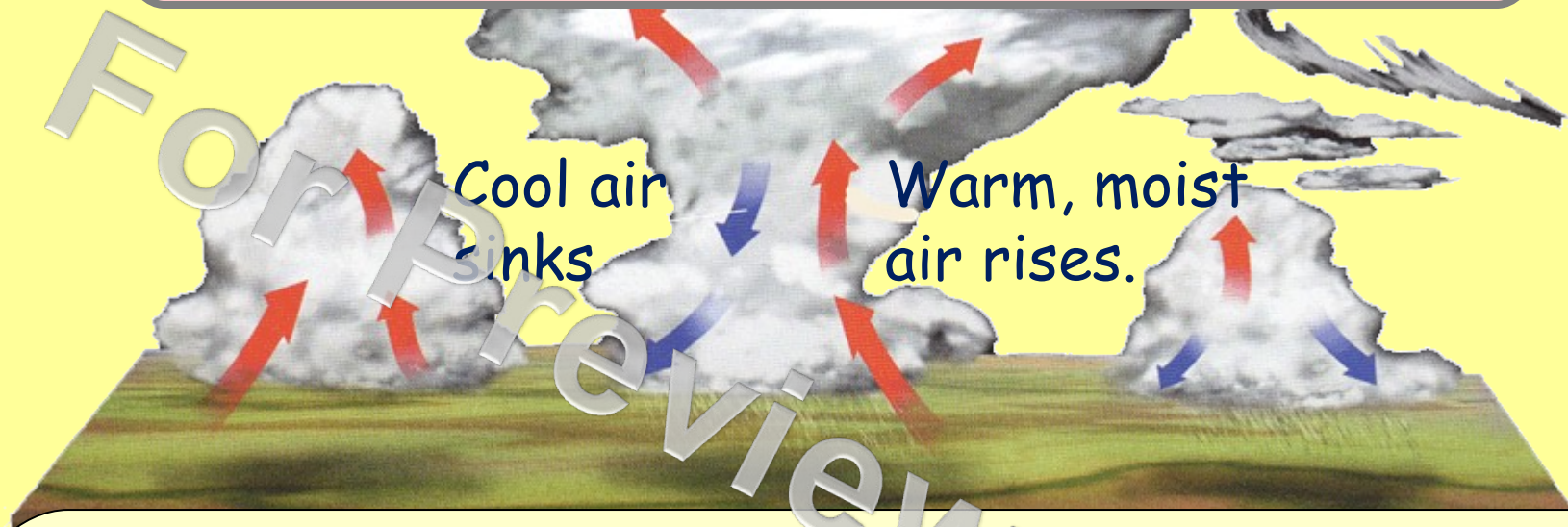
The Start of a Storm



A single cumulonimbus cloud releases as much energy as the explosion of a nuclear bomb.

As well as producing thunder and lightning, storm clouds bring heavy rain or snow, and strong winds.

Growing Storm Cloud



Storm clouds grow as warm, moist air rises and cools. This makes the water vapour turn into droplets. Condensation releases heat, which makes the air rise further and the cloud grow taller. A storm cloud may keep growing until it reaches the top of the troposphere.

How Lightning Forms

Inside a cumulonimbus storm cloud, violent air currents cause ice crystals to crash into each other, generating static electricity. These charges build up until electricity starts leaping. At first the lightning jumps between different parts of the cloud, and then from the cloud to the ground.





Facts About Thunderstorms

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You can tell how far a storm is by counting the time between seeing the lightning and hearing the thunder. For every 5 seconds, the storm is a mile away.

Lightning kills about 100 people every year.

When lightning strikes, it heats the ground to about 1,800°C.

Thunderstorms produce heavy rain from 30 minutes to an hour.

At any time, there are 2,000 thunder storms in progress.

During a storm, your chances of being struck by lightning are estimated to be 1 in 600,000.

During a storm, if your hair stands on end, then that spot is about to get struck by lightning.