



For Preview
Only

What Are Clouds?



Fluffy clouds are just like fog - grey and damp inside. Despite the endless variety of shapes, all clouds are made of the same ingredients, water droplets and ice crystals. These are so tiny that they float in the air like dust to start falling as rain or snow.





Cloud droplets are smaller than specks of flour; it would take four of them to cover the width of a human hair.



It is only when the water droplets or ice crystals crash together that they grow large enough to start falling as rain or snow.

How do Clouds Form?

Clouds form when warm air rises and then cools down until it reaches the dewpoint temperature. This is the temperature at which the invisible water vapour in air starts condensing into liquid droplets.



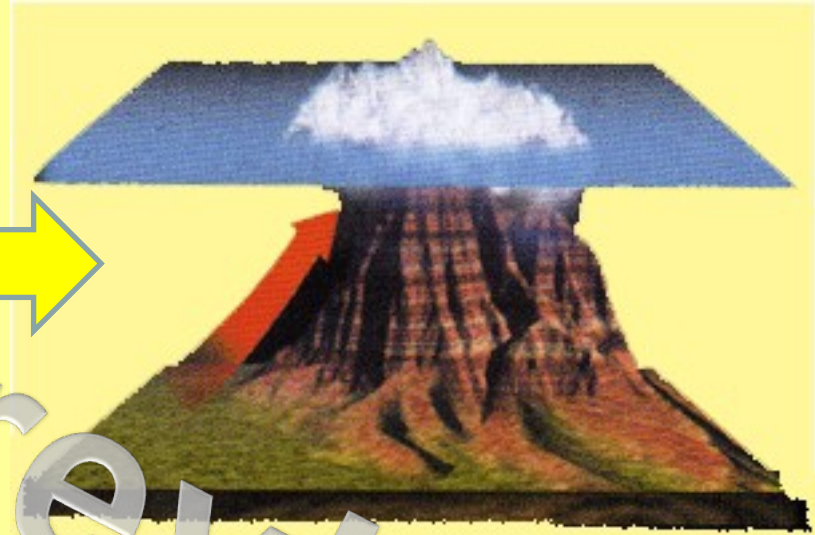
How do Clouds Form?



When the air absorbs heat from the ground it expands and gets lighter which makes it rise. It then cools and its water vapour condenses into droplets.



When moving air encounters hills or mountains it is forced upwards. The rising air cools and clouds form at the dewpoint.



When a mass of cold air and a mass of warm air collide, the warm air is forced to rise. Clouds form as the warm air cools.