

Dichotomous Key Cloud Types

1. Does the sky contain clouds?
If yes... go to #2
If no... It is a clear day.
2. Are the clouds low and look like puffy like cotton balls? They mean fair weather.
If yes... Cumulus Clouds
If no... go to #3
3. Are the clouds low and light or gray that cover most of the sky like a blanket? They may bring poor weather. It can also be called fog and found low to the ground.
If yes... Stratus Clouds
If no... go to #4
4. Are the clouds low, irregular masses, rolling and/or puffy?
If yes... Stratocumulus Clouds
If no... go to #5
5. Are the clouds low and dark gray. It may be raining. It can hide the sun.
If yes... Nimbostratus Clouds
If no... Go to #6
6. Are the clouds low, large clouds that are tall like a tower? It may be raining. It may be called a thunderstorm cloud.
If yes... Cumulonimbus Clouds
If no... Go to #7
7. Are the clouds middle white or grayish clouds that are puffy like cotton balls with space in between them?
If yes... Altocumulus Clouds
If no... Go to #8
8. Are the clouds middle clouds that are light gray? These clouds may cover the sky uniformly.
If yes... Altostratus Clouds
If no... Go to #9
9. Are the clouds high and feathery?
If yes... Cirrus Clouds
If no... Go to #10
10. Are the clouds high, thin, light gray or white? You may be able to see the sun or the moon through them.
If yes... Cirrostratus Clouds
If no... go to #11
11. Are the clouds high, puffy with spaces between the clouds like waves?
If yes... Cirrocumulus Clouds

*Information taken from the GLOBE Cloud Chart and from the cloud chart at <http://www.pnr-rpn.ec.gc.ca/air/cloudchart/aj00s15.en.html>