

Lesson 1.1 – Look Up & See

Starting to pay attention to the sky

Objective: Through the use of observation, creativity, and art, students will learn to start to pay attention to the sky. It is a part of nature that too many people miss. They'll learn that you can think of clouds in terms of three basic groups. They will consider how the sky affects our moods and how clouds change much like feelings do. A mindfulness strategy will help students to be aware of observation and begin to look inward to build emotional resilience.

Time: 45-90 minutes depending on activity options selected and teacher preference.

Materials:

1. Paper
2. Tablet or phone
3. Pencil/paper
4. Cloud Poster
5. Cloud Field Guide
6. My First Clouds worksheet <We still need to create this, it could be daily and/or 10 main cloud types with rainbow and crepuscular rays>
7. Five Senses Mindfulness cards
8. Popsicle/lollipop sticks (PRIMARY)
9. Glue (PRIMARY)

Lesson Prep:

1. Hang Cloud Poster <Not yet available, but you can use the temporary one provided>
2. Print mindfulness cards (laminates if possible)
3. Ready the 'Welcome to The World of Clouds' video
4. If there's no easy access to a window or the outside, photograph the sky prior to the lesson and ready photographs to show students.

Resources:

1. ['Welcome to the World of Clouds' video](#).
2. My First Clouds worksheet: <Not yet available>
3. Cloud Poster: <Not yet available, but you can use this [temporary Cloud Poster](#)>
4. (Optional) Skyline Webcam: skylinewebcams.com
5. (Optional) JMW Turner Skies Sketchbook: tate.org.uk/art/sketchbook/skies-sketchbook-65800/5

Lesson Intro: How aware are you of the sky?

Find out about the sky awareness of the students before they have been asked to start paying attention to the sky.

- If there is a window in the classroom, ask the pupils to look at the teacher (not out of the window) and describe as much as they can about what is visible in the sky right now.
- If there's no easy access to a window, ask the students to describe what was in the sky the last time they were outside – perhaps in their last breaktime or on their way into school that morning. Confirm whether they got it right by the teacher showing some photos they took of the sky during that period.

- Alternatively: Without reference to the sky, take a look together at some locations around the world using the Skyline Webcam website (skylinewebcams.com) and then ask the students afterwards if they can recall what was happening in the sky.

PRIMARY: We are looking for a basic description: cloudy, blue, dark, sunny, raining, snowing. What about the names of the clouds? Do you know any names? There are many names of clouds, which we will learn about. One name is Cumulus.

SECONDARY: We are challenging them to give a more detailed description of what they remember: if they say 'cloudy' then ask them to describe what the clouds looked like; clumpy clouds or wispy ones? layers of cloud that cover the whole sky or with patches of blue? if no clouds, was the sky the same colour up above as on the horizon?

On different days, the clouds can look very different.

There are many different types of cloud that we will be learning to spot, but they mostly fall into three basic types: clumpy ones, wispy ones and layered ones:



PRIMARY: Clumpy is a Cumulus, wispy is a Cirrus, and layered clouds are Stratus.
SECONDARY: These clouds are called Cumulus, Cirrus and Stratus.

Ask the students to:

- Describe the appearance of each cloud
- Describe how each cloud makes them feel – what mood it elicits.
Cumulus: bouncy, cheery, happy
Cirrus: adventurous, free, creative, mysterious, playful, scary, nervous
Stratus: sad, glum, boring, bored
- Match each photo with a name:
PRIMARY: Cumulus is clumpy, Cirrus is wispy, Status is layered
SECONDARY: Cumulus is the Latin word for a 'stack' or a 'heap' (where we get the term accumulation). Cirrus is the Latin for a 'lock' or 'curl' of hair. Stratus the (Latin for a 'layer'.

Activity Options:

Option 1 (No preparation): Go outside for some cloudspotting

PRIMARY & SECONDARY: This depends, of course, on what the weather is like. Makes most sense if it isn't pouring with rain and if there is something in the sky other than just plain blue or

flat overcast. The teacher should have an alternative practical activity for the students (see below) if the weather isn't right for these reasons. If the weather is right:

- Students go outside in pairs or small groups.
- Can they identify any of the three general types of cloud in the sky?
- Can they take a photo of a cloud with their phones?
- Ask them to look at the clouds they see as if for the first time. Pretend that they are describing what they see to an alien who has never seen a cloud before. Can they write a description of exactly what the cloud looks like? Can they draw a diagram?
- How does the cloud change over time? Is it moving across the sky? They might have to slow right down to notice any change.
- Can they find a cloud that looks like something?

Back in the classroom, students share their observations and work

Additional / Alternative Ideas

Watch: Welcome to The World of Clouds video

- Watch the video. Solicit concepts that may be new to them.
- Introduce the details of this cloud curriculum. How often will students have a lesson? Will you create a weather station? Mindfulness will be included in each lesson.
- Students will learn different cloud types, and how people can work and play with the clouds as hobbies or careers.
- List and describe jobs working with clouds (STEAM). A weather person is called Meteorologist, engineers who build wind turbines, an artist who paints landscapes that include sky elements. Solicit more careers/jobs.

Introduce the Cloud Poster <Yet to be finished>

- Look at how at the top of the poster the ten main cloud types are divided into low, mid-level and high clouds. (These will all be discussed in Lesson 1.2.) Find the Cumulus, Cirrus and Stratus clouds on the poster and see what levels they are at.

Option 2 (Some preparation): Introduce resources to help record spottings

PRIMARY: Teacher provides students with the My First Clouds worksheet to track their observations as they study clouds.

SECONDARY: Introduce students to The Cloud Appreciation Society website, membership, and Cloud-A-Day app. Classes could potentially have a classroom membership (maybe?).

Encourage students to keep their eyes to the sky, take cloud pictures, and show classmates during the next lesson, on a daily basis, or to have a cloud spotting contest with the school building or sign.

Option 3: (More preparation)

PRIMARY: Popsicle/Lollipop Stick Cloud Sky Viewers – Students each make their own Cloud Sky Viewer using popsicle/lollipop sticks. These will take a day to dry, so plan to use them the next time you go outside, or to incorporate into a weather station.

SECONDARY: Organize sky drawing/painting sessions, open-air if possible. Use classic sky artists as reference and inspiration. Two artists to consider are J.M.W. Turner (you could look at his [Skies Sketchbook](#)) and John Constable (look for his series of Cloud Studies from the 1820s). This activity could also be done at a local gallery, gaining inspiration from the clouds in the collection.

Mindfulness

PRIMARY: Have students use the My First Clouds worksheet <not yet available> to recall what they observed while outside. This could be the wind, sun, colors of nature, sounds.

SECONDARY: Students share outloud what they observed about the clouds, sky, and surroundings with all their senses. What did they see, hear, smell, touch, taste?

PRIMARY & SECONDARY: Direct students through the Five Senses Mindfulness strategy to learn that when they are feeling anxious, angry, sad, or their mind is scattered and not focused, they can use this strategy to calm their bodies and minds down. Use the Five Senses cards, or write them on the board.

Observe:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can hear (near or far)
- 3 things you can touch
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can imagine to taste

Assessment: Students recall what type of cloud they saw in the sky during their observation. Recall how many layers there are for cloud formations. There are three. Recall one name of a type of the 10 main cloud types. Review what types of clouds they observed outside, what other things they observed, and something that they maybe never noticed about clouds before. Remind students they can look up at anytime and see the different cloud formations and know that they will soon know the names of them.

Conclusion: By paying attention to the sky, numerous things can be observed. By knowing the names of some cloud formations, students may want to look to the sky more frequently as a source for inspiration and creativity. Encourage students to keep their eyes to the sky and see what they can observe. Are the clouds clumpy, wispy, or layered? Invite students to use their cloud field guide <yet to be created> to draw what they see, or for students with phones, take pictures to bring back to class and share their spottings.