



Survival Kit for the Imagination

Lesson 1.1

Look Up & See

Starting to Pay Attention to the Sky



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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. Students will be introduced to mindfulness and a strategy to help students be aware of observing the world around them and begin to look inward to build emotional resilience.

Lesson plans, links, and resources available at cloudappreciationsociety.org

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

Materials

- Paper, pencil, glue
- Tablet or phone
- Popsicle sticks
- Cloudspotting Chart Poster (kit or PDF)
- Cloud Selector ID wheel (kit only)
- My First Clouds Observations chart
- 5 Senses Mindfulness chart and cards printout
- Mindful Breathing printout
- Look Up and See printout

Lesson Prep

- Hang the Cloudspotting Chart Poster
- Print/Display 5 Senses Mindfulness
- Ready the 'Welcome to The World of Clouds' video
- If there's no easy access to a window or the outside, take a few pictures of the clouds with your phone on your way to school.

Resources:

- 'Welcome to the World of Clouds' video. <https://vimeo.com/429624942>
- 'Welcome to the World of Mindfulness' video. <https://vimeo.com/670033396>
- Skyline Webcam <https://www.skylinewebcams.com/en/webcam.html>
- JMW Turner Skies Sketchbook <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/sketchbook/skies-sketchbook-65800/5>
- John Constable Cloud Series 1820s <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/constable-cloud-study-n06065>

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 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. Project images for students to see these three cloud types.

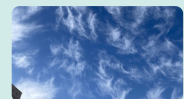
Ask the students to describe the appearance of each cloud & what mood it elicits.

- Cumulus: bouncy, cheery, jumbled, jittery
- Cirrus: adventurous, free, creative, mysterious, playful, scary, nervous
- Stratus: sad, glum, boring, bored, happy, calm, quiet, still.

Match each photo with a name:

Primary: Cumulus is clumpy, Cirrus is wispy, Stratus 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 is the Latin for a 'layer'.



Introduction to the Cloudspotter Chart

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. Note: You can choose to put up the poster folded so that just the top and bottom parts show and the more unusual clouds in the middle are hidden for the time being.



Welcome to the World of Clouds

Watch the video 'Welcome to the World of Clouds'. This gives a brief overview of how clouds form and what they are made of, and it introduces them to the idea of 'collecting clouds' and spotting different types.



Primary

Ask them some questions to see what they remembered about the video. E.g. What are clouds made of? (Lots of small bits of water – either droplets or ice crystals)

Secondary

Which of the three images look like low clouds and which look like high clouds. Can they remember anything from the video about the main difference between low and high clouds? (Cumulus and Stratus are low. Cirrus is high. Low clouds are made of droplets. High clouds are made of ice crystals.)

Activity Options

NO PREP



Cloudspotting outside or accessing a webcam



Take a walkabout outside, if the weather is right. If it's pouring with rain, a flat overcast sky, or there are no clouds in the sky, go to the main webcam page and chose different parts of the world they want to investigate to see different clouds. Make the webcam link available so students can explore the world of clouds in their free time.

- Students going outside can work in pairs or small groups.
- Have primary students use the 5 Senses Mindfulness cards and write down what they experience.
- Inform secondary students that there will be a 5 Senses Mindfulness exercise when they return and to observe outside with all their senses.
- Can they identify any of the three general types of cloud in the sky?
- Encourage secondary students to 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?

Discussions

- What did you observe?
- What did you notice that you may not have ever seen before?
- What does the environment looks like in one part of the world versus another.
- How are the clouds similar and different?
- For secondary students, expand the discussion of how, as humans, are similar and different in many ways. This may include the different ways humans live versus all the similarities, like working, playing, having a family, and life challenges.

After observations and discussions, introduce the details of this cloud curriculum.

- Decide how often students will have a lesson.
- Will you create a weather station?



SOME PREP



Introduce resources to help record cloudspottings



Primary

Teacher provides students with the My First Cloud Observations printout to track their spottings as they study clouds. Encourage students to look at this resource regularly as they see new clouds in the sky. Remind them that clouds can change fast and there can be many different clouds in the sky at once time.



Secondary

Introduce students to The Cloud Appreciation Society website, membership, and Cloud-A-Day app. Encourage students to be mindful, 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 by taking pictures of clouds that include the school building or school sign.



MORE PREP



Sky viewers, drawing and paint sessions



Primary

Popsicle Stick Cloud Viewers

1. Glue four sticks into a box shape with parallel sticks for level one.
2. Add two more levels.
3. Add two popsicle sticks for the handle.

Students each make their own Cloud Sky Viewer using popsicle 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 and John Constable. This activity could also be done at a local gallery, gaining inspiration from the clouds in the collection.



MORE PREP



Alternative Activity

List and describe jobs working with clouds in the Science-Technology-Engineering-Artistry-Math fields. Meteorologists study and forecast the weather, cloud physicists explore how clouds form and behave, engineers build wind turbines, artists paint landscapes that include sky elements. Solicit more careers/jobs.



Mindfulness

Look Up & Look Within

Mindfulness will be included in each lesson. Mindfulness is a way to pay attention to your body, emotions, and physical sensations without judging what is happening. It is the process of observing, just like cloudspotting. Ask if anyone has done mindfulness before. Discuss that when students are feeling anxious, angry, sad, or their mind is scattered and not focused, they can use their senses to calm their bodies and minds down.

Primary

Have students recall what they observed outside using the My First Clouds worksheet. This could be the wind, sun, colors of nature, and sounds. Provide students with the 5 Senses Mindfulness cards as they recall what they experienced. Then have students in their mind, repeat 5 Senses Mindfulness to identify what they experience in the classroom. Place a poster on the wall that students can do whenever they want or need to begin to self-regulate through their senses.

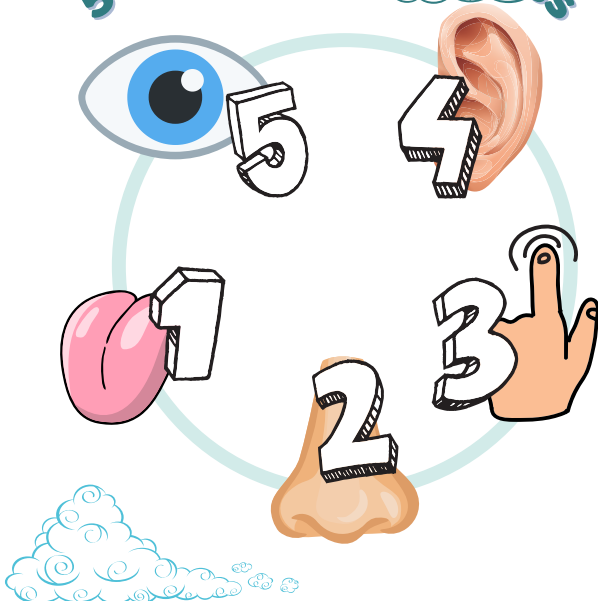
Watch Welcome to the World of Mindfulness Video



Secondary

Project the 5 Senses Mindfulness page and have students share outloud what they observed about the clouds, sky, and surroundings with all their senses. Collaboratively What did they see, hear, smell, touch, taste? Students can use this mindfulness strategy at any time to calm down anxiety or focus their thoughts.

5 Senses Mindfulness



Senses Spotting

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can hear
- 3 things you can touch
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can imagine to taste

Teacher Tip

Ideally, a teacher can remind and direct students at any time, to do this strategy until it becomes second nature.

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 Latin name and one 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 My First Cloud Observations, the Cloudspotting Chart, and the identification wheel, or for students with phones, take pictures to bring back to class and share their spottings.



Photo Credits

- Cumulus by Stanley Henderson
- Cirrus by Badr Alsayed
- Stratus by Søren Hauge



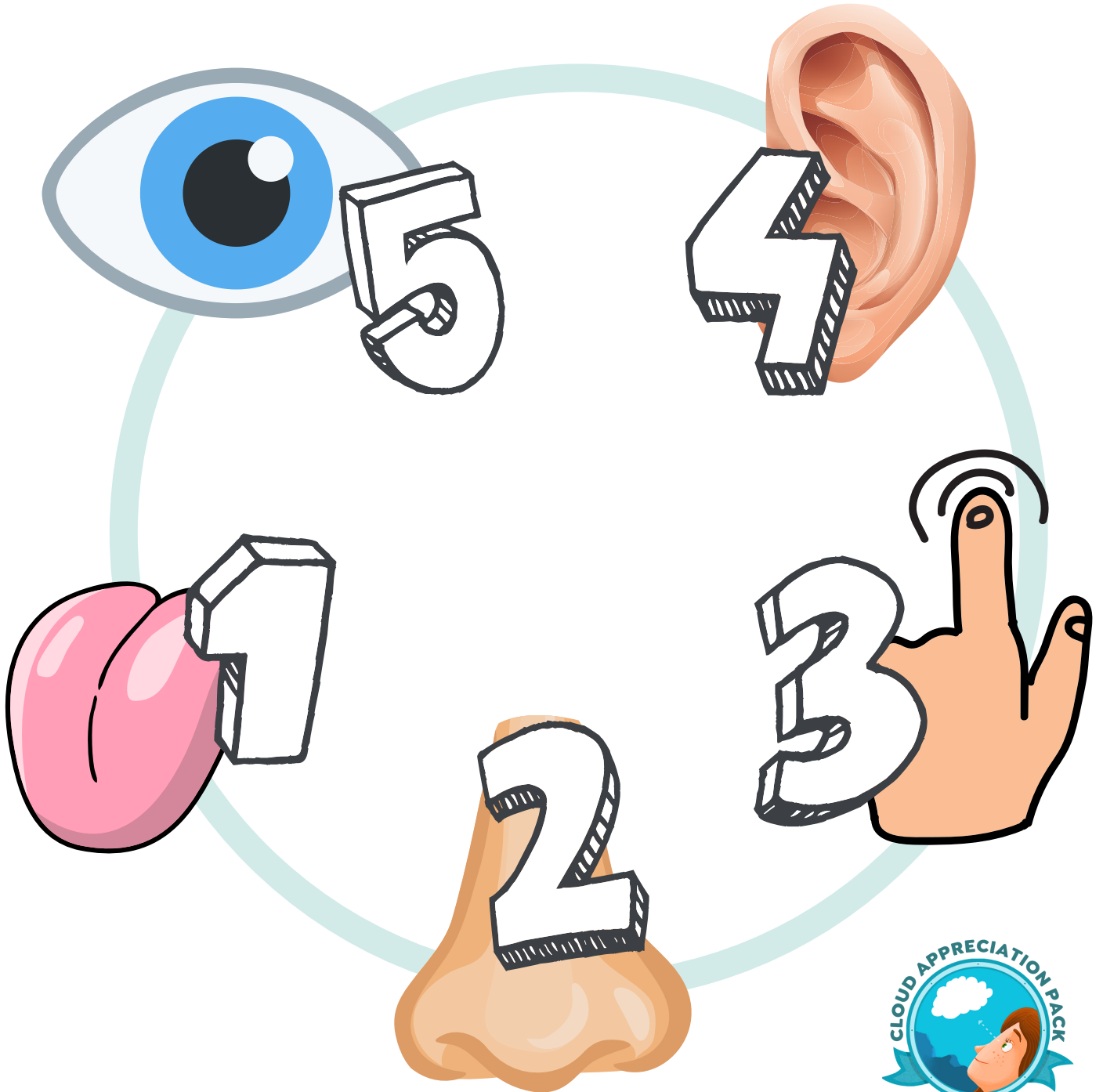
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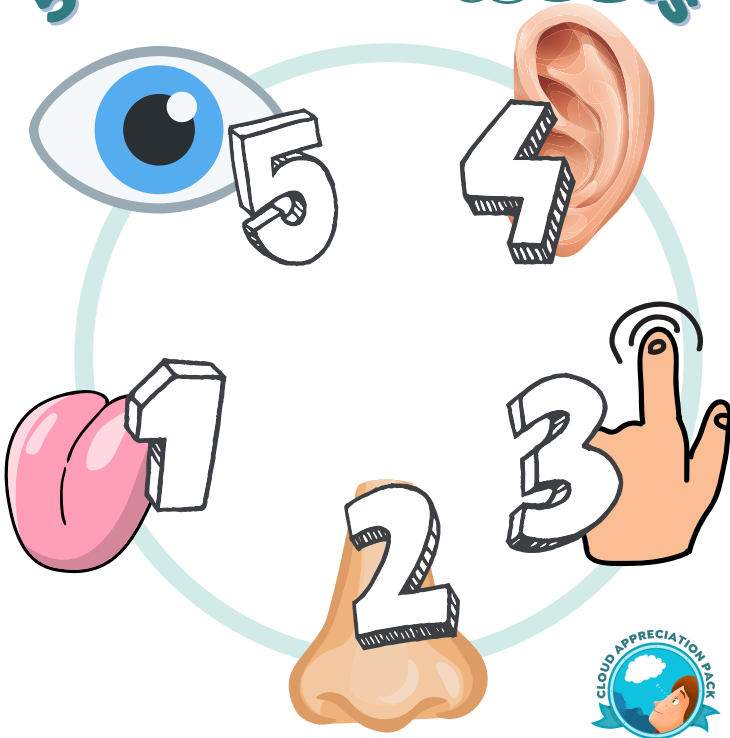
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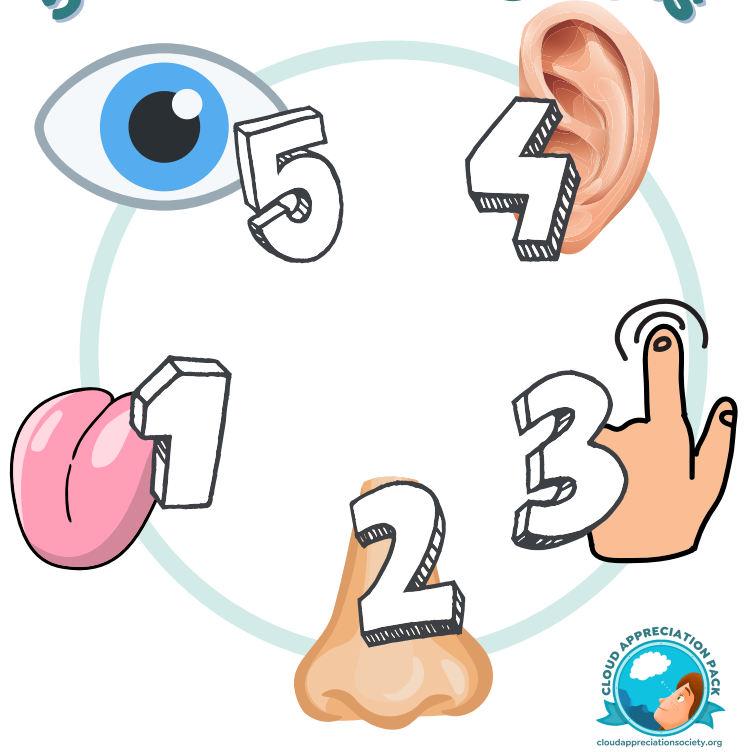
5 senses Mindfulness



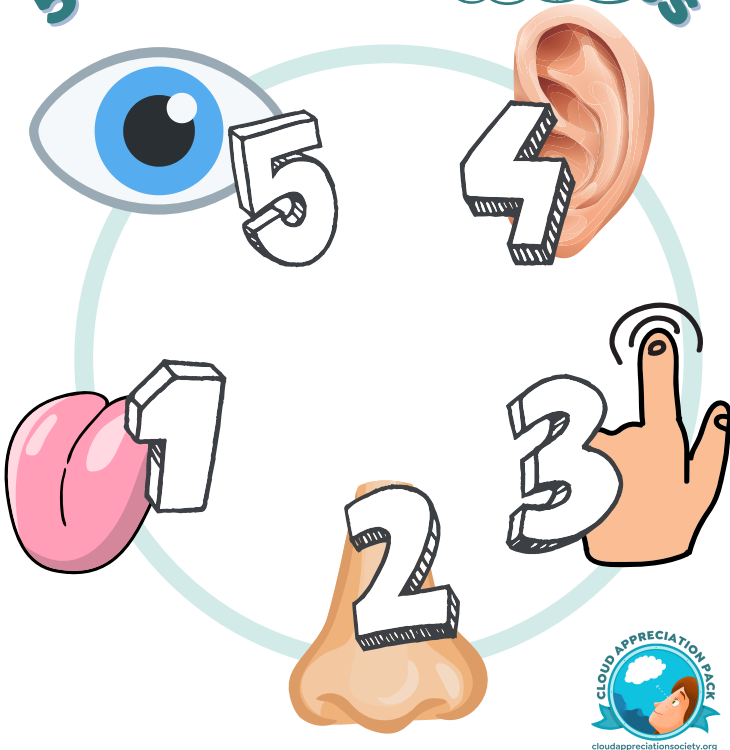
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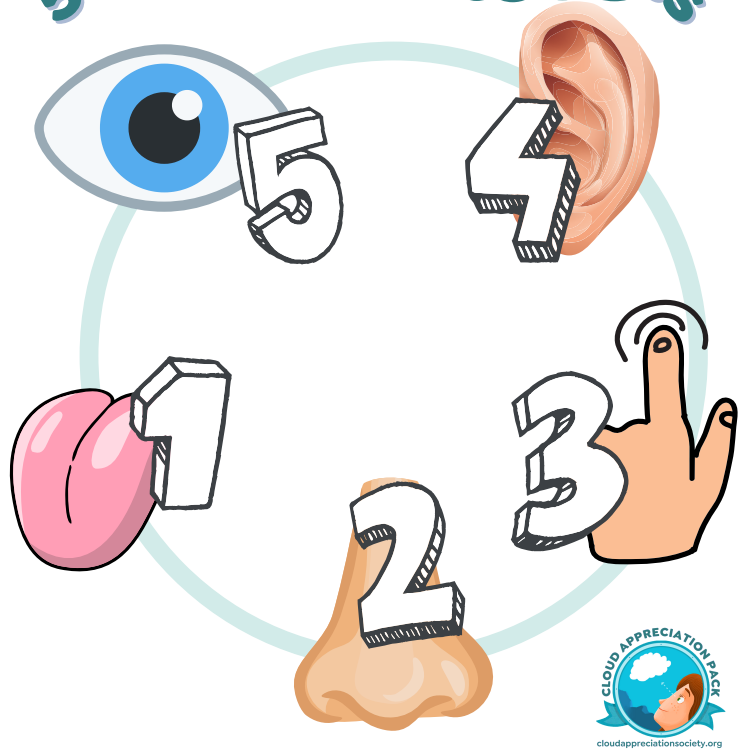
5 senses Mindfulness



5 senses Mindfulness



5 senses Mindfulness





Look Up & See

Lesson 1.1 Photo Guide



This clumpy cloud is called Cumulus
Spotted over Dundee, Scotland by Stanley Henderson



cloudappreciationsociety.org



This wispy cloud is called Cirrus
Cirrus by Badr Alsayed





This layered cloud is called Stratus

Stratus by Søren Hauge



Mindful Breathing

Sheet Lesson 1.1

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Directions: Read through each step, giving a moment or two between each. Students can be divided into small groups of 3-4 giving the option of repeating this practice and allowing students to be leaders by each reading the directions. Best if you can do this outside where students can observe the sky.

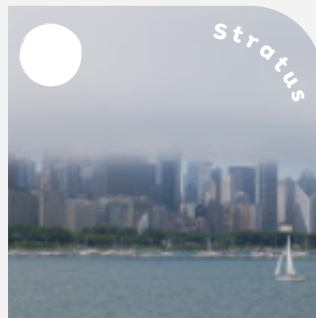
1. Become aware of your body and any discomfort or sensations.
2. Notice the the sky and any clouds, while feeling the sitting sensation.
3. As you begin to inhale, notice the air flowing into your nose.
4. Notice the expansion of your chest and hold it.
5. Notice the details of the sky, the clouds, the colors, the movement.
6. Exhale and hold it. Continue noticing any minor shifts within you and the sky.
7. Inhale and hold, noticing both body and sky shifts. Exhale.
8. Inhale one last time. Hold it and exhale.
8. Were you able to see a shift in the clouds, the color, the shape?
9. Check in with current emotions or body sensations.
10. Mindful breathing is about noticing what is happening in the present moment without judgement. What did you notice? What shifted?
11. Finding peace, calm, and relaxation can be as simple as watching the sky around us shift while mindfully breathing.



My First Clouds

Lesson 1.1 Observations Sheet

Check off each cloud as you spot them.



Cumulus clouds spotted by Mike Nordin | Stratocumulus clouds spotted by Suzanne Winckler | Stratus clouds spotted by Prof Giles Harrison | Altocumulus clouds spotted by Vicki Kendrick | Altostratus clouds spotted by Karel Jezek | Cirrus clouds spotted by Tania Ritchie | Cirrocumulus clouds spotted by Adria S Hillman | Cirrostratus clouds spotted by Patrick Dennis | Nimbostratus clouds spotted by Donna Clifford Martinez | Cumulonimbus clouds spotted by Christian H. Swan | Rainbow and Contrail spotted by Wendy DeGraffenried | Not for commercial use | All images © 2022 the listed photographers | This lesson plan © 2022 The Cloud Appreciation Society

