



Survival Kit for the Imagination

Lesson 1.3

Cats, Birds and Rabbits

How to Find Shapes in the Clouds



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How to Find Shapes in the Clouds

Objective:

Students are encouraged to explore the shapes they see in clouds. They will find out that this is not just fun, it is also how the Latin naming system for clouds works. Many of the Latin names just describe what the clouds look like, and so the science of identifying clouds is the same as finding shapes in the sky. The mindfulness activity will apply awareness of the body to sky observations.

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

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

Materials

- Cloud Lookalikes and Latin Names printout
- 3 Mindful Breaths and Colouring printouts
- Skyku Challenge printout
- Fabric, buttons, random accessories
- Glue, markers, poster board

Lesson Prep

- Print Cloud Lookalikes and Latin Names
- Print 3 Mindful Breaths and Colouring
- Print Skyku Challenge
- Prep room for art projects

Resources

'The Clouds' poem by Dutch poet Martinus Nijhoff (translated by John Irons)
<http://johnirons.blogspot.com/2016/04/de-wolken-by-martinus-nijhoff-in.html>

Previous Lesson Review

Each cloud is unique but there are ten main types, each of which has a certain feeling or 'personality'. Just as the clouds are different, each student is different and experiences emotions differently. Recall that they learned Cloud and 4-7-8 Breathing.

Lesson Intro: Have you ever found shapes in the clouds?

Ask the students to recall if they've ever seen the shape of something in a cloud. If you pay attention to the clouds you will start to see shapes more and more. Show examples of cloud lookalikes from the Cloud Appreciation Society.



"What do you see" Game

1. Display the picture of cloud lookalike
2. Have students think of what they see then raise their hand, but not yet share what they think it is.
3. Once all students raise their hands, have each one share what they saw.

Class can have a conversation about how we all have different perspectives and see the world differently based on our individual life experiences.

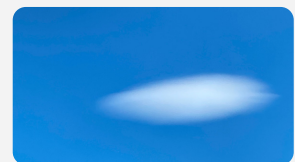


Cloud Identification

The science of cloud identification is all about finding shapes! Many of the Latin names we use for the different cloud formations just describe what the cloud looks like. Refer to the "Cloud Lookalikes" Guide and discuss where the cloud names come from.

Latin Names

- The name of the Cirrus cloud comes from the Latin word a 'curl' or a 'lock' or hair. The name for the lacunosus cloud is Latin for 'full of holes.' The name for lenticularis clouds is the Latin for a 'lentil.'
- The Latin names may sound strange to you, but actually we use Latin to stop people getting confused. Latin is a language no one speaks these days (the Romans used to speak it a couple of thousand years ago) and this means people around the world don't try to translate cloud names into their own language like they would if the names were in, say, English. If everyone around the world uses the same names for the clouds there is less chance for confusion between different countries about who's referring to which type of cloud. Fluctus means 'wave' in Latin.
- Students can explore the other latin names for clouds and share their findings with the class.



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 choose 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.

- May review 10 Main Cloud Types before outing.
- Can they find a cloud that looks like something? Take photos.
- Have students identify an emotion they see in the clouds today.
- Ask student, "would you want to stay outside in this weather today and why?"
- Have student watch the sky and see if they can see movement in the clouds.
- If students can't remember the cloud names, ask them to describe what it looks like. They may get close to "clumpy," "wispy" or "wavey."

Discussions

- What shapes did you observe?
- Did you know the names of a cloud?
- What did you notice that you may not have ever seen before?
- What does the environment look like in one part of the world versus another.
- How are the clouds similar and different?

Draw, Paint, & Colour Clouds

Direct the students to draw, paint, or color a cloud of their choice. Name and label the cloud. Students may use the Colouring Clouds page. They can use The Ten Main Clouds printable as reference.



SOME PREP



Multimedia Cloud Art



Have students create a piece of artwork combining multiple types of clouds and shapes to their liking. Use fabric, buttons, random accessories, glue, and markers.

Primary



Secondary

Secondary

Have students spot lookalikes in the sky, or find images online and make a presentation slideshow, naming both what the cloud looked like and which of the ten main cloud types they identified it as, to share with the class the following week. Class votes on the best cloud lookalike.

Educator makes a slideshow with student's photos of the cloud lookalikes they spot over the coming week.



Coloring Clouds and Finding Online Clouds by Level



Write a Skyku poem. Reference the Skyku Poem printable. Students read their Skyku to the group when complete.

Primary



Secondary



Secondary

Give students printouts of 'The Clouds' poem by Dutch poet Martinus Nijhoff (translated by John Irons). Discuss the poem and explore why lying down finding shapes in the clouds with a child might make an adult want to cry (emotions).

Mindfulness



Relax & Slow Down through the Breath



Have you noticed that it takes time to find clouds that look like things? The shapes don't appear right away. Sometimes, this is because the clouds just don't happen to be drifting in the right way across the sky. More often, though, it is because you have to be in the right mood to find cloud shapes – you have to relax and slow down. Don't try too hard when you are looking for clouds in the shape of things. Instead, just try lying back and relaxing for a bit. Just look at the shapes and see what starts slowly to appear.

Primary

Once outside, instruct students: "Looking at a cloud, take one deep breath as if you are inhaling the cloud. Exhale back to the cloud. Notice what changed about the cloud. Repeat two more times. Notice what changed in you." Optional: "Trace the cloud with your finger from lump to lump inhaling and exhaling."

Secondary

This is a guided meditation, have students do it independently or guide their mates. Follow instructions in 3 Mindful Breaths printout.



Review Previous Strategies



Teacher Tip



Personal Weather Check

Teach students to do ongoing Mindfulness Check-Ins using weather language to express their emotions. It might sound something like this: "Cloudy with sunny spells later," or "Stormy."



Assessment

Have students recall how many Latin names they can identify and the corresponding shape that matches. Encourage students to see if they can find examples of latin named cloud in the coming week.



Conclusion

Spotting and naming clouds is a science. Remind students they are scientists when they use the latin names to observe clouds. Calming the body and mind down with mindfulness will allow us to spot cloud lookalikes and our own personal emotional weather.



Photo Credits

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- Breakdancer cloud by Fiorella Iacono
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- Cirrus by Tania Ritchie, Lacunosus by Gunda Wiczorek
- Lenticularis by Luciano Gerber
- Fluctus by Patrick Dennis.



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