

Charles E. Burchfield

**Cloud Identification Guide**



# CLOUDS & BURCHFIELD

“While other phenomena of nature delight us and arouse the poetry in us I do not believe anything quite stirs our imagination as do clouds...”

-Charles Burchfield



Burchfield was right, clouds are a wonderful phenomena! Think of them as nature’s abstract art, it changes everyday and you can always see it as long as you don’t forget to look up.

But, what really are clouds anyway? Can you guess?

They’re all water!

A **cloud** is made up of tiny water droplets, and forms when the air is heated by the sun. As it rises and cools, it slowly condenses into a cloud. As long as the cloud and air its made up of stays warmer than the air surrounding it, it floats!



## Cirrus

Shape: strands, hooks, or filaments.  
Altitude: 16,500-45,000 feet

## Altostratus

Shape: large and lumpy, slow moving, one or more bands or layers expanding and thickening.  
Altitude: 6,500-20,000 feet



## Cumulonimbus

Shape: Large, towering cloud, often with an anvil top. These clouds mean thunderstorms, watch out!  
Altitude: 2,000-25,000ft



## Cumulus

Shape: Fluffy, cotton ball shape, these are fair weather clouds.  
Altitude: >6,000 feet



## Stratus

Shape: One thick continuous layer.  
Altitude: >6,000 feet



## Watching clouds is not only fun, but it can give you clues about what kind of weather is coming.



Imagine you're laying in this field on a warm fall day. As you look up at the sky you see the blue sky dotted with fluffy white clouds. As a game you imagine the clouds are forming into a cat or a frog! These friendly puff balls are **cumulus clouds**.

These are known as convection clouds. These form because of large updrafts of warm, moist air moving up into cold air. Similar to how a lava lamp works.



The skies are dark and rain is pouring. You see a big bolt of lightning, and a few seconds later you hear the rumble and crash of thunder!

You can thank **cumulonimbus clouds** for the ruckus! These are large, tall clouds that are dark at the bottom and produce rain and thunderstorms. They can also cause other types of weather too, like: hail and snow showers. These clouds also form during hurricanes and can form into tornadoes!

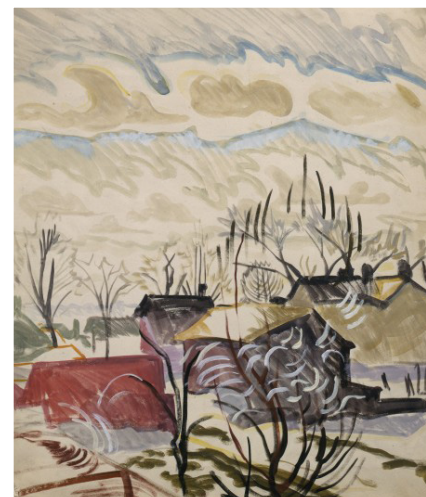
Have you ever looked out the window to see nothing but gray clouds as far as you can see? How about walking through fog or mist? If you said yes, then you've walked through a **stratus cloud!**

These are thick gray clouds that cause overcast days. A stratus cloud forms when warm air from the ground is lifted into the air, as it's lifted it forms into these flat, hazy clouds.



There are hundreds of different formations clouds make, and dozens of classifications too.

You can see them all, just don't forget to look up!



# LOOK!

Let's look for some clouds in paintings by Charles Burchfield. See if you can identify the types of clouds in his works:

This work is called *Summer Sky with Clouds*. Can you identify what types of clouds these are? How are these clouds formed? What kind of weather do you think this depicts?



Can you identify these clouds?



1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_



3. \_\_\_\_\_





Find the following words below in the word search.

R	C	I	R	R	U	S	D
C	O	N	T	R	A	I	L
U	S	T	R	A	T	U	S
M	S	H	I	E	F	G	E
U	T	S	T	O	R	M	J
L	N	I	M	B	U	S	F
U	A	L	T	O	H	G	T
S	H	F	O	G	Y	D	D

ALTO

FOG

CIRRUS

NIMBUS

CONTRAIL

STORM

CUMULUS

STRATUS

## Artwork Identification

**Charles E. Burchfield** (1893-1967), Summer Sky with Clouds, 1946; watercolor on paper, 32 x 25 1/2 inches, Image from the Burchfield Penney Archives.

**Charles E. Burchfield** (1893-1967), Windswept Sky, September 10, 1916; watercolor on paper, 14 x 20 inches; Burchfield Penney Art Center, Gift of Tony Sisti, 1979.

**Charles E. Burchfield** (1893-1967), Gray Clouds, undated; watercolor on paper, 19 x 27 inches; Image from the Burchfield Penney Art Center Archives.

**Charles E. Burchfield** (1893-1967), Clearing Sky, July 13, 1917; watercolor, gouache and pencil on paper, 17 5/8 x 21 1/2 inches; Burchfield Penney Art Center, Gift of Charles Rand Penney, 1994.

**Charles E. Burchfield** (1893-1967), Leaves Falling Across Cumulus Clouds, 1963; watercolor on paper; Private Collection, Image from the Burchfield Penney Art Center Archives.

**Charles E. Burchfield** (1893-1967), Cloud Over Buildings, circa 1917; watercolor and gouache on paper, 19 1/2 x 18 inches; Image from the Burchfield Penney Art Center Archives.

**Charles E. Burchfield** (1893-1967), Sunburst, 1929-31; oil on canvas, 35 1/2 x 47 1/2 inches; Burchfield Penney Art Center, Gift of Charles Rand Penney, 1994.

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