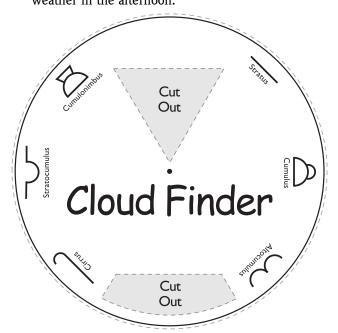# Cloud Key

Identifying clouds is a terrific way for students to put their skills of observation and classification to work, as well as to launch them into weather prediction. Clouds are only one of the many factors—including fronts, winds, pressure systems, etc.—that contribute to predicting weather, but they are one that students can easily observe. Note: Identifying clouds can be difficult at first. Encourage students to make their best guesses based on the dominant kind of clouds they see, or to list more than one type.

Materials
(for each student)

reproducible pages 45 and 46

brass paper fastener

scissors

Directions

1 Make a copy of the reproducible for each student. Show students how to make the Cloud Key by cutting out both circles on pages 45 and 46, cutting out and discarding the two shaded areas on page 45, and fastening the wheels together. Page 45 goes on top.

2 Show students how to use the key. Move the wheel until the cloud you want appears, then read the name and weather information in the box.

3 Have students make a chart with these five headings: "Date/Time," "Cloud Type," "A.M. Weather," "P.M. Predicted Weather," "Actual P.M. Weather/Time." (See the sample shown here.) Invite students to fill in the chart every morning for a week, comparing their predictions to the actual weather in the afternoon.

Date/Time	Cloud Type	AM Weather	Predicted Weather PM	Weather/Time

Cumulonimbus   Cut Out   Stratus

Stratocumulus

Cumulus

Cloud Finder

Cirrus   Cut Out   Altocumulus

Cut out the wheel.

Cut out the two shaded areas inside the wheel.

This is the top wheel of your cloud key.

Cumulonimbus

Stratus

Cut
Out

Stratocumulus

Cloud Finder

Cumulus

Cirrus

Altocumulus

Cut
Out

The Wow's and Why's of Weather Scholastic Professional Books
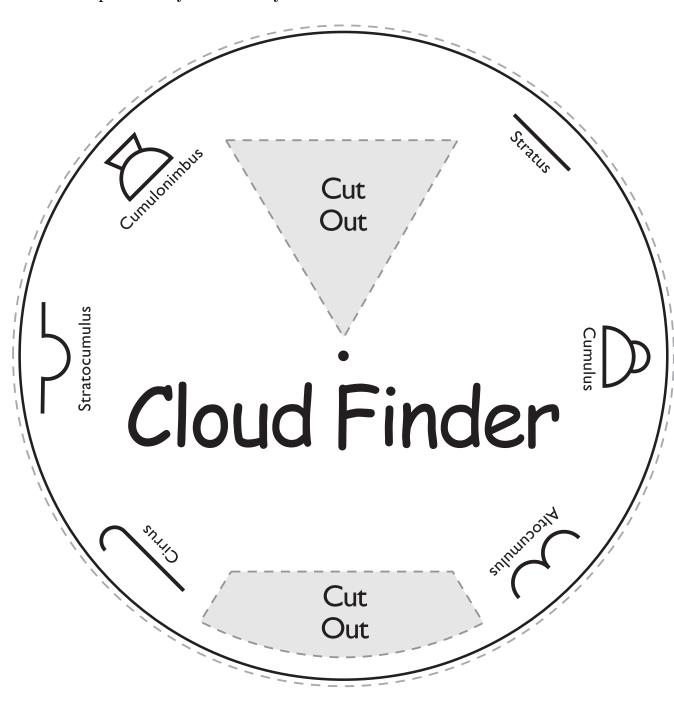
Cloud Finder

Altocumulus
Thick blue-gray blanket-like clouds made of ice and water at middle heights. Rain or snow likely, or at least cloudy skies.

Cirrus
High wispy ice clouds. Often seen in clear skies and mean good weather, but can mean a change in the weather!

Cumulus
Fluffy lower clouds that often "grow" during sunny days. Usually mean fair weather unless they grow tall late in the day.

Stratus
Flat layer of low clouds. Light rain, drizzle, or flurries likely, overcast skies. Light at best.

Cumulonimbus
Giant thunderhead clouds that tower to high heights. Thunderstorms with heavy rain, hail, winds, and lightning are on the way.

Stratocumulus
Dark heavy water-droplet clouds at low or lower-middle heights. Rain or snow very likely.