The water on Earth is always on the move, changing state from liquid to vapor back to liquid and snow and ice near the poles and mountains. The process used to describe the continuous movement of water between the Earth and atmosphere is known as the water cycle, and is often referred to as the hydrologic cycle. There is no beginning or end to the water cycle; it behaves much like a ferris wheel at an amusement park, moving around and around.

### Cloud Cover

- Clear (0% - 5%)
- Partly Cloudy (5% - 25%)
- Mostly Cloudy (25% - 75%)
- Overcast (75% - 100%)

### Visual Opacity

- Opaque
- Translucent
- Transparent

**Cloud Cover**

Determination of the amount of cloud cover is done by estimating the percentage of the sky covered with clouds. This is one of several possible scales or categories for cloud cover.

**Visual Opacity**

The thickness of a cloud determines the amount of light being transmitted through the cloud. Shadows often provide a clue.

**Cloud Level**

Three levels of clouds have been identified based on the altitude of a cloud's base.

- Low
- Middle
- High

### Convective Clouds

- Stratocumulus
- Nimbostratus
- Fog
- Stratus
- Cumulonimbus
- Cumulus

### Evaporating Clouds

- Transport
- Condensation
- Evaporation
- Transpiration
- Precipitation
- Surface Runoff

### Water Cycle

- Snowmelt Runoff
- Infiltration into Groundwater
- Groundwater Flow
- Plant Uptake

In 1803 Luke Howard used Latin terms to classify four main cloud types.

- Cumulus means pile and describes heaped, lumpy clouds.
- Cirrus, meaning hair, describes high level clouds that look wispy, like locks of hair.
- Stratus clouds that form sheets are called Stratus, meaning layer.
- The term Nimbus, which means 'precipitating cloud', refers to low, grey rain clouds.
- Alto is used to describe mid level clouds.
- Finally, convective clouds have a vertical development extending through large portions of the atmosphere.