

Lesson 2 – Resource Sheet 1

Elements of weather

Weather

When we think about the weather we focus on the state of the atmosphere (the layer of air surrounding the earth) at a particular place and time. The 'weather' includes all the daily changes in temperature, precipitation, wind speed and direction, the amount of sunshine and level of humidity (the amount of moisture in the air).

Remember that weather is not the same as 'climate'. The words 'weather' and 'climate' mean different things. Weather is the condition of the atmosphere at a particular place and time; climate is the long-term weather expected for a place based on data collected over time (usually, 100 years).

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The elements of weather include:

- **Temperature** – How hot or cold it is.
- **Wind** – The movement of air across the earth surface – the strength and direction of this movement is important.
- **Cloud cover** – How extensive is the cloud cover. For example, clear, scattered, full cover, storm clouds.
- **Humidity**: Refers to the amount of moisture in the air. The air may be hot and humid or hot and dry. It may also be cold and humid or cold and dry. Humid days in summer feel hot and sticky.
- **Precipitation**: The word 'precipitation' refers to any moisture reaching the ground. It includes rain, snow, hail (large frozen drops of rain) and dew (drops of water formed when moist air comes in contact with a cold surface). See Resource Sheet 2.