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Lightning



Thunderstorms are exciting events. The dark sky fills with light and the clouds seem to erupt with sound. The flash of light you see is called **lightning** and is seen when electricity jumps from one place to another. The boom is the thunder that is made by the lightning.

What causes lightning?

Thunderstorms begin even before you see the lightning. As the Sun warms the ground, the Earth lets off hot air that rises up into the **atmosphere**. When the hot air reaches a particular height, clouds can form. If the clouds form in a tower pattern, they are called “towering cumulus” clouds. These are the first signs of a thunderstorm. Within these clouds, **precipitation** starts to form. Near the top part of the cloud, small pieces of ice are created. The middle part of the cloud forms smaller pieces of ice and hail

Fun Fact

There are 25 million lightning flashes each year. The Empire State Building in New York is hit an average of 23 times per year alone!

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Lightning - Jumping electricity produced by thunderstorms.

Atmosphere - The layers of gases that are around the earth.

Precipitation - Water that falls from the sky in the form of snow, hail, or rain.

Lightning and Thunder

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Dangers of Lightning

Lightning is extremely dangerous. At about 1,000,000,000 volts of electricity (you only get 120-240 volts out of regular power outlets), it can seriously injure or kill a person. People may be hit by lightning if they are standing outdoors during a thunderstorm. Lightning can also be



conducted through tall objects. For instance, when lightning hits a tree, the electricity passes through the tree. If a person is standing near the tree, the electricity can travel through the tree to the person, causing them harm. This is why you shouldn't stand under a tree during a thunderstorm.

The best way to avoid being injured by lightning is to remain indoors during thunderstorms. People should move inside as soon as they hear thunder for the first time and should remain indoors 30 minutes after the last thunderclap.

Reading Comprehension Questions:

- 1) How
- 2) What is precipitation?
- 3) What is
- 4) Why is it
- 5) Where is the best place to be when during a thunderstorm?

Extension Questions:

- 6) Create a poster showing people how to be safe during a thunderstorm.
- 7) Research

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