

Does Earth have a blanket?



Yes, it does.

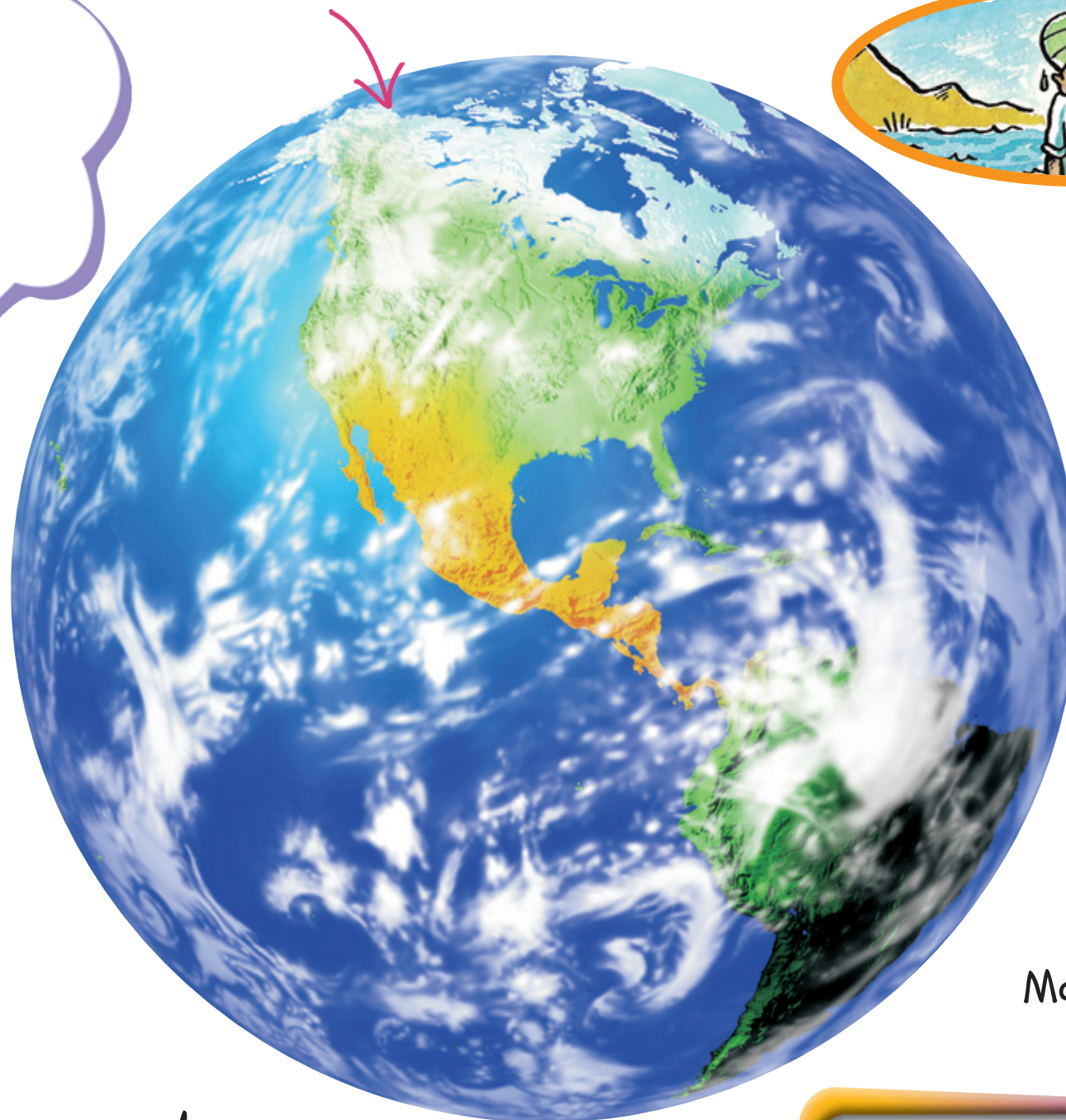
The Earth is wrapped in a thick blanket of air.

It is called the atmosphere. This is where all the weather happens. The atmosphere also helps to keep the Earth's surface warm at night. In the day it protects us from harmful rays coming from the Sun.



every day, and there are downpours of heavy rain, too. Rainforest plants grow very quickly in this steamy weather.

Planet Earth



Monsoon downpour!

In some countries it pours with rain for a few weeks every year. This is called a monsoon. In India, enough rain falls in one year to cover the ground with water 26 metres deep!



How deep is the atmosphere?

The atmosphere stretches hundreds of kilometres above our heads. If you go up through the atmosphere, the air gets thinner and thinner. High up in mountains, mountaineers find it difficult to breathe so they take breathing equipment with them.

Mountaineer



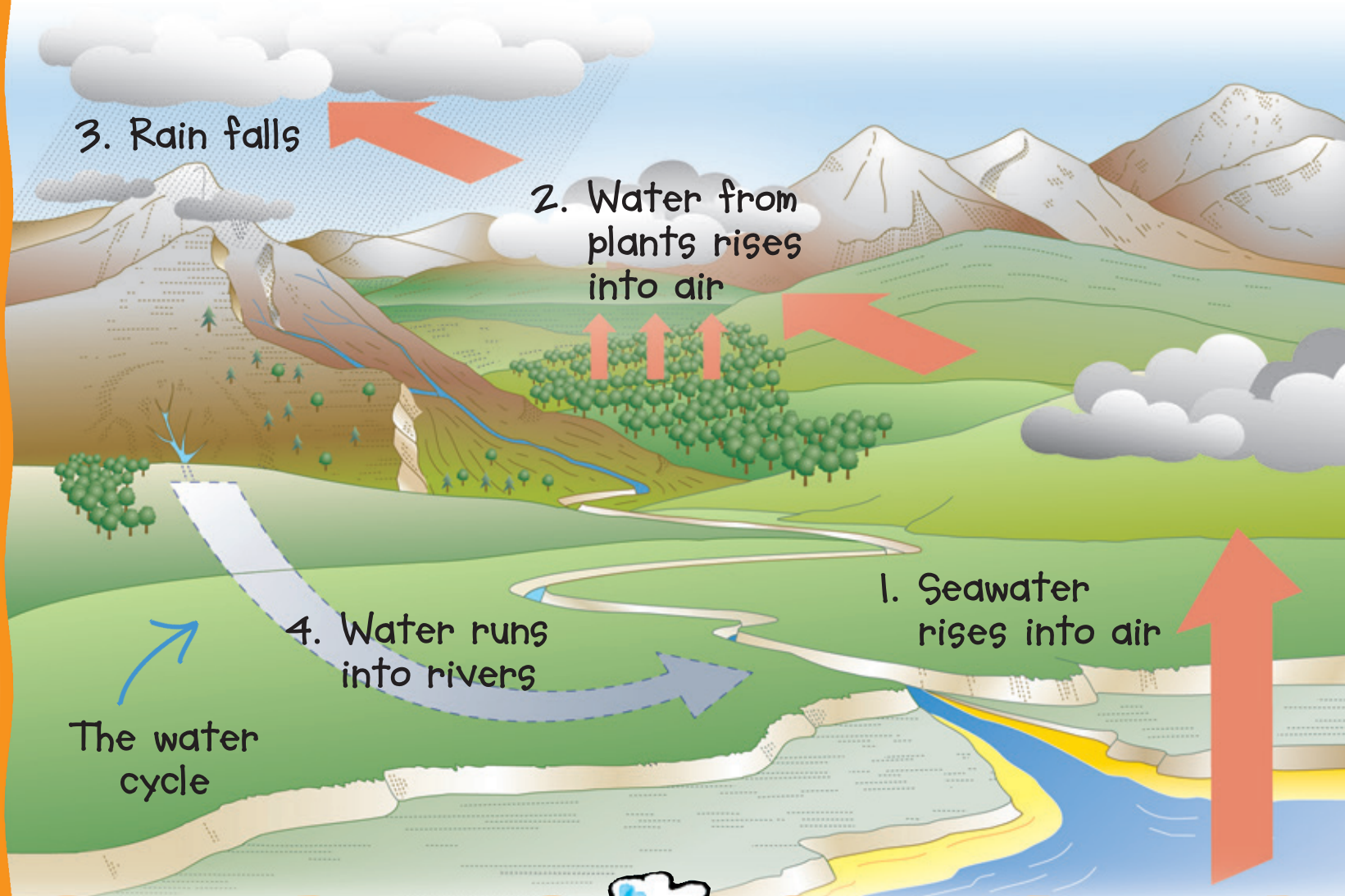
Look

Look at the picture of the Earth above. What do you think the white swirly patterns are?

Why does it rain?

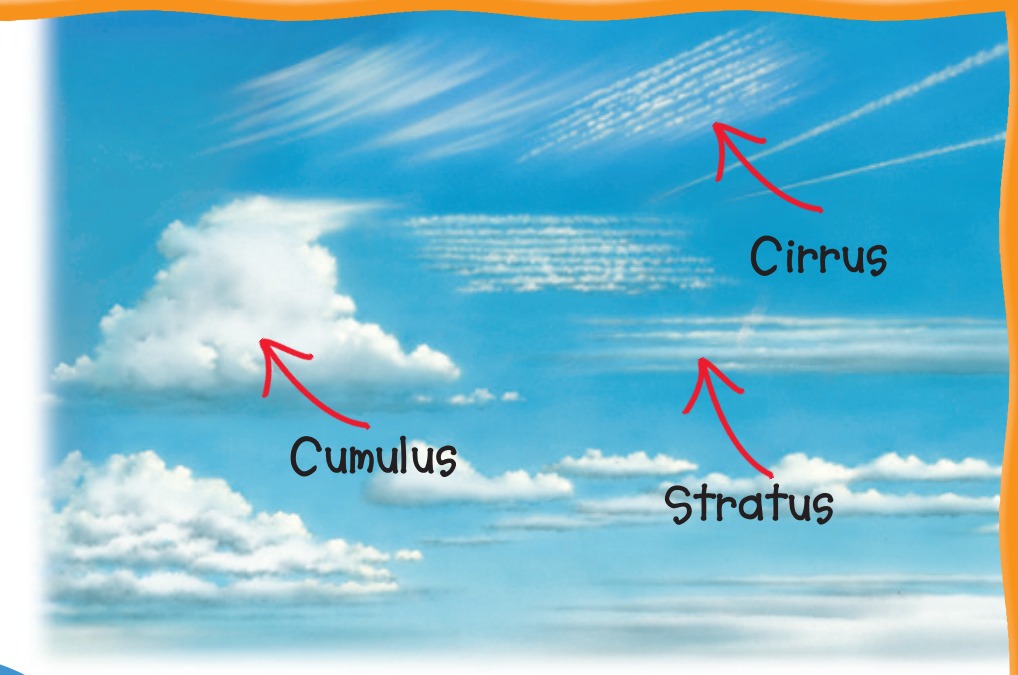
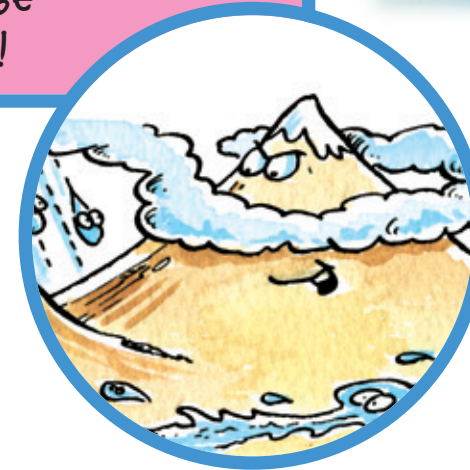


It rains because water from oceans, rivers and lakes turns to gas in the air. If the air rises, the gas becomes water drops. These make clouds. If the drops get big enough, they fall as rain. The water then flows back to the sea.



Head in the clouds!

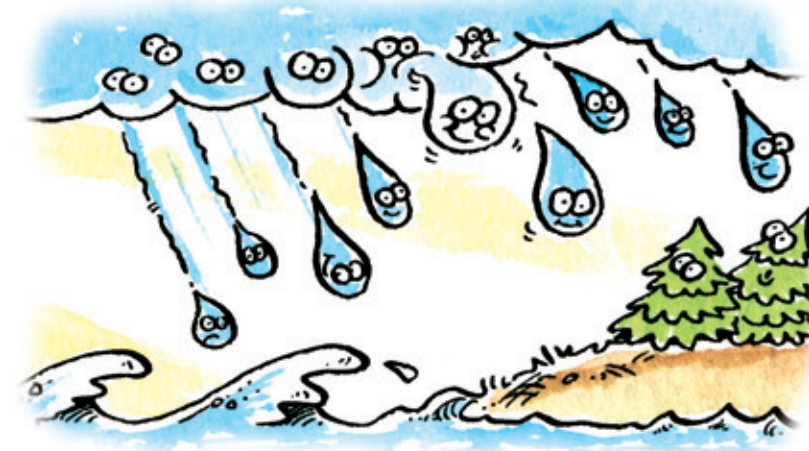
The tops of tall mountains are often in the clouds. At the top it looks misty. Mountaineers sometimes get lost in these clouds!



Are all clouds small and fluffy?

Clouds come in lots of different shapes and sizes. Weather experts give the different clouds names. Fluffy clouds are called cumulus clouds. Some are small and some

are giant. Flat clouds are called stratus clouds. Wispy clouds high in the sky are called cirrus clouds.



What rain never lands?

Sometimes rain that falls from a cloud never reaches the ground. If the drops of rain fall into very dry air, the water in them turns into gas. This means that the drops disappear and never reach the ground.

Look

Look at the clouds outside today. Are they fluffy or flat? The picture above will help you.



What happens in a flood?



Sometimes a lot of rain falls in a few hours.

So much water flows into rivers

that they fill up and burst their banks. The rivers flood the land on each side. Sometimes houses disappear under the flood water.



Did Noah build an ark?

The Bible tells the story of a man called Noah. He built a great boat called an ark to escape a flood. We don't know if Noah's ark existed. Scientists have found out that there probably was a huge flood thousands of years ago.



↑
Noah's ark

Find

Can you find the country of Egypt and the river Nile in an atlas?

Floods of tears!

The river Nile in Egypt floods every year. Thousands of years ago, the Egyptians made up a story about the flood. It said that a goddess called Isis cried so much that the river filled up with her tears.



Can there be a flood in a desert?

Yes there can. Most of the time there is no rain in a desert. The hot Sun bakes the ground hard. Once in a while, it rains heavily. The water flows off the ground instead of soaking in. This can cause a flood.

