

Watching the Weather ... Let's add to our weather station.

Wind Watching:

Weather is what is happening in the atmosphere. Atmosphere is the blanket of gases that surround the earth. Wind is a part of the weather that takes place in our atmosphere. It often accompanies a change in the weather...bringing us good and bad weather.



What Makes the Wind?

Wind is air in motion. It is produced by the uneven heating of the earth's surface by the sun. Since the earth's surface is made-up of different landforms and water sources, it absorbs the sun's heat unevenly. Warm air rises and cool air moves down into low spaces. This movement up and down creates air movement ...wind. The swiftness and direction of the air movement depends on the differences in the air pressure (measured by a barometer) from one area to another.

Wind is measured by the speed and direction of the air movement. Speed is determined by how close high and low pressures are together and how much they vary. It is measured with an anemometer. Wind direction can be determined with a weathervane and wind socks which are often seen at airports and chemical plants.

Use our DIY directions to make an anemometer, a weathervane or a wind sock. Place one or all of these outside on a windy day, avoiding buildings that may block the flow of the wind.

- Calibrate your anemometer. Count the cup rotations on the anemometer or read the stripes on the wind sock and calculate the wind speed. (see DIY sheet for directions)
- Take the wind measurements once or twice per day at the same time each day.
- Record the measurements on a weather journal or calendar. Compare it to other measurements taken near your location.
- Does the wind change when the weather changes; from fair to rain or from rain to fair weather?
- Note the direction that the wind is moving from and to. Does a change in weather come from the same direction of the wind?
- How are the clouds reacting to the change in wind speed and direction?

The wind can be a very powerful force for both good and bad. It can wave a flag on the Fourth of July, cool us on a hot day, or dry laundry on a clothes line (evaporation). It can also alter landforms (erosion), or cause great destruction during a hurricane or a tornado.

