

Weather vs. Climate

By Julia Chen

When you watch the weatherman on TV, you often hear about the highs and lows of the day, humidity levels and precipitation. But sometimes on TV you also see advertisements for places to vacation claiming that their location has a hot and sunny beach climate or a cold and snowy location that is great for skiing. If climate and weather both describe temperature and precipitation, what is the difference?

Weather is the conditions in the **atmosphere** in a certain place during a certain time. Weather is always changing. It changes from day to night and even from minute to minute. Many things make up weather. Weather is a combination of **temperature** (the degree of hotness or coldness), **humidity** (or the amount of water vapor in the air), **precipitation** (or any form of water, like rain or snow), **cloudiness**, **wind** and more. Imagine, one little word like weather covers all these topics!



What about **climate**? Climate is what the weather is generally like over long periods of time, such as years or decades in a particular area. A place that has little rainfall has a dry climate, and a place that has high temperatures has a hot climate. For example, From November to February here in New England we know it will be cold and probably snowy because that has been the climate pattern for many, many years.

Both weather and climate are very important parts of your life. Weather can tell you if you should bring an umbrella to school or if you need to bundle up with a warm hat and mittens. Climate can tell you when the best time of year is to take a vacation. As one middle school student says, “climate tells you what clothes to buy, but weather tells you what clothes to wear.”