

Changes in air pressure, caused by air's height above sea level, temperature, and amount of water vapor, causes wind. The Earth's rotation also helps. It causes the Coriolis Effect, which makes the wind blow on a curved path.



Key vocabulary

air pressure

The density or weight of the air.

updraft

Warmer, less dense air that rises.

downdraft

Cold, dense air that sinks.

convection cell

A pattern of rising and sinking air formed from updrafts and downdrafts that forms winds.

coriolis effect

The effect caused by the Earth turning on its axis that causes falling objects to move rightward in the northern hemisphere and leftward in the southern hemisphere.

polar easterlies

Winds that blow from high pressure areas in the North and South poles.

prevailing westerlies

Winds that blow in the middle latitudes.

trade winds

A belt of winds around the Earth that move from high pressure areas to the lower pressure areas at the equator.

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