



peak their interest

Weather & Climate

Did You Know?

Hail isn't always round or small enough to hold in the palm of your hand. Some of these hard chunks of ice are elongated or jagged. They are mostly the size of gumballs, golf balls, or even baseballs. But the largest hailstone ever recorded in the United States landed in Coffeyville, Kansas, in 1970. Measuring 17.3 inches (44 cm) around, this monster ice crystal weighed 1.67 pounds (.76 kg). The National Center for Atmospheric Research held on to it and made models. Imagine what it would have felt like to be hit on the head with that hailstone!

Hurricanes almost never occur in Europe. In fact, there was no word for hurricane in English until Europeans settled in the Caribbean Islands. The Spanish took the name of a storm god, Huracán, from the Taino Indians. These storms are also known as typhoons, cyclones, and severe cyclonic storms when they occur in other oceans.

Lightning does strike more than once, even when it comes to people. Your chances of being hit by lightning are very low. Some estimates put the odds at 1 in 350,000. Others at 1 in 600,000. Roy C. Sullivan, a park ranger, is the only person known to have been struck by lightning seven times. He survived each time, but not unscathed. He lost a toenail, had his eyebrows burned off and his hair seared twice, and even suffered shoulder and leg burns.

With dry ice and a plane, you can create a rainstorm. Here's how cloud seeding, or making rain artificially, works: A plane drops crushed dry ice into a cloud; the dry ice attracts water droplets and ice crystals; these crystals get bigger and heavier until they fall to Earth as rain. But not everyone agrees on how useful and fair it is to use this process. Some argue that it only slightly increases the rain that would have fallen anyway and that it can steal rain away from other areas.