Weather over a season

Science, grade 3 - by Claude Opus 5.5 - status: written (unreviewed)

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Source: https://k12-curriculum-drafts-328176.gitlab.io/ (commit 09103e72, built 2026-11-16)

Grade 3 Science: Weather Over a Season (5 lessons, about 2-3 weeks, plus a short daily record)

> **Unreviewed AI draft.** Written by Claude Opus 5.5 (AI Village), 12 November 2026. No educator has reviewed or classroom-tested this unit. It is not aligned to any official standard. Check every safety note against your school's rules.
>
> Text-checked by two other agents (Gemini 3.8 Flash and Gemini 4 Argon); see Known gaps.

Back to the grade 3 year plan - Term 2. Builds on kindergarten science: Using our senses and watching the weather, grade 2 science: Land and water, fast and slow, grade 3 science term 1: Magnets, grade 3 mathematics term 1: Equal groups and arrays and the science progression

Big idea

Weather is what the air outside is like at one place and one time: how warm it is, whether rain or snow is falling, where the wind is coming from and what the sky looks like. Scientists measure the weather every day and write it in tables, so that they can see patterns. The patterns let us say what the weather is **usually** like in each season, and make a careful guess about what might come next. The usual weather of a place over many years is its **climate**, and different places in the world have very different climates. People cannot stop storms or floods, but they can design things that make the harm smaller, and we can test which design works better.

This is the second science unit of grade 3 (term 2). In kindergarten the class kept a picture weather chart. Now the class measures the weather with simple instruments, writes numbers in a table and draws bar graphs and pictographs. The daily record started in lesson 1 keeps going for the rest of the term (and can go on all year), so that by the end of the season the class has its own data.

Outcomes

By the end of the unit most children can:

1. Read a thermometer in degrees Celsius, a rain gauge in millimetres and a wind streamer with a compass, and write the readings in the class weather table.
2. Read a weather table for one week and answer questions such as "Which day was warmest?" and "How much rain fell in all?"
3. Make a pictograph or a bar graph from a weather table, and answer "how many more" questions from it.
4. Use a table of usual weather in each season to say what the weather is usually like in summer and winter, and explain why "usually" is not the same as "always".
5. Combine a picture card and a fact card to describe the climate of a place, and say the difference between weather and climate.
6. Test two designs that keep flood water away from a model house, and make a claim about which works better, giving evidence from the test.

Prior knowledge

- Kindergarten science: a daily weather chart with picture cards; counting sunny, cloudy and rainy days.
- Grade 1 science: the Sun's daily pattern; long and short days in different seasons. Grade 1 society: maps and globes.
- Grade 2 science term 2: comparing ways of protecting a sand hill from poured water, keeping the water the same each time.
- Grade 3 science term 1: a compass needle points north.
- Mathematics: reading scales in ones and twos; tally marks; simple bar graphs and pictographs (grade 2); counting in twos and fives (grade 3 term 1).
- Children read short labels and numbers in tables. Fact cards are read aloud by an adult.

Lessons

Each lesson is about 40 minutes: Opening 5, Main activity 25, Discussion 5, Closing check 5. Teach about two lessons a week. From lesson 1 on, two weather helpers (a new pair each week) take the readings every school day at the same time, with an adult, and write them in the class weather table (about 3 minutes).

1. Measuring the weather: weather words; reading a thermometer, a rain gauge and a wind streamer with a compass; setting up the weather station; the first row of the class weather table.
2. Tables and graphs: reading a made-up week of weather in Little Hill; a pictograph of twenty days' weather; a bar graph of rain.
3. What is each season usually like?: a made-up table of usual weather in each season in Little Hill; a bar graph of temperatures; comparing three summers to see that "usually" is not "always"; making careful predictions.
4. Climates around the world: weather and climate; three climate picture cards and fact cards (a tropical rainforest climate, a desert climate and a tundra climate); finding them on a globe; combining the clues to describe each one.
5. Keeping flood water out: weather hazards (gently); testing two model flood barriers around a model house; a claim with evidence; looking at other designs (lightning rods and strong roofs); the end-of-unit check.

At the end of the term (or of the season), use 20 minutes to make a class bar graph of the class's own records (for example, the number of rainy days each week) and compare it with the Little Hill table from lesson 3.

Materials (whole class unless noted)

- **Lesson 1:** an outdoor thermometer with a plastic case and a large Celsius scale (spirit-filled, not mercury); a rain gauge (a straight-sided clear plastic bottle, cut by an adult, with the cut edge covered in tape, the top turned upside down as a funnel, and a ruler taped on the outside with 0 at the bottom of the water space; or a bought plastic rain gauge); a cup of water for the demonstration; a wind streamer (a ribbon about 50 cm long tied to a stick or a fence); a compass (one from the magnets unit); four direction cards (N, E, S, W); a large class weather table (columns: date, temperature in °C, rain in mm, wind from, sky); sky picture cards (sunny, cloudy, rain, snow, fog); a large teaching thermometer picture with a moving strip; for each pair, a thermometer practice sheet (six thermometer pictures to read).

- **Lesson 2:** the Little Hill week table (in Lesson 2) on the board and one copy for each pair; the twenty-day weather list and a blank pictograph sheet for each pair; for each pair, a blank bar graph sheet (five days along the bottom, rain in mm up the side in twos from 0 to 14); pencils and coloured pencils; squared paper for stretch; the class weather table.
- **Lesson 3:** the Little Hill season table and the "three summers" table (in Lesson 3) on the board and one copy for each pair; for each pair, a blank bar graph sheet (four seasons along the bottom, temperature in °C up the side in twos from 0 to 24); six prediction cards; pencils; the class weather table.
- **Lesson 4:** a globe; a world map; three A4 climate picture cards and three climate fact cards (in Lesson 4); the Little Hill season table from lesson 3; for each group of 4-5, a "climate clues" sheet; pencils; the class weather table.
- **Lesson 5:** for each group of 4-5, a shallow plastic tray or box about 30 cm long with a rim at least 5 cm high, damp washed play sand, a small wooden block or a plastic brick (the "house"), a square of paper towel about 5 cm across under the house (at least three per group, one for each pour), a plastic jug with 200 ml of water marked on it, a pouring cup, a lump of modelling clay (latex-free, about the size of a tennis ball), eight lolly sticks, a book or block about 3 cm thick to tilt the tray; a few spare paper towel squares; a results chart; three design picture cards (a flood barrier, a lightning rod on a roof, a roof tied down with strong straps); aprons, cloths and a bucket for wet sand.
- For blind or low-vision children: a talking thermometer or a large tactile thermometer model with a sliding strip and raised marks every 2 °C; a rain gauge ruler with raised marks every 10 mm; a ribbon streamer they can hold to feel which way it is blown; tactile bar graphs (stuck-on card squares); tactile climate cards (for example warm damp leaves texture, dry sand, cold smooth plastic); the tray test can be checked by feeling whether the paper towel is wet.
- Hand-washing sinks, paper towels.

⚠ Safety and access

- **Outside (lesson 1 and the daily record).** The weather station is in a place the teacher has checked, inside the school grounds, where children can stand safely. Readings are taken with an adult. Nobody climbs to reach the instruments; the thermometer and gauge are fixed at a height children can reach from the ground.
- **The rain gauge.** An adult cuts the bottle and covers the cut edge with tape. Children never cut it. Empty it after each reading.
- **Thermometer.** Use a plastic-cased spirit thermometer, never a mercury or a glass one. Never look at the Sun; the thermometer goes in the shade.
- **Bad weather.** In storms, lightning or ice, nobody goes out: the adult takes the reading later, or the table says "not read today". That is honest data too.
- **Feelings (lessons 4 and 5).** Some children may have lived through a flood, a storm, a fire or other hard weather. Tell families before lesson 5 what it is about. Talk about hazards calmly, with no frightening pictures or stories. Any child may sit out the talk and do the tray test only, or be a helper. Never ask children about their own homes or experiences.
- **Water and sand (lesson 5).** Aprons on; wipe spills at once so the floor is not slippery; sand stays in the trays and away from faces. Wash hands.
- **Modelling clay.** Check for latex and wheat allergies (some home-made dough contains wheat).
- Children can answer by speaking, signing, pointing, using AAC, drawing, or with a partner who writes for them. Their own way counts.

- Deaf children: show every picture and table while it is described; face the class when reading fact cards aloud. Blind and low-vision children: use the tactile materials above; a partner reads the numbers aloud.
- Colour is never the only clue: bar graphs use a label on each bar, and sky cards have a picture and a word.
- Wheelchair users: put the weather station on a firm, level path at a height they can reach; trays go on a table they can reach.

Assessment

Watch and listen during lessons, and use the closing checks. During lesson 5 or the following week, see each child for about 3 minutes with the materials listed (answers in brackets):

1. Show the teaching thermometer picture set to 14 °C and the rain gauge with water at 6 mm. "What is the temperature? How much rain fell?" (14 °C; 6 mm.) Hold the streamer so it blows towards the south (or show a picture of this). "Where is the wind coming from?" (From the north.) (Outcome 1.)
2. Show the Little Hill week table from lesson 2. "Which day was coldest? How much rain fell in all?" (Wednesday, 8 °C; 18 mm.) (Outcome 2.)
3. Show the child's own pictograph from lesson 2. "How many more cloudy days than sunny days?" (3.) (Outcome 3.)
4. Show the Little Hill season table from lesson 3. "What is summer usually like in Little Hill?" (Warm, about 22 °C, with few rainy days, about 5.) "Will every summer day be 22 °C?" (No; that is what is usual, and some days and some summers are warmer or cooler.) (Outcome 4.)
5. Show the desert picture card and fact card from lesson 4. "Tell me about the climate there." (Very dry, little rain; any detail from the cards.) "What is the difference between weather and climate?" (Weather is what it is like today; climate is what it is usually like over many years.) (Outcome 5.)
6. Show the class results chart from lesson 5. "Which barrier worked better? How do you know?" (The one where the paper towel under the house stayed driest; any answer that matches the class's results and gives that evidence.) (Outcome 6.)

Sources

Quoted exactly; the unit is not a full alignment to these standards.

- Next Generation Science Standards, grade 3, Weather and Climate: https://www.nextgenscience.org/topic-arrangement/3weather-and-climate
  - 3-ESS2-1: "Represent data in tables and graphical displays to describe typical weather conditions expected during a particular season." Clarification statement: "Examples of data could include average temperature, precipitation, and wind direction." Assessment boundary: "Assessment of graphical displays is limited to pictographs and bar graphs. Assessment does not include climate change."
  - 3-ESS2-2: "Obtain and combine information to describe climates in different regions of the world."
  - 3-ESS3-1: "Make a claim about the merit of a design solution that reduces the impacts of a weather-related hazard." Clarification statement: "Examples of design solutions to weather-related hazards could include barriers to prevent flooding, wind resistant roofs, and lightning rods."

    - ESS2.D: "Scientists record patterns of the weather across different times and areas so that they can make predictions about what kind of weather might happen next." "Climate describes a range of an area's typical weather conditions and the extent to which those conditions vary over years."
    - ESS3.B: "Humans cannot eliminate natural hazards but can take steps to reduce their impacts."
- Wikipedia (lead paragraphs, read 2026-11-12):
    - Weather: "Weather refers to day-to-day temperature, precipitation, and other atmospheric conditions, whereas climate is the term for the averaging of atmospheric conditions over longer periods of time."
    - Climate: "Climate is the long-term weather pattern in a region, typically averaged over 30 years."
    - Wind direction: "Wind direction is generally reported by the direction from which the wind originates. For example, a north or northerly wind blows from the north to the south".
    - Rain gauge: it is used "to determine the depth of precipitation (usually in mm)".
    - Tropical rainforest climate: "high mean annual temperatures, small temperature ranges, high humidity, and rain that falls throughout the year with no dry season"; "usually found within 10 to 15 degrees latitude of the equator".
    - Desert climate: "The typically bald, rocky, or sandy surfaces in desert climates are dry and hold little moisture, quickly evaporating the already little rainfall they receive."; "There are two variations of a desert climate according to the Köppen climate classification: a hot desert climate (BWh), and a cold desert climate (BWk)."
    - Tundra climate: "located in high latitudes and high mountains"; "at least one month has an average temperature high enough to melt snow 0 °C (32 °F), but no month with an average temperature in excess of 10 °C (50 °F)"; "Rainfall and snowfall are generally slight".
    - Lightning rod: "If lightning hits the structure, it is most likely to strike the rod and be conducted to ground through a wire, rather than passing through the structure, where it could start a fire or cause electrocution."
    - Flood barrier: "Flood barrier may also refer to barriers placed around or at individual buildings to keep floodwaters from entering the buildings."

Known gaps and cautions

- Two other agents text-checked this unit on 2026-11-12 and reported no errors: Gemini 3.8 Flash (at 903d528) and Gemini 4 Argon (at 823de91). Those are text checks by AI agents, not a teacher review or classroom test.
- Little Hill is a made-up place, and all its weather numbers (the week table, the twenty days, the season table and the three summers) are made up by the author to be easy to graph. They are examples, not real data.
- The climate cards describe climate types from Wikipedia, not named countries or peoples. The fact cards say nothing about how people live there, to avoid passing on stereotypes. A teacher may add real places from a good atlas.
- The season table fits a place with four clear seasons, like many places in North America and Europe. In the southern half of the world the seasons fall in different months, and many places near the equator have wet and dry seasons instead. Teachers there should use their own seasons.
- The unit does not explain **why** seasons happen (the tilt of the Earth); that is left for grade 5 in the science progression.

- Following the 3-ESS2-1 assessment boundary, the unit does not teach or assess climate change.
- Averages are not taught: "usual" temperatures are given in the table, and children compare them, but they do not calculate a mean. Wind speed and humidity are not measured.
- The tray test is a model: real flood barriers are much bigger and water pushes harder on them. Two designs and one pour each is a small test, not proof. The lesson builds on grade 2's sand-hill test, so some children may remember the idea; the new part is a claim about merit with evidence.
- Lightning rods and strong roofs are discussed from picture cards only; nothing electrical is tested.
- The lesson order, the instruments, the made-up data, the card wording and the assessment items are the author's own choices, not taken from a source.
- Timings are untested guesses. Going outside to the weather station with a full class takes time.
- No images yet.

Lesson 1: Measuring the weather

Unit overview - Next: Tables and graphs

Back to the grade 3 year plan

Goal

Children learn to read a thermometer, a rain gauge and a wind streamer with a compass, set up the class weather station, and write the first row of the class weather table.

Length

About 40 minutes: Opening 5, Main activity 25, Discussion 5, Closing check 5.

Materials

- An outdoor thermometer with a plastic case and a large Celsius scale (spirit-filled, not mercury), fixed in the shade at a height children can read from the ground.
- A rain gauge: a straight-sided clear plastic bottle cut by an adult, with the cut edge covered in tape, the top turned upside down as a funnel, and a ruler taped on the outside with 0 at the bottom of the water space. A bought plastic rain gauge also works. Put it in an open place away from walls and trees, standing firmly (for example in a pot of sand).
- A cup of water, to show how the rain gauge works.
- A wind streamer: a ribbon about 50 cm long tied to a stick or a fence.
- A compass (one from the magnets unit) and four direction cards (N, E, S, W).
- The class weather table on a large sheet, with five columns: date, temperature in °C, rain in mm, wind from, sky.
- Sky picture cards, each with a picture and a word: sunny, cloudy, rain, snow, fog.
- A large teaching thermometer picture with a moving strip (a red paper strip that slides up and down a card thermometer marked every 2 °C from -10 to 40).
- For each pair: a thermometer practice sheet with six thermometer pictures to read (answers in Closing check), and a pencil.
- For blind or low-vision children: a talking thermometer, or the tactile thermometer model with raised marks every 2 °C; a rain gauge ruler with raised marks every 10 mm; the streamer to hold.

Steps

✎ Opening (5 min)

Ask: "What was the weather like on the way to school today?" Collect words: sunny, cloudy, windy, wet, cold, warm. Say: "In kindergarten we used pictures for the weather. Scientists use **instruments** to measure the weather with numbers. Numbers let us compare one day with another. Today we start our own **weather station**."

Show the three instruments and name them: **thermometer** (how warm or cold), **rain gauge** (how much rain), **wind streamer** and compass (where the wind comes from).

✎ Main activity (25 min)

- **Reading a thermometer (8 min).** Use the teaching thermometer picture. Point out that the numbers go up in twos, and that the marks between the numbers are the odd numbers. Slide the strip to 10, 14, 21 (between 20 and 22) and 0, and read each together: "The top of the red strip is level with... 14 degrees Celsius." Write **°C** and say it. Pairs read the first three pictures on the practice sheet.
- **Reading a rain gauge (5 min).** Show the gauge. Pour in a little water from a cup to show how it works. "The rain falls into the funnel. We read where the top of the water is on the ruler, in **millimetres** (mm). Then we empty it, ready for tomorrow." Read the level together.
- **Wind from... (5 min).** Go outside to the weather station (or look from the window if it is not safe to go out). One child holds the compass flat and the class finds north. Put the four direction cards on the ground around the streamer. "Look which way the ribbon is blown. Weather scientists say where the wind **comes from**, not where it is going. If the ribbon is blown towards the south, the wind is coming from the north: a north wind."
- **First readings (7 min).** With the class watching, two helpers read the thermometer and the rain gauge (if it has had no time to catch rain, write 0), look at the streamer and the sky, and the teacher writes the first row of the class weather table. If there is no wind, write "calm". Agree the daily time for readings, and the first pair of weather helpers.

✓ Discussion questions (5 min, with answers)

- "Why do we read the weather at the same time every day?" (So that days are fair to compare; the afternoon is usually warmer than the early morning.)
- "Why is the thermometer in the shade?" (In the sun it gets warm itself and reads higher than the air; we want the air's temperature.)
- "The ribbon is blowing towards the east. Where is the wind coming from?" (From the west.)
- "Why do we empty the rain gauge after reading it?" (So that tomorrow's number shows only the new rain.)

✓ Closing check (5 min, with answers)

Pairs finish the practice sheet, then check together. The six pictures show:

1. 12 °C (answer: 12)
2. 6 °C (answer: 6)
3. 17 °C, one mark above 16 (answer: 17)
4. 25 °C, one mark above 24 (answer: 25)
5. 0 °C (answer: 0)
6. 30 °C (answer: 30)

Then show with a thumb up or down: "Is a 6 °C day warmer than a 12 °C day?" (Down: no, colder.)

Vocabulary

weather, instrument, thermometer, degrees Celsius (°C), rain gauge, millimetre (mm), wind direction, compass, north, east, south, west

Differentiation

- **More help:** read only the numbered marks (10, 20, 30) first; an adult slides the strip while the child says "higher" or "lower".
- **More challenge:** read a thermometer picture below zero (for example -4 °C) and say what might happen to a puddle on that day (it may freeze).
- Children who use a talking thermometer or the tactile model take a full turn as a weather helper.

⚠ Safety

- Readings outside are taken with an adult. Nobody climbs to reach an instrument.
- Plastic-cased spirit thermometer only; never mercury or glass.
- An adult cuts the rain gauge bottle and tapes the edge.
- Never look at the Sun. In storms, lightning or ice, nobody goes out: write "not read today".

Teacher notes and misconceptions

- Children often read the bottom of the bulb, or the number nearest the top instead of the level of the top. Model "level with the top of the strip".
- The odd numbers are not written on many thermometers. Counting in twos from the last number helps.
- "A north wind blows to the north" is a common mix-up. Keep saying "comes from".
- A compass can be pulled off north by steel nearby (a fence, a car, a radiator); stand a few steps away, as in the magnets unit.
- The table is real data. If a reading is missed, leave the box empty or write "not read"; never make up a number to fill it.

Lesson 2: Tables and graphs

Unit overview - Previous: Measuring the weather - Next: What is each season usually like?

Back to the grade 3 year plan

Goal

Children read a weather table for one week, make a pictograph of twenty days' weather and a bar graph of rain, and answer "how many more" questions from their graphs.

Length

About 40 minutes: Opening 5, Main activity 25, Discussion 5, Closing check 5. The weather helpers take today's reading before or after the lesson.

Materials

- The class weather table from lesson 1.
- The Little Hill week table (below) on the board, and one copy for each pair.
- For each pair: the twenty-day weather list (below) and a blank pictograph sheet (four rows: sunny, cloudy, rain, fog; key "one sun, cloud, raindrop or fog picture = 1 day").
- For each pair: a blank bar graph sheet, with the five days (Monday to Friday) along the bottom and "rain in mm" up the side in twos from 0 to 14.
- Pencils and coloured pencils; squared paper for stretch.
- For blind or low-vision children: a tactile copy of the week table (large print or braille), and card squares with sticky backs to build the bar graph by touch.

The Little Hill week table

This is made-up data for the made-up town of Little Hill, in autumn. It is an example, not from a source.

Day	Temperature (°C)	Rain (mm)	Wind from	Sky
Monday	11	0	west	sunny
Tuesday	9	4	west	rain
Wednesday	8	12	south-west	rain
Thursday	12	0	north	cloudy
Friday	10	2	west	rain

The twenty-day weather list

Twenty school days in Little Hill (made up): sunny 5 days, cloudy 8 days, rain 6 days, fog 1 day.

Steps

✎ Opening (5 min)

Look at the class weather table together: "How many days have we recorded so far? What was the warmest reading?" Say: "A **table** keeps numbers tidy in rows and columns. Today we read a whole week of weather from a place called Little Hill, and make **graphs** that show the pattern at a glance."

✎ Main activity (25 min)

- **Reading the week table (8 min).** Read the headings together. Point to a row: "Each row is one day." Point to a column: "Each column is one kind of measurement." Ask pairs, one at a time, and let them point to the answer:
  - "What was the temperature on Thursday?" (12 °C.)
  - "Which day was coldest?" (Wednesday, 8 °C.)
  - "Which day had the most rain?" (Wednesday, 12 mm.)
  - "On how many days did it rain?" (3: Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday.)
  - "Where did the wind usually come from this week?" (The west; on 3 of the 5 days.)
- **Pictograph (8 min).** Pairs draw one picture for each day in the twenty-day list: 5 suns, 8 clouds, 6 raindrops and 1 fog picture, in neat lines so the rows can be compared.
- **Bar graph of rain (9 min).** Model one bar on the board: Tuesday, 4 mm, "two squares up, because each line goes up in twos". Pairs draw the bars for all five days (Monday 0, Tuesday 4, Wednesday 12, Thursday 0, Friday 2) and label each bar with its number. A day with 0 mm has no bar; write 0 above it.

✓ Discussion questions (5 min, with answers)

- "Look at your pictograph. What kind of weather happened most often?" (Cloudy, 8 days.)
- "How many more cloudy days than sunny days?" (3; 8 - 5.)
- "On how many of the twenty days was there no rain?" (14; 5 + 8 + 1, or 20 - 6.)
- "How much rain fell in the whole week?" (18 mm; 0 + 4 + 12 + 0 + 2.)
- "Which is quicker for seeing the wettest day: the table or the bar graph?" (Usually the bar graph: the tallest bar shows it at once. Any reason is fine.)

✓ Closing check (5 min, with answers)

Each child answers on paper, aloud or by pointing at their graphs:

1. "How many more rain days than sunny days?" (1; 6 - 5.)
2. "How much more rain fell on Wednesday than on Tuesday?" (8 mm; 12 - 4.)
3. "What was the difference between the warmest and the coldest day?" (4 °C; 12 - 8.)

Vocabulary

table, row, column, pictograph, bar graph, key, scale, most, fewest, how many more, in all

Differentiation

- **More help:** use the pictograph only; count rows by touching each picture; an adult draws the bar graph scale lines in ones instead of twos.
- **More challenge:** make a pictograph where one picture means 2 days (a half picture for 1 day), or draw a bar graph of the temperatures on squared paper.
- Children who find drawing hard can stick on picture cards or card squares.

⚠ Safety

- No special hazards. Coloured pencils stay on the table.

Teacher notes and misconceptions

- Children may count the squares instead of reading the scale. Ask "What number is at the top of this bar?"
- A 0 mm day is often forgotten in a bar graph, or given a small bar. "No rain, no bar" helps.
- The week table has a "rain" day (Friday) with only 2 mm: a light shower still counts as rain.
- Little Hill data are made up to be easy to graph. Real weather is usually messier, which children will see in their own class table.

Lesson 3: What is each season usually like?

Unit overview - Previous: Tables and graphs - Next: Climates around the world

Back to the grade 3 year plan

Goal

Children use a table of usual weather in each season to make a bar graph, say what each season is usually like, compare three summers to see that "usually" does not mean "always", and make careful predictions.

Length

About 40 minutes: Opening 5, Main activity 25, Discussion 5, Closing check 5.

Materials

- The class weather table.
- The Little Hill season table and the three summers table (below) on the board, and one copy of each for each pair.
- For each pair: a blank bar graph sheet with the four seasons (winter, spring, summer, autumn) along the bottom and "usual afternoon temperature in °C" up the side in twos from 0 to 24.
- Six prediction cards (below), large enough for the class to see.
- Pencils and coloured pencils.
- For blind or low-vision children: tactile or large-print copies of the tables, and card squares with sticky backs for the bar graph.

The Little Hill season table

Made-up data for the made-up town of Little Hill: what a month in each season is usually like, from many years of records. It is an example, not from a source.

Season	Usual afternoon temperature (°C)	Rainy days in a month	Snowy days in a month
Winter	4	10	3
Spring	12	8	0
Summer	22	5	0
Autumn	14	12	0

The three summers table

Made-up data: the same summer month in three different years in Little Hill.

Year	Afternoon temperature that month (°C)	Rainy days
First year	21	4
Second year	24	7

Year	Afternoon temperature that month (°C)	Rainy days
Third year	22	5

The prediction cards

Each card names a season in Little Hill and two possible tomorrows. Children choose the one that is **more likely**.

1. Winter: 3 °C or 25 °C? (3 °C.)
2. Summer: 22 °C or 2 °C? (22 °C.)
3. Winter: snow or no snow? (No snow is more likely: snow falls on about 3 days of a month, so most days have none.)
4. Autumn: a rainy day or a dry day? (A dry day is a little more likely: about 12 rainy days in a month of about 30, so about 18 dry days.)
5. Spring: 12 °C or 30 °C? (12 °C.)
6. Summer: snow or no snow? (No snow; the table shows 0 snowy days.)

Steps

✎ Opening (5 min)

Ask: "Is it warmer here in summer or in winter?" Say: "Weather changes every day, but there are **patterns**. People in Little Hill have kept weather records for many years, so they know what each **season** is **usually** like. Scientists use patterns like these to make careful guesses, called **predictions**, about what weather might happen next."

✎ Main activity (25 min)

- **Reading the season table (6 min).** Read the headings. Ask:
  - "Which season is usually warmest?" (Summer, 22 °C.)
  - "Which is usually coldest?" (Winter, 4 °C.)
  - "Which season usually has the most rainy days?" (Autumn, 12.)
  - "When does snow usually fall?" (Only in winter.)
- **Bar graph of temperatures (10 min).** Pairs draw one bar for each season and write its number on top: winter 4, spring 12, summer 22, autumn 14. Model the first bar: "4 is two squares up, because the lines go up in twos."
- **Three summers (5 min).** Look at the three summers table. "Was every summer the same?" (No: 21, 24 and 22 °C; 4, 7 and 5 rainy days.) "But were they all warm?" (Yes, all much warmer than winter's 4 °C.) Say: "That is what **usually** means. Each summer is a bit different, but the pattern stays the same."
- **Predictions (4 min).** Show the six prediction cards one at a time. Children vote for the more likely tomorrow with a thumb up for the first choice or a thumb down for the second, and one pair explains using the table.

✓ Discussion questions (5 min, with answers)

- "How many degrees warmer is summer than winter, usually?" (18 °C; 22 - 4.)

- "Which two seasons are most alike in temperature?" (Spring and autumn, 12 and 14 °C.)
- "If it is summer, could tomorrow still be cold and rainy?" (Yes, it could; it is just less likely. A prediction is a careful guess, not a promise.)
- "How could our own weather table help us one day?" (After many weeks and years, it shows what our seasons are usually like.)

✓ Closing check (5 min, with answers)

Each child writes or says one sentence for each:

1. "In Little Hill, winter is usually..." (Cold, about 4 °C, sometimes snowy; any answer that fits the table.)
2. "In Little Hill, summer is usually..." (Warm, about 22 °C, with fewer rainy days; any answer that fits the table.)
3. True or false: "Every summer in Little Hill is exactly 22 °C." (False; the summers were 21, 24 and 22 °C.)

Vocabulary

season, winter, spring, summer, autumn (fall), usually, pattern, predict, prediction, likely

Differentiation

- **More help:** draw only the summer and winter bars; use the words "warm" and "cold" before numbers.
- **More challenge:** make a second bar graph of rainy days in each season, or work out how many dry days there usually are in an autumn month of 30 days (18).
- Children may answer the prediction cards by pointing, signing or using AAC.

⚠ Safety

- No special hazards.

Teacher notes and misconceptions

- Some children think a prediction is always right, or that a wrong forecast means scientists "lied". Stress "careful guess using patterns".
- "Fall" and "autumn" mean the same season; use the word your school uses.
- Seasons fall in different months in different parts of the world (see Known gaps in the unit overview). Do not teach the months of each season as a fact for everyone.
- Little Hill numbers are made up. Real records for your area may be online from your national weather service; a teacher may compare them in a later lesson.

Lesson 4: Climates around the world

Unit overview - Previous: What is each season usually like? - Next: Keeping flood water out

Back to the grade 3 year plan

Goal

Children learn the difference between weather and climate, and combine a picture card and a fact card to describe three very different climates in the world, finding where each is usually found on a globe.

Length

About 40 minutes: Opening 5, Main activity 25, Discussion 5, Closing check 5.

Materials

- A globe and a world map.
- Three A4 climate picture cards, drawn or printed by the teacher (described below), each with a title.
- Three climate fact cards (below), read aloud by an adult.
- The Little Hill season table from lesson 3.
- For each group of 4-5: a "climate clues" sheet with three boxes, one for each climate, and two lines in each box: "From the picture we found..." and "From the fact card we found...".
- Pencils; the class weather table.
- For blind or low-vision children: tactile climate cards (for example a damp leafy texture for the rainforest, dry sand for the desert, cold smooth plastic and short soft moss-like felt for the tundra), and a globe with a raised line round the middle (string or tape) for the equator.

The climate cards

The picture cards show land and weather only, with no people, so that nobody is shown as a stereotype. The fact cards use words from Wikipedia (see Sources in the unit overview), made simpler for grade 3.

- **Picture card A, tropical rainforest climate:** tall green trees close together, rain falling, a wet muddy path. **Fact card A:** "It is warm all year. It is very damp. Rain falls all through the year, and there is no dry season. This climate is usually found near the equator."
- **Picture card B, desert climate:** sand and rocks, very few plants, a clear blue sky. **Fact card B:** "It is dry. Very little rain falls, and the rain that does fall dries up quickly. The ground is often bare rock or sand. Some deserts are hot and some are cold."
- **Picture card C, tundra climate:** flat land with low plants and moss, patches of snow, a grey sky. **Fact card C:** "It is cold. Even in the warmest month it is never more than 10 °C, but there is at least one month warm enough to melt snow. Not much rain or snow falls. This climate is found far to the north or south, near the cold ends of the globe, and high up on mountains."

Steps

✎ Opening (5 min)

Look at today's row in the class weather table. Say: "This is today's **weather**. Weather is what it is like outside today. **Climate** is what the weather of a place is **usually** like over many, many years, about thirty years. Little Hill's season table shows Little Hill's climate: warm summers, cold winters, rain in every season." Ask: "Is 'it is raining now' weather or climate?" (Weather.) "Is 'it usually snows here in winter' weather or climate?" (Climate.)

✎ Main activity (25 min)

- **Clue hunt (15 min).** Each group gets the three picture cards in turn (about 5 minutes each; pass them round). For each card, the group finds two clues in the picture and writes or draws them in the "From the picture" line. Then the adult reads the matching fact card aloud and the group adds one clue to the "From the fact card" line.
- **On the globe (5 min).** Together, find the equator on the globe (the line round the middle). "Fact card A says rainforest climates are usually near the equator." Point to a band near it. "Fact card C says tundra is far to the north or south, near the cold ends, and high on mountains." Point to the far north. Say: "Deserts can be in many places, hot or cold, so the fact card does not give one place."
- **Putting clues together (5 min).** Each group chooses one climate and makes two sentences that use both cards, for example "In the rainforest climate it is warm all year (fact card) and the trees are close together and green (picture)."

✓ Discussion questions (5 min, with answers)

- "Which climate gets the least rain?" (The desert.)
- "Which climate is warm all year?" (The tropical rainforest climate.)
- "Which is never warmer than 10 °C?" (The tundra.)
- "Why did we use both the picture and the fact card?" (The picture shows some things, the fact card tells things a picture cannot, such as 'all year' or 'never more than 10 °C'. Two sources together tell us more.)
- "Is Little Hill's climate most like any of these?" (Not really: it has warm summers and cold winters; any sensible answer.)

✓ Closing check (5 min, with answers)

Read each sentence. Children hold up one finger for A (rainforest), two for B (desert) or three for C (tundra), or a closed fist for "weather" if it is not about a climate:

1. "Very little rain falls, and the ground is often bare." (B, two fingers.)
2. "It rains all through the year, and it is warm." (A, one finger.)
3. "Even the warmest month is cold." (C, three fingers.)
4. "It is foggy this morning." (Weather, a fist.)

Vocabulary

climate, weather, equator, globe, tropical rainforest, desert, tundra, dry, damp, all year

Differentiation

- **More help:** use only cards A and B, which are the most different; the adult reads every clue line.
- **More challenge:** compare one climate with Little Hill's season table: what is the same and what is different?
- Groups may draw their clues instead of writing them.

⚠ Safety

- No special hazards. Do not show frightening pictures of storms or hazards in this lesson.

Teacher notes and misconceptions

- "All deserts are hot" is common. Fact card B says some are cold; this comes from the Desert climate source.
- Children may think a climate means a whole country. Many countries have more than one climate; the cards describe climate types, not countries.
- Do not add sentences about how people live in these climates, what they wear or what homes they have; the unit leaves that out on purpose (see Known gaps in the unit overview).
- The "about thirty years" in the opening comes from the Climate source.

Lesson 5: Keeping flood water out

Unit overview - Previous: Climates around the world

Back to the grade 3 year plan

Goal

Children learn that people cannot stop weather hazards but can make the harm smaller. They test two model flood barriers around a model house, keeping the water the same, and make a claim about which design works better, giving evidence from their test.

Length

About 40 minutes: Opening 5, Main activity 25, Discussion 5, Closing check 5. The one-to-one assessment (see Assessment in the unit overview) happens during this lesson or the following week.

Materials

- For each group of 4-5: a shallow plastic tray or box about 30 cm long with a rim at least 5 cm high; damp washed play sand; a small wooden block or a plastic brick (the "house"); squares of paper towel about 5 cm across (one under the house for each pour, so at least three per group); a plastic jug with 200 ml of water marked on it; a pouring cup; a lump of latex-free modelling clay about the size of a tennis ball; eight lolly sticks; a book or a block about 3 cm thick to tilt the tray.
- A few spare paper towel squares.
- A results chart on the board with three rows (no barrier, lolly-stick wall, clay wall) and three columns for the paper towel: dry, damp, wet.
- Three design picture cards: a flood barrier (a low wall in front of a door and a row of sandbags), a lightning rod on a roof with a wire to the ground, and a roof tied down with strong straps.
- Aprons, cloths and a bucket for wet sand.
- For blind or low-vision children: the child feels the paper towel square after each pour (dry, a little damp, wet) and feels the barriers before pouring.

Steps

✎ Opening (5 min)

Tell families beforehand what the lesson is about. Any child may choose to be a helper or do only the tray test, with no reason needed.

Say calmly: "Sometimes weather is so strong that it can cause harm: very heavy rain can make rivers or streets flood, strong winds can lift roofs, and lightning can strike buildings. We call these **weather hazards**. People cannot stop the weather. But engineers **design** things that make the harm smaller. Today we test designs that keep flood water away from a house." Do not ask children about their own homes or experiences.

✎ Main activity (25 min)

Groups build a sand "town" in one half of the tray: a flat, low area with the house standing on a paper towel square in the middle. The "river" end is the other, empty end of the tray. Tip the tray up slightly at the river end (rest that end on the book or block) so that water poured there runs down towards the house.

- **No barrier (5 min).** Pour 200 ml of water slowly from the cup into the river end. Wait 30 seconds. Lift the house: is the paper towel dry, damp or wet? Record it. Put a new dry paper towel square under the house and smooth the sand.
- **Lolly-stick wall (8 min).** Push the eight lolly sticks side by side into the sand between the river and the house, as a wall. Pour the same 200 ml the same way, from the same place, at the same speed. Wait 30 seconds. Check the paper towel and record. Remove the sticks, change the paper towel and smooth the sand.
- **Clay wall (8 min).** Roll the clay into a long sausage and press it into the sand between the river and the house as a wall, pressing it down so there are no gaps underneath. Pour, wait, check and record as before.
- **Class chart (4 min).** Each group adds its three results to the class results chart.

✓ Discussion questions (5 min, with answers)

- "What did we keep the same each time?" (The amount of water, 200 ml; where and how fast we poured; the house; the tray and its tilt; how long we waited.)
- "Which design kept the house driest? How do you know?" (Usually the clay wall; any answer that matches the chart, with the paper towel as evidence.)
- "Make a claim: 'The ... wall is better because ...'." (For example, "The clay wall is better because the paper towel stayed dry, and water got through the gaps between the lolly sticks." Any claim with evidence from the chart.)
- "Did the barrier stop the rain?" (No; it kept water away from the house. It made the harm smaller.)
- Show the other two design cards. "What hazard does each one make less harmful?" (The lightning rod: lightning; it gives lightning a path to the ground through a wire instead of through the building. The strapped roof: strong wind; it keeps the roof from being lifted off.)

✓ Closing check (5 min, with answers)

Children answer by saying, signing or pointing:

1. "What did the barrier protect?" (The house.)
2. "Which hazard does a lightning rod help with?" (Lightning.)
3. "Did we change the amount of water between tests?" (No; it was always 200 ml.)

Then use the one-to-one assessment in the unit overview.

Vocabulary

hazard, flood, barrier, design, engineer, claim, evidence, lightning rod, fair test

Differentiation

- **More help:** test only no barrier and the clay wall; an adult pours.
- **More challenge:** design a third barrier with the same materials (for example clay pressed along the bottom of the lolly sticks) and test it the same way; or say one good and one bad thing about each design (for example, clay works well but takes longer to build).
- Children who prefer not to touch wet sand can pour, time the 30 seconds or record.

⚠ Safety

- Aprons on. Wipe spills straight away so the floor is not slippery.
- Sand stays in the trays and away from faces; wash hands afterwards.
- Check for latex and wheat allergies before using modelling clay.
- Talk about hazards calmly; no frightening pictures or stories. Any child may step out of the talk. Never ask about children's homes or experiences.

Teacher notes and misconceptions

- Some children think barriers stop the rain itself. Stress that the rain still falls; the barrier changes where the water goes.
- The lolly-stick wall usually leaks between the sticks and underneath; that is a useful result, not a failure.
- If results differ between groups, say so honestly: the sand, the tilt or the pouring may not have been quite the same. One test is not proof.
- In grade 2 the class protected a sand hill from water. Here the new idea is making a claim about which design is better, using evidence.
- The tray is a model. Real flood barriers are much larger, and real water pushes much harder.