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STUDENT FEATURES

Counting Contrails in the Sky

10

GLOBE needs your help.

Image to right: Contrails in the sky. Credit: NASA

We're looking for special clouds called contrails. We want students, teachers and parents all over the world to report the number of contrails in the sky on October 14-15. October 10-16 is Earth Science Week, a special week for learning about the land, air and water of our planet.



GLOBE is a NASA-sponsored, hands-on, science and education program for students in grade 5-8. GLOBE students take measurements of the environment and report them over the Internet. Student scientists around the world then use the data to learn more about the Earth system. Your work scientists who want to study how contrails affect the air and climate.

Contrails look like white lines in the sky. They form very high in the air where airplanes fly. An airplane engine releases small particles and gases called exhaust. Invisible water molecules called water are in the exhaust and in the air around the plane. The air is very cold at this height. So if conditions are right, the water vapor condenses into water drops. The water drops then freeze around small particles from the exhaust, and a contrail cloud forms.

See pictures of the different kinds of contrails at <http://www.globe.gov/earthsciweek2004>. There are also directions on how to send us your contrail counts. Talk to your teachers or parents. They can help you identify the contrails in the sky and report what you see.

View GLOBE site:
<http://www.globe.gov>

Related Resources

GLOBE Contrail Education
<http://asd-www.larc.nasa.gov/GLOBE/contrails>

Cloud Match Game
http://www.nasa.gov/audience/forkids/games/G_Cloud_Memory_and_Matching.html

Julia Cole, NASA Langley Research Center



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NASA Official: Brian Dunbar
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