

How thick is the atmosphere?

What does it teach? Earth's Atmosphere

Background: Earth is surrounded by invisible gases that form a thin protective blanket that we call the atmosphere. It contains the oxygen that we breathe as well as other important gases such as nitrogen, carbon dioxide, water vapor, and ozone. It protects us from the Sun's harmful rays, burns and destroys meteors that are headed toward Earth, and keeps our planet from having extreme temperature changes. Without this protective blanket we would have very hot days and freezing nights.

The atmosphere is divided vertically into four layers based on temperature: the troposphere, stratosphere, mesosphere, and thermosphere. Most of the atmosphere is in the troposphere which starts from the ground level and extends to about 10 miles above. We live in the troposphere, where most of our weather conditions, like rain, clouds, and storms are produced.

Description: MLO staff discuss the atmosphere with the students, answering questions and asking trivia. A large inflatable rubber globe is often used to illustrate Earth and aid in explaining atmospheric properties.



John shows a globe and discusses the atmosphere



John asks the students questions and explains his answers.