

Thunderstorms

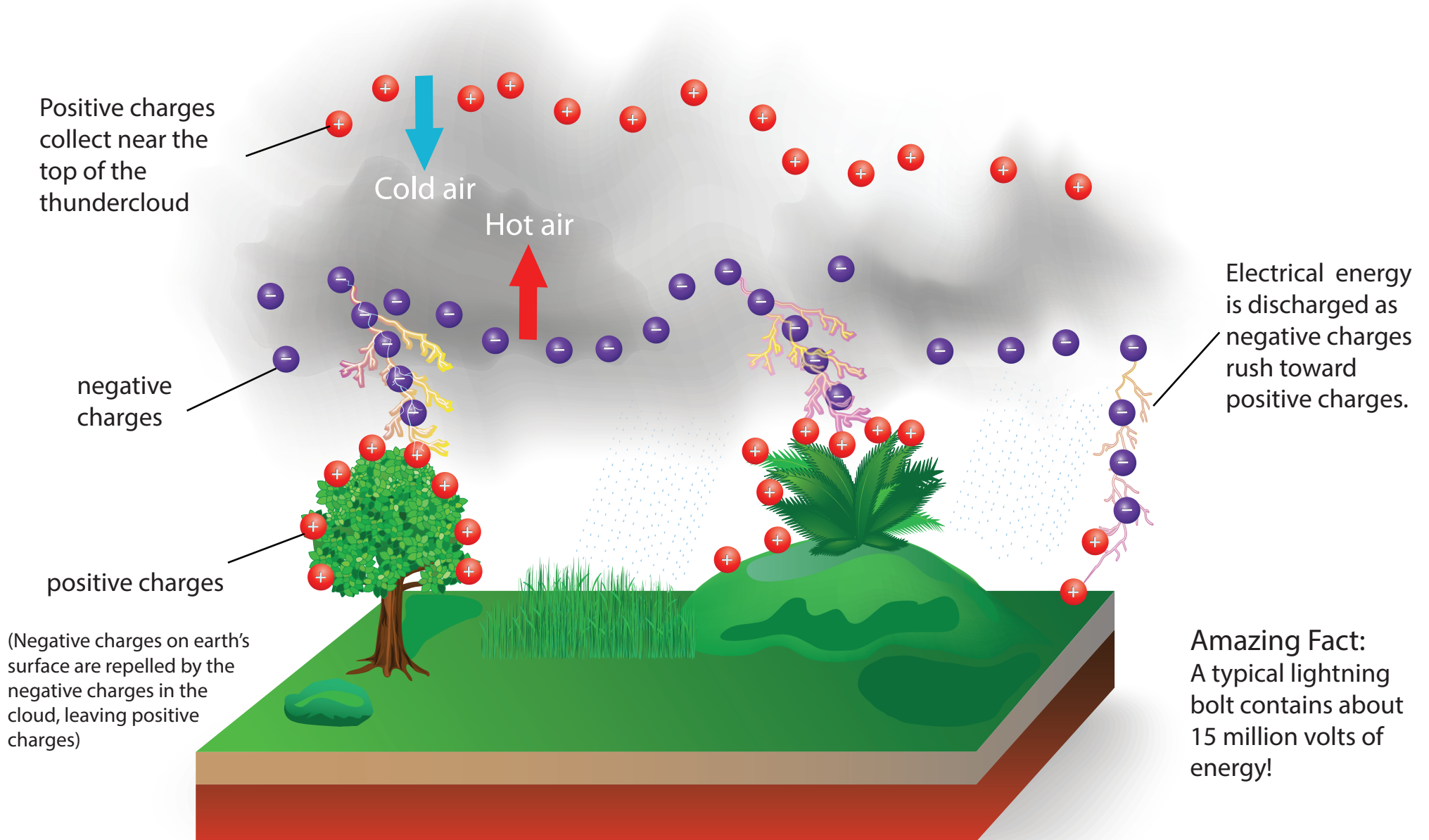
Discussion Questions:

- 1) What causes thunderstorms?
- 2) What is lightning?
- 3) What is thunder?
- 4) Why are thunderstorms dangerous?



Thunderstorms typically form in cumulonimbus clouds. These clouds form when rapidly rising moist air meets cooler air high in the atmosphere. Rain droplets and hail may form within the cloud and damaging winds may also be produced as the storm front moves across the land. Lightning strikes may also cause damage if they meet with trees or buildings. Most thunderstorms are over within about half an hour, but a thunderstorm can last for a few hours when many cells of clouds form together.

How Lightning Is Formed







Why does thunder always follow lightning?

Lightning is the sudden flash of light we see in the sky during a thunderstorm when negative charges in the cloud rush toward positive charges on the earth. The resulting lightning bolt is a powerful release of electricity.

The sound of thunder that accompanies lightning is caused by the sudden increase in pressure and temperature in the column of air below the lightning strike. Thunder is like a sonic shockwave. It can sound like a loud cracking noise or a low rumbling noise.

Light travels through the air extremely quickly, at about 300 million metres per second. Sound moves more slowly, at about 300 metres per second. This is why we always see lightning before we hear thunder.

What would you do?

