Interesting Facts About Thunder and Lightning by Cody

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Thunder and lightning are among the most common phenomena of the nature that we see very often. We all know how powerful thunder and lightning are. There is none who is not fascinated by the sight of thunder and lightning. It seems as though God is trying to send a message across to the people on earth by means of thunder/ lightning. It is just like how we see the fantasy things in the popular Movie Channels. All right! Let us now discuss a few interesting facts about thunder and lightning.

First, let us know what really causes thunder? Thunder is nothing but a lightning bolt that occurs due to the rapid expansion and contraction of the bolt. The lightning bolt is almost five times hotter than the sun and its temperature is believed to be 50,000 degree Fahrenheit. When thunder strikes, the air around the lightning bolt becomes extremely hot. This occurs in a matter of a few seconds. However, the heat in the air doesnâ€™t stay for long too. It occurs and disappears in a matter of a few seconds. The continuous compression and expansion of the air around the lightning bolt as waves produces the loud sound that we call the thunder.

An interesting question about thunder is, why is there is a fractional delay in the appearance of thunder and lightning though they both seem to happen at the same time?

The answer is, it is only because of the difference in their speeds. Light travels at a speed of about 187,000 miles per second while sound travels at a speed of 0.211 miles per second. This is the reason why lightning reaches the earth much faster than thunder. To give you a practical observation, the next time when you see lightning and thunder, just try to calculate the difference in the time gap of light and sound. Even if your calculation is approximate, divide the number (the time difference) by 5. This will give you a figure that is more or less equal to the distance in miles of the time difference. Note that, the result may also be influenced by factors like the altitude. But you will get more or less the correct value if your observation and recording is fair.

What makes thunder rumble?

There are several reasons as to why the thunder rumbles. Firstly, the lightning bolt or the thunder doesnâ€™t appear in a straight line. And the nodes are also not equidistant from each other. A lightning bolt always happens in a zigzag manner is also four miles long. Moreover, the high speed of the lightning bolt may cause it to spread all over the place in a unsteady manner. So, the unequal distance of the nodes, zigzag motion and the high speed of motion of the lightning bolt makes thunder rumble. And the wave that accompanies thunder appears closer and louder to us too.

The second factor can be attributed to the blocks that tend to disrupt the lightning bolt. As a matter of fact, thunder is subjected to being deviated and bounced back by the clouds, terrains, mountains, and other gigantic objects that come in its way. Just like how our voice echoes back in places where there is no object to absorb sound, even the sound waves of thunder get bounced back by the large obstructions.

High frequency is another reason why thunder dissipates quickly in the air. Practically speaking, noise made in a low frequency is much louder than the noise made in lower frequencies. Sometimes if you see the lightning and no thunder, it means that the thunder has bounced back because of the frequency range.

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