

Make a wind vane.

Did you know that the sun is responsible for creating winds? As the air is warmed by the sun, it rises, and colder, denser air moves in to replace it. This is wind! Geographical features, such as mountains, bodies of water and deserts, help determine the nature of wind—its speed and direction.

The direction of wind (where it is blowing *from*) often affects the weather. For roughly two-thirds of the continental United States good weather is brought by northwest, west and southwest winds; bad weather is generally blown in by winds from the northeast, east and southeast. You can make your own wind vane to check wind direction.

Make an indicator with a straw and two triangles cut from thin cardboard (see the diagram). Cut slits in the straw ends and glue the triangles in place. Stick a pin right through the middle of the straw into a pencil eraser. Make sure it swings freely. Support the pencil in a yogurt container that is anchored to a board with some modeling clay. Place the vane on a flat surface outdoors and mark N, E, S, and W on the container. The arrow will point to the direction the wind is blowing from. Can you predict what weather the winds will bring?

