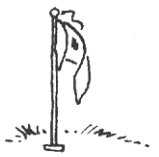
weather watch

Beaufort Scale

The Beaufort scale was originally designed by Francis Beaufort, a British admiral, in the early 1800s to help guide ships. It calculated wind speed at sea, but it has since been adapted for use on land. The Weather Bureau, though it uses an anemometer to measure wind speed, still reports winds to us using the Beaufort Scale.

It gives you a great way to judge the speed of wind—anywhere, any time—by watching the things that the wind moves. Memorize it and you'll be able to amaze people with your accurate readings.

0: Calm
Smoke goes straight up
Wind Speed: Less than 1mph



1: Light air
Smoke drifts in direction of wind
Wind Speed: 1–3mph

2: Light breeze
Wind felt on face; leaves rustle; flags stir; weather vanes turn
Wind Speed: 4–7mph

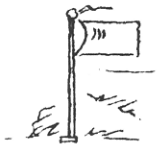
3: Gentle breeze
Leaves and twigs move constantly; light flags blow out
Wind Speed: 8–12mph

4: Moderate breeze
Dust, loose papers, and small branches move; flags flap
Wind Speed: 13–18mph

5: Fresh breeze
Small trees in leaf begin to sway; Flags ripple
Wind Speed: 19–24mph

6: Strong breeze
Large branches in motion; flags beat; umbrellas turn inside out
Wind Speed: 25–31mph

7: Moderate gale
Whole trees in motion; flags are extended
Wind Speed: 32–38mph



8: Fresh gale
Twigs break off trees; walking is hard
Wind Speed: 32–38mph

9: Strong gale
Slight damage to houses—TV antennas may blow off, awnings rip
Wind Speed: 47–54mph

10: Whole gale
Trees uprooted; much damage to houses
Wind Speed: 55–63mph

11: Storm
Widespread damage
Wind Speed: 64–75mph

12: Hurricane
Excessive damage
Wind Speed: more than 75mph