

# Lightning

## **Narrator:**

Lightning is a common natural event—one that scientists are still learning about.

You're most likely to see lightning in summer, when it breaks the peace and quiet of a hot day.

Around the world, lightning happens 50 to 100 times a second. Lightning happens most often in Central Africa, the Himalayas, and South America.

We can often see lightning flashing between storm clouds and the earth.

Lightning is electricity. Scientists don't fully agree about why the lightning escapes from the cloud. But they generally agree that lightning occurs because of electricity moving up and down inside the cloud. Some particles move to the top of the cloud and get a positive charge. Other particles move down and get a negative charge. The positive and negative charges get stronger, and this creates electricity—lightning—between the two parts of the cloud.

Lightning mainly stays inside the cloud, but sometimes it reaches the earth. The energy of the

lightning is very strong, but it is finished after less than a second. Lightning looks like one flash coming down, but it's really a series of return flashes reaching back into the cloud.

Inside the lightning, the temperature is more than 28,000 degrees Celsius. This high temperature changes the pressure inside the lightning, and that makes the sound of thunder.

In the United States, you're most likely to see lightning in Florida. The hot, wet weather conditions there create thunder clouds, and these clouds produce lightning.

Lightning is nature at its most dangerous. Every year, it causes about 100 deaths in the United States—more than hurricanes or tornadoes. If you're in a lightning storm, you should go inside a building, or get in a car, and wait for the storm to end. As a rule, it's best to stay away from high places and tall trees.

Lightning is a natural and common event, but one that can be deadly.