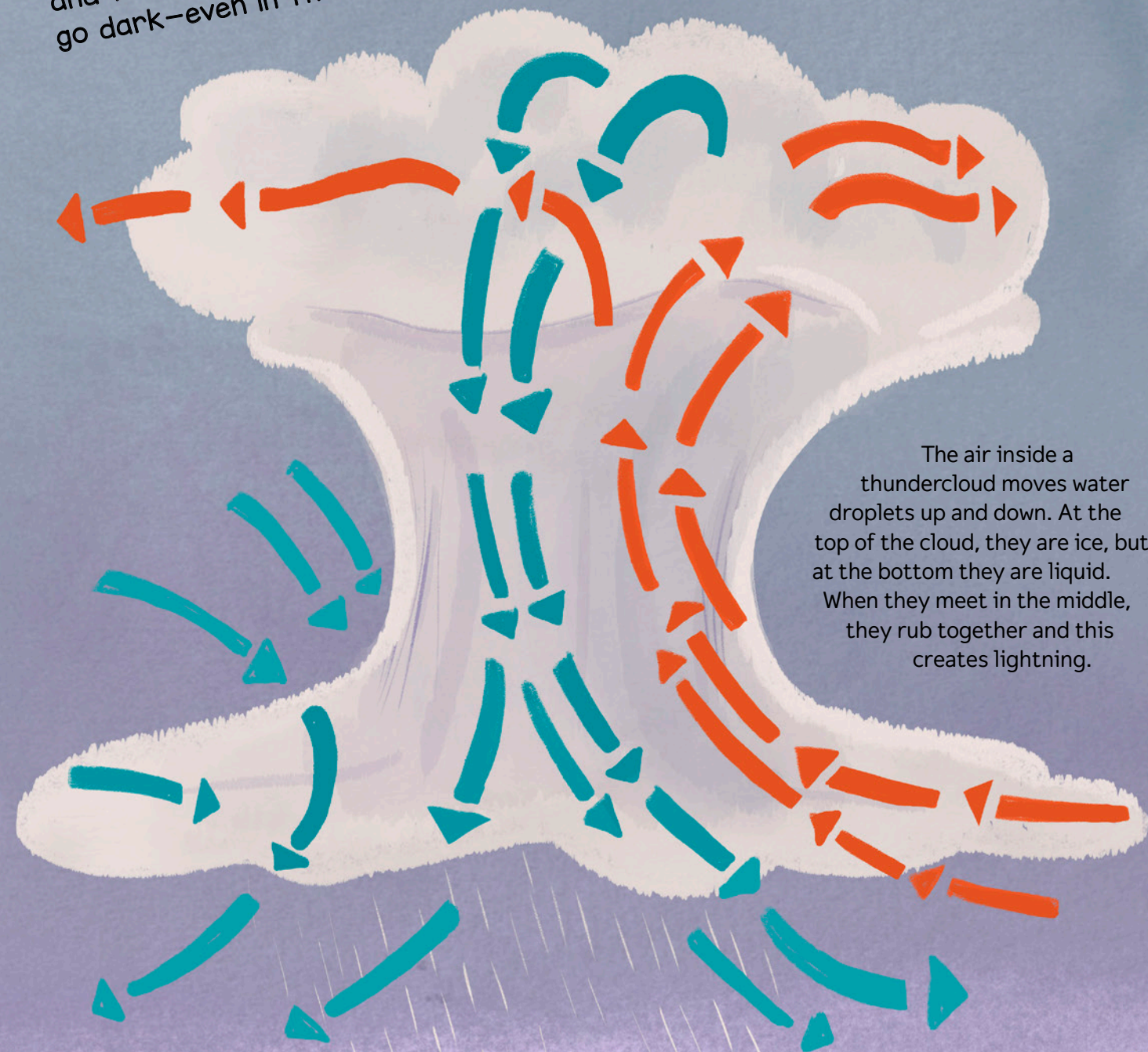


Boom, crack! A thunderstorm!

Thunderstorms bring strong winds, heavy rain, booming thunder, and bolts of lightning. Thunderclouds are really big and tall, and they can make everything go dark—even in the middle of the day.



The air inside a thundercloud moves water droplets up and down. At the top of the cloud, they are ice, but at the bottom they are liquid. When they meet in the middle, they rub together and this creates lightning.

Thunderclouds are called cumulonimbus clouds.

When lightning heats up the air, it causes thunder.

You can use thunder and lightning to work out how far away a thunderstorm is. As soon as you see the lightning, start counting the seconds until you hear the thunder. The sound of thunder takes about five seconds to travel one mile (1.6 kilometers). So divide the number of seconds by five, and you'll know how many miles are between you and the lightning. For instance, a count of 10 seconds means the storm is two miles (three kilometers) away!

Thunderstorms can be exciting, but they are also dangerous, so it's important to know how to stay safe in one.

Don't shelter under trees.



Their height attracts lightning.

Don't use electrical appliances—you might get a nasty electric shock.



Get a nasty electric shock.

Stay indoors.



heavy winds can flip cars over and uproot trees.

Avoid using water



at home—lightning can travel through plumbing.