

A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt
but intended for use
November 1, 1929

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed October 25, 1929

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DEFINITIONS OF DRY AND WET WEATHER

For everyday purposes no quantitative definitions are needed for such expressions as "rainy day", "dry spell", "drought", etc., but such definitions are useful in connection with formal weather statistics. In the records published annually by the British Rainfall Organization, including results of observations at more than 5,000 rainfall stations in the British Isles, several terms of the character mentioned are used with precise meanings as follows:

A rain-day is a period of 24 hours on which .01 inch or more of rain is recorded.

A wet-day is a period of 24 hours on which .04 inch or more of rain is recorded.

A rain-spell is a period of 15 or more successive days, each of which is a rain-day.

A wet-spell is a period of 15 or more successive days, each of which is a wet-day.

An absolute drought is a period of 15 or more successive days, no one of which is a rain-day.

A partial drought is a period of 29 or more successive days, the mean rainfall of which does not exceed .01 inch per day.

A dry-spell is a period of 15 or more successive days, no one of which is a wet-day.

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