

Dear [REDACTED]

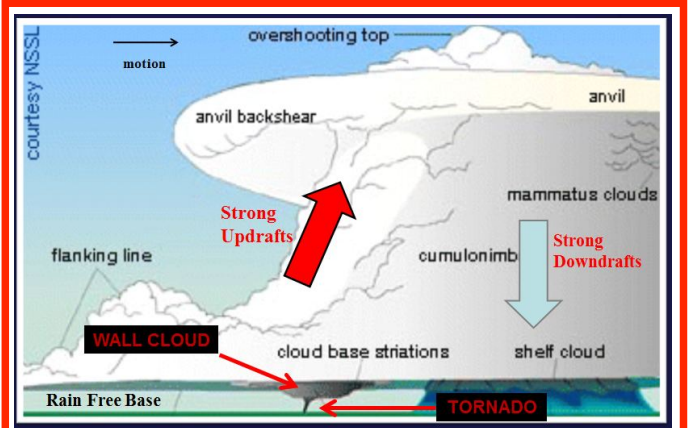
\* Pre-scientists love receiving your letters- sharing you love to receive their letters as well helps strengthen connection and excitement

I am so glad you enjoyed my previous letter! I was so excited to read the last one you sent me. I hope that you had a great Thanksgiving. What did you do to celebrate? My husband and I made Thanksgiving for just the two of us this year since we couldn't travel to California like we normally do.

\* Relevant images with captions keep pre-scientists engaged and help contextualize content

You ask such great questions. I wasn't scared to when I went tornado chasing because I was with scientists who storm chase as part of their research. We were far enough away that the tornado wasn't able to hurt us. Oklahoma is really flat so you can see much farther than you can in other parts of the country. While the storm looked close in the picture, it really wasn't that close! We were close enough that the winds at the ground were being sucked up into the storm (called updrafts, look at the picture to see more). The dirt from the road we were on was being picked up because the winds were blowing so much

\* Always answer pre-scientist questions



Thunderstorms are a lot bigger than you think! This is a type of thunderstorms that produces tornadoes called a "supercell". The big red arrow are the winds going up into the storm ("updrafts) and blue arrows are the wind coming down out of the storm



You asked if I had siblings and I do! I have one older brother, one older sister, and one younger sister. Do you have any siblings? My cat Meg, is called a "domestic shorthair" which means she's just a regular housecat, no fancy breed. I adopted her from an animal shelter in Raleigh, North Carolina which is where I went to graduate school (more about that later). She's sitting on my lap right now!

Thank you for answering my questions. You told me that you were learning about coding in science. Do you like coding? You also told me that you play quarterback. That's exciting! I'm glad that you've mastered the perfect spiral. Do you have any pets?

\* Asking pre-scientist questions ensures pre-scientist you also want to get to know them too

The theme for this letter is about college and higher education. I went to Millersville University

\* Address Letter theme

[www.millersville.edu](http://www.millersville.edu)

Clickable links allow pre-scientists to learn more Meg being enjoying the sunshine on her belly.

for my college degrees. I earned two college degrees, one in meteorology and one in computer science (which

means I like coding!). I figured out I wanted to work with weather models (computer programs that forecast the weather) after I did research at the National Severe Storms Lab in Norman, OK

\* Explain what scientific terms/concepts are in student-friendly language

Many pre-scientists haven't heard of graduate school- explanations really help!

(where I went storm chasing). In order to get a job working with weather models, I needed to earn a graduate degree. Graduate school is school after college that you go to if you want to learn a lot of specific knowledge in your field. I went to graduate school at North Carolina State University ([www.ncsu.edu](http://www.ncsu.edu)). I earned my Master's Degree (which is a degree after a college

using parentheses to explain scientific terms

degree, but below a doctorate) in atmospheric science (which is another way to say meteorology). After graduate school, I applied to a lot of jobs, and eventually got the job I have now!

Explanation of journey before college that a middle school student can understand and relate to

I started thinking about college in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. I knew that after high school, I was going to go to college because I knew that I wanted a job that needed more education than high school. I knew I wanted to go into science, but I wasn't sure what type of science. I found out that I really like meteorology in 11<sup>th</sup> grade after I took Advanced Placement Environmental Science. I started researching colleges that had good meteorology programs in 11<sup>th</sup> grade with the help of my school guidance counselor.

Support pre-scientist interests and encourage them to explore more

My college advice for you now as a middle schooler is to start thinking about what classes and projects you like the most and which ones you want to learn more about. You told me that one of your favorite science subjects is weather



This is me the day I graduated from graduate school! That was 3 years ago.

I can relate!), so think about what classes have to do with weather. Take an earth science class (if your school offers it) or check out books from your local library. Explore what interests you and what gets you excited. Don't feel like you have to pick what you're going to study in college now. What is more important is to figure out what you like and if there are jobs in that field. After you find that out, talk to your teachers about how to get more experience or what colleges have programs that teach what you like.

I know that was a lot of information! Let me know if you have any more questions about college and higher education. I'd be happy to answer them. When you write back, feel free to ask me about anything at all. I hope that you and your family are staying safe.

Happy Holidays!

*Lindsay*

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