

► Name:

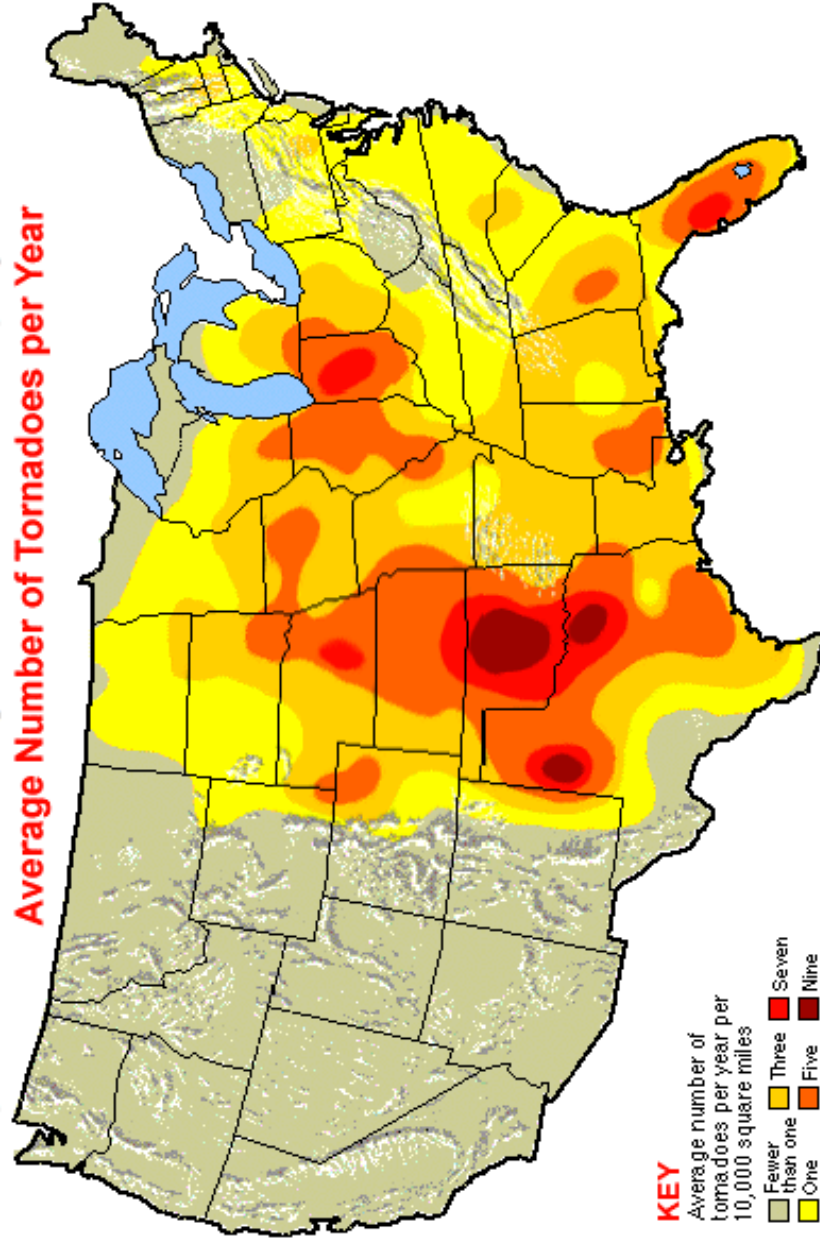


Make a Tornado

Student Weather Maps

DIRECTIONS ► Use the weather map below to help you figure out why some areas in the United States have more tornadoes than others. Each person in your group should choose a different weather map to become an 'expert' on.

Map 1



Most tornadoes happen in the “Tornado Alley” area of the United States; Oklahoma and Texas have more tornadoes than any other state. There are also many tornadoes in Florida, but these are often not as destructive as tornadoes in the Midwest.



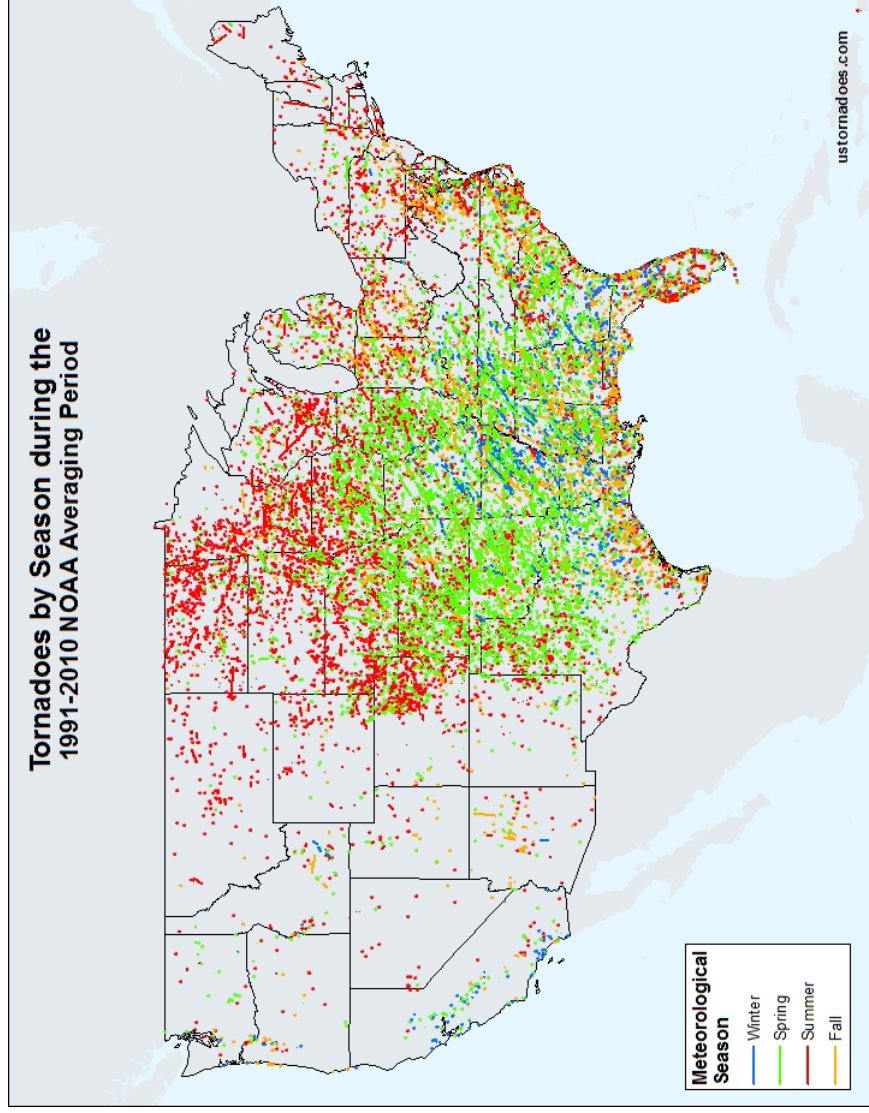
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Map 2



More tornadoes happen during the spring and summer because these are the times with the warmest temperatures. We also see that there are many more tornadoes in the middle-eastern states than in the western United States.

► Name:



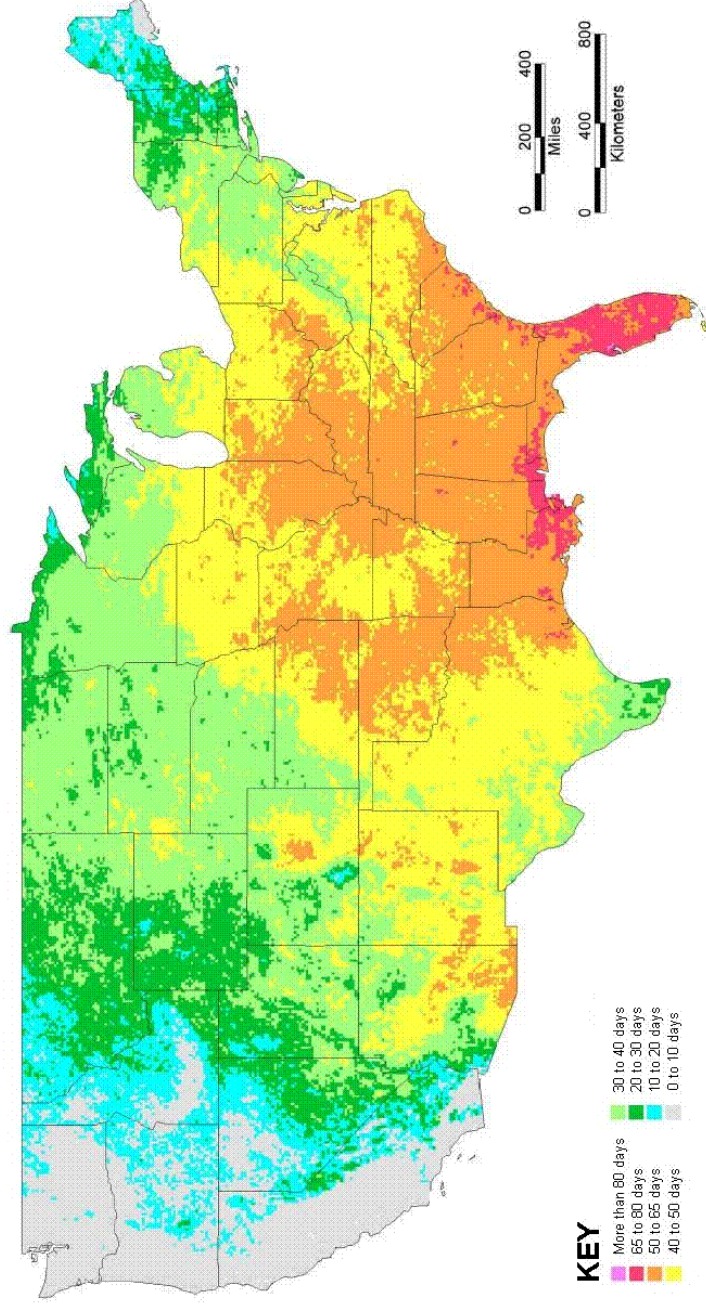
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Map 3

Average Number of Thunderstorm Days per Year



There are more thunderstorm days in the southern states due to the abundance of warm, moist air. We can see a correlation in Florida between number of thunderstorms and frequency of tornadoes. However, the map of most thunderstorms does not directly align with the map of highest occurrence of tornadoes for the rest of the country. This is because the presence of cool air at high altitudes coming off the Rocky Mountains and from the north, which creates consistent conditions for destructive tornadoes, is missing from the southern states.



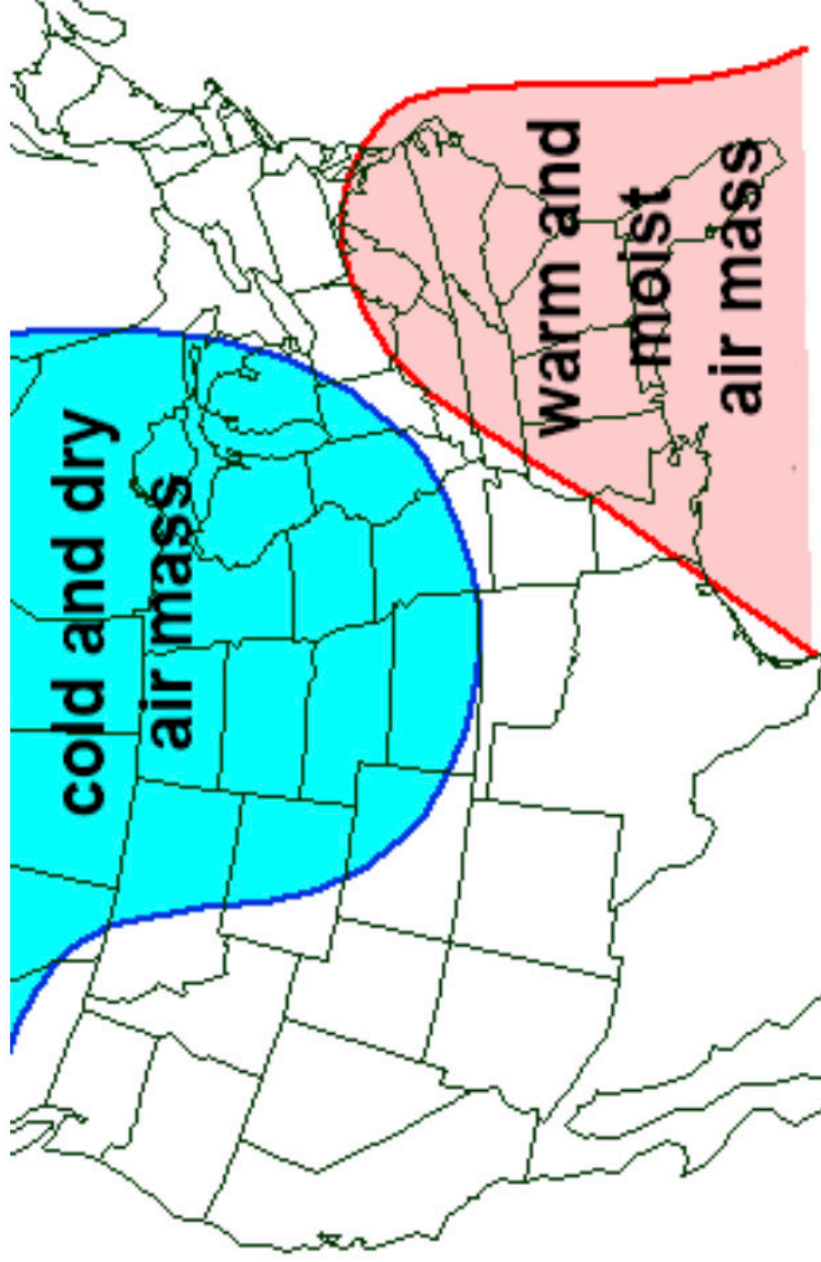
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Map 4

Air Masses



The continental polar (cool/dry) air masses collide with the maritime tropical (warm/moist) air masses in the center of the United States, right in Tornado Alley! The movement of these air masses creates consistent conditions for storm fronts, where differing air masses collide. Also apparent from this map is why the coastal areas in the United States have so many storms; cooler air from the north meets warmer air from the tropics, combined with all the moist air over the oceans is carrying.