Hubble Spots a 10-Sided Cloud Shape on Saturn

NASA shared a new image showing a decagon around Saturn's South Pole, giving scientists a fresh puzzle to study.

Saturn with rings appears in space, with a faint 10-sided cloud pattern around its south pole.

NASA shared a new space image today that shows a strange shape around Saturn's South Pole, according to NASA's Astronomy Picture of the Day. The South Pole is one end of Saturn as it spins, like the bottom of a globe. Around it, Hubble saw a **decagon**, a shape with 10 sides, made of **clouds**.

This matters because scientists do not often see **weather** making such neat shapes. On Earth, clouds can look messy and soft. On Saturn, huge bands of clouds can line up in a **pattern** from **geometry** class. It is like seeing a cloud draw a shape from math.

The picture came from the Hubble Space Telescope, a telescope that travels in space. The Saturn image was made from observations taken last year. NASA shared it now as a daily space picture.

Saturn has done something like this before. Its North Pole has a **hexagon**, a shape with six sides. Scientists first found that northern shape in 1987. They saw it in information from NASA's Voyager spacecraft. Those spacecraft flew past Saturn in the early 1980s and sent back data.

The northern hexagon has lasted for more than 40 years. That is a long time for a cloud pattern. The new southern decagon is different. Scientists still need to watch it. They want to know if it will stay, change, or fade.

NASA says the shape may form because gases move at different speeds. Farther from the pole, some gas moves fast. Closer to the pole, other gas moves more slowly. When these moving gases meet, they may make **waves**. These are not ocean waves. They are pushes and bends in flowing gas. Those waves may help draw the edges of the decagon.

Imagine watching cream swirl in a cup of hot cocoa. Some parts move faster than others. Lines and loops can appear for a moment. Saturn's clouds are not cocoa, of course. But moving stuff can make patterns in both places.

The discovery also shows why scientists keep looking at places they already know. Saturn is not new to us. Its rings are famous. Yet a telescope can still spot a surprise. A familiar planet can still ask a fresh question.

Written from reporting by NASA.

THINK IT THROUGH

1. **Why might a cloud shape on Saturn be more than just a pretty picture?**

2. **Should space telescopes spend more time revisiting familiar planets or looking for new places? Defend your choice.**

3. **How does comparing Saturn's clouds to cream in cocoa help, and how could that comparison be misleading?**

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R P N H D T I L W W E E
R E C A S A E R R T H T
Y L L D W G A C Y W U L
G E O M E T R Y W A E A
G R U S A C E I N V N L
W A D E T P A T T E R N
S D S C H O G G N S E E
W F W H E X A G O N R R
N H H T R N A L V N C W
R H R H H V E C E C R W
M I P A L T G T F W O T
I A A X E H E P E N Y O

CLOUDS DECAGON GEOMETRY HEXAGON PATTERN
WAVES WEATHER

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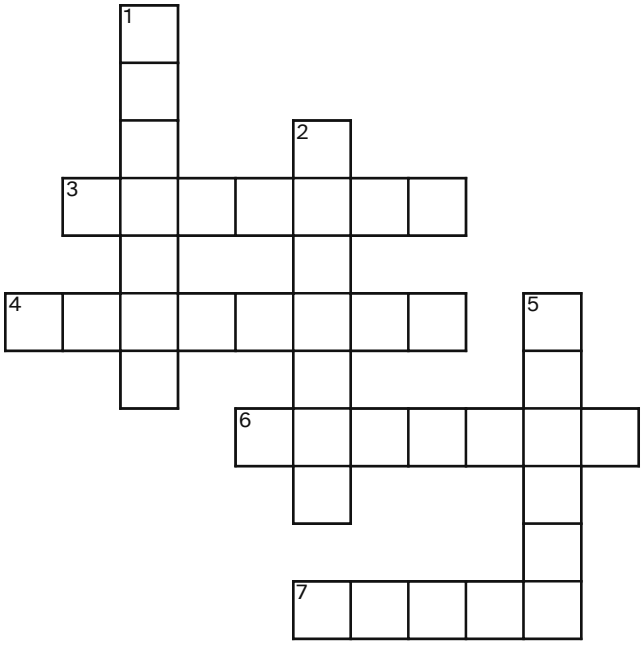

ACROSS

3 Design that repeats in an order

4 Math study of lines, angles, and shapes

6 Flat shape with 10 sides

7 Moving pushes that travel through water or air

DOWN

1 Flat shape with 6 sides

2 Changing air conditions, such as wind and moving clouds

5 Visible groups of tiny particles in the sky

Where this came from

This article was written for 3andB from the reporting below. It is not a reprint — the wording is ours and the facts are theirs.

NASA

"APOD: 2026 September 8 – Hubble: Decagon Around Saturn's South Pole"

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https://science.nasa.gov/image-article/apod-2026-september-8-hubble-decagon-around-saturns-south-pole/

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The article and its discussion questions, a word search, and a crossword.

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