

Lecture Notes on Boundary Layer Meteorology

Harshit Prashant Dhanwalkar (SC21B164)^{1*}

Abstract

Notes of Lectures and additional information from books.

¹ *MTech, Earth System Sciences (ESS), 1st year, Department of Physics, Indian Institute Of Space Science and Technology (IIST)*

***email:** harshitpd1729@gamil.com

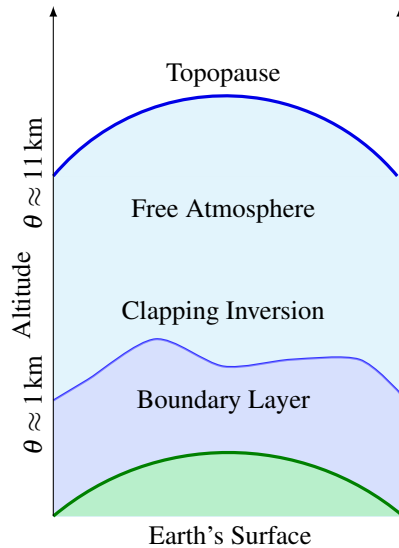
Contents

1	Lecture 1 09/01/2025	3
1.1	Introduction to Boundary Layer	3
1.2	Boundary layer forcing mechanism	3
1.3	Types of air flow or wind	3
1.4	Eddies	3
1.5	Turbulence Generation Mechanisms	3
2	Lecture 2 15/01/2025	5
2.1	Taylor's Hypothesis	5
2.2	Virtual Potential Temperature (θ_v)	5

1. Lecture 1 09/01/2025

1.1 Introduction to Boundary Layer

The Boundary Layer can be defined as part of the troposphere that is directly influenced by the presence of the Earth's surface and responds to surface forcings with a time scale of about an hour or less.



1.2 Boundary layer forcing mechanism

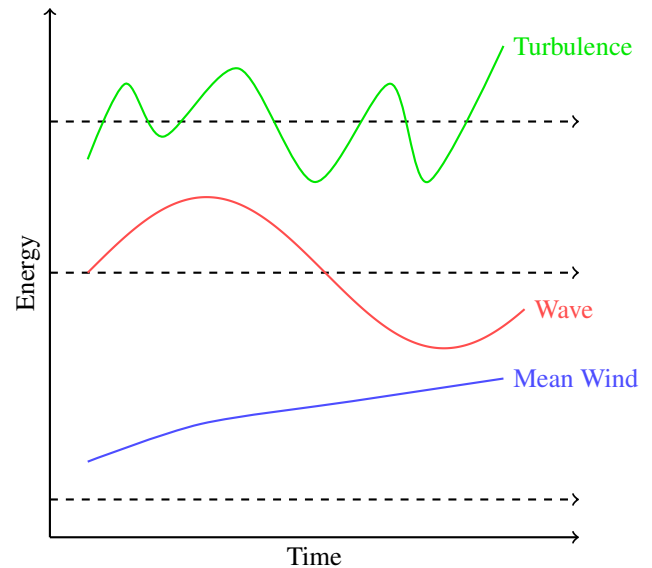
What physical process modify boundary layer air parcel?

1. Heat transfer to/from the ground.
2. Frictional drag.
3. Evaporation/transpiration.
4. Terrain-induced flow modification.
5. Pollution emission.

1.3 Types of air flow or wind

Air flow or wind can be decomposed into following 3 types:

1. **Mean Wind** ($\bar{u}, \bar{v}, \bar{w}$): Represents the average wind components in the horizontal (\bar{u}, \bar{v}) and vertical (\bar{w}) directions. It is important for the horizontal transport of quantities such as moisture, heat, momentum, and pollutants, a process known as advection.
2. **Waves**: Atmospheric waves, such as gravity waves, occur mostly at night in the nocturnal boundary layer (NBL). They can influence the structure of the boundary layer and the transport of energy.
3. **Turbulence**: The vertical transport of moisture, heat, momentum, and pollutants is primarily dominated by turbulence, which is characterized by chaotic and irregular motion.

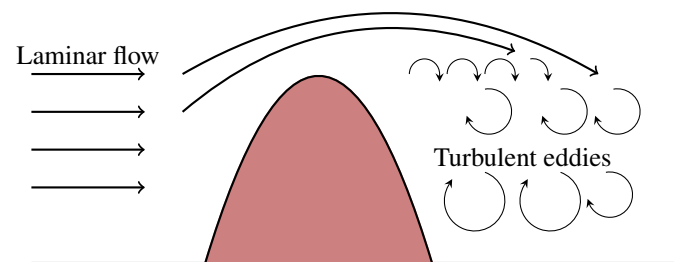


1.4 Eddies

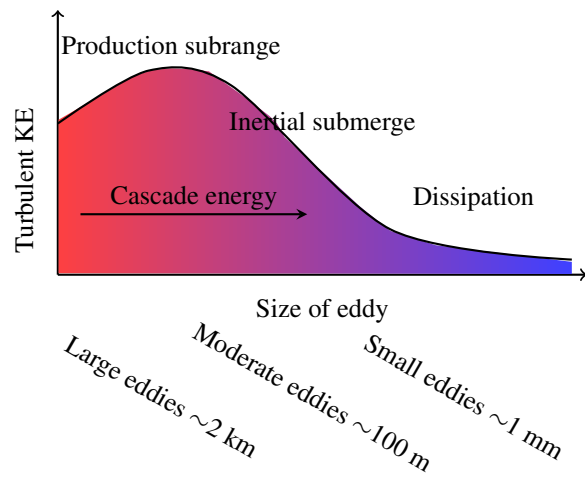
Eddies are formed due to the interaction of currents with obstacles like coastlines, underwater topography, or other currents, as well as from the instability of larger current systems. Eddies exhibit a rotational flow pattern, either clockwise or counterclockwise. Eddies can vary from size 100 to 3000 metres and also can exist as small as few millimetres. Small eddies might last for seconds to minutes, while larger oceanic eddies can persist for weeks, months, or even years.

1.5 Turbulence Generation Mechanisms

- **Solar Heating**: Solar heating generates thermals, which are essentially larger eddies that drive turbulence in the atmospheric boundary layer.
- **Wind Shear**: Variations in wind speed or direction with height create wind shear, which is a significant source of turbulence.
- **Obstacle-Induced Flow**: Deflected flow around obstacles such as trees, buildings, or other structures generates turbulent eddies downstream of these obstacles, creating turbulent wakes.



Large eddies will break into smaller eddies after which small eddies dissipate from K.E. to thermal energy.



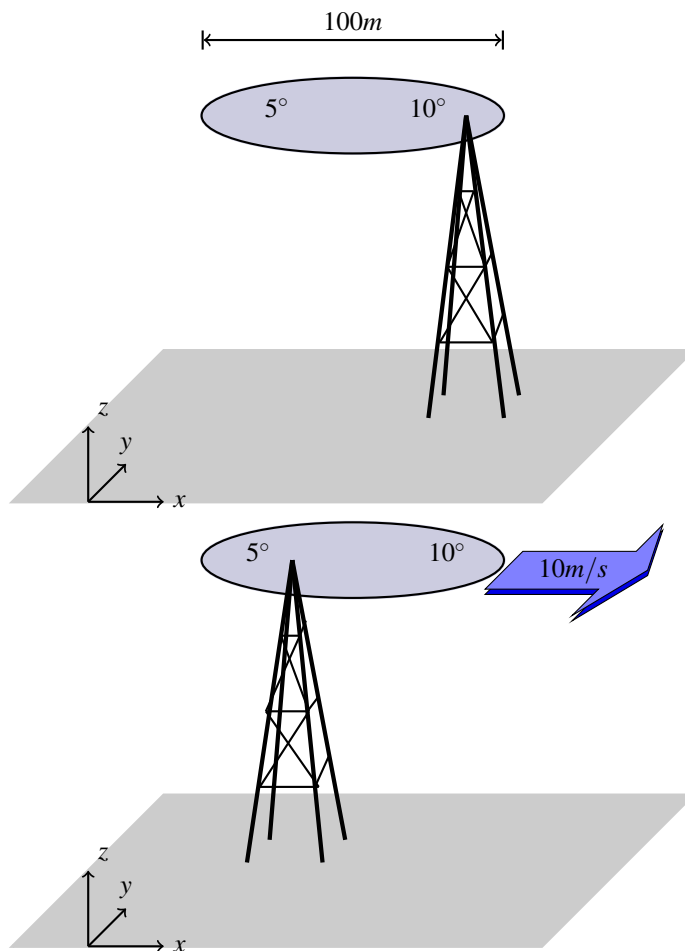
2. Lecture 2 15/01/2025

Virtual temperature:

$$T_v = T(1 + 0.61r) \quad (2)$$

2.1 Taylor's Hypothesis

- When studying atmospheric boundary layer (ABL), It is not easy to create a snapshot of turbulence in the Atmosphere.
- Hence it is easier and cheaper to make measurements of point in the atmosphere for a longer time, then an instantaneous snapshot.
- So we just consider the atmosphere is frozen.
- *Taylor suggested that turbulence may be considered frozen as it advects past sensor.*



$$\underbrace{\frac{DT}{Dt}}_{\text{Total derivative} = 0 \text{ (Taylor's hypothesis)}} = \underbrace{\frac{\partial T}{\partial t}}_{\text{Local derivative}} + \underbrace{u \frac{\partial T}{\partial x}}_{\text{Advective term}}$$

$\frac{\partial T}{\partial x} = 0.05\text{K/m}, \quad \frac{\partial T}{\partial t} = -0.5\text{K/s}$

2.2 Virtual Potential Temperature (θ_v)

Virtual potential temperature:

$$\theta_v = \theta(1 + 0.61r) \quad (1)$$