Deep Research Report: what is a rainbow?

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Author: Deep Research Assistant

What is a Rainbow?

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A rainbow is a spectacular natural phenomenon that occurs when sunlight passes through water droplets in the air, creating a spectrum of colors that appear as an arc in the sky.

Definition and Explanation

According to NASA, "a rainbow is formed when sunlight passes through water droplets in the air at a precise angle, causing the light to be refracted, or bent, and split into its individual colors" (NASA, n.d.). This phenomenon occurs because of the way that light interacts with water droplets in the atmosphere.

Formation Process

The process of forming a rainbow involves several steps:

- Sunlight enters the Earth's atmosphere and is refracted, or bent, as it passes through the air.
- When the sunlight hits a water droplet in the air, it is refracted again and split into its individual colors.
- The different colors of light have different wavelengths, which means they are spread out over a range of angles.
- As the light exits the water droplet, it is refracted once more and spreads out even further.

Types of Rainbows

There are several types of rainbows that can occur:

- **Primary Rainbow**: This is the brightest and most colorful type of rainbow. It occurs when the sunlight passes through the water droplets at an angle of about 42 degrees.
- **Secondary Rainbow**: This type of rainbow is fainter than the primary rainbow and has colors that are reversed (i.e., red on the outside and violet on the inside).

- **Double Rainbow**: This type of rainbow occurs when the sunlight passes through the water droplets twice, creating a secondary arc of colors outside the primary arc.
- **Reflected Rainbow**: This type of rainbow is formed when the sunlight hits a surface at an angle, such as a puddle or a sheet of glass.

Rainbow Colors

The colors of a rainbow always appear in the same order: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. This is because each color has a specific wavelength that is spread out over a range of angles.

Science Behind Rainbow Colors

The science behind the colors of a rainbow is based on the way that light interacts with matter. When sunlight hits a water droplet, it is refracted, or bent, and split into its individual colors. The different wavelengths of light are then reflected back to the observer's eye, creating the colorful arc of a rainbow.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a rainbow is a beautiful natural phenomenon that occurs when sunlight passes through water droplets in the air. By understanding the science behind rainbows, we can appreciate the beauty and complexity of this spectacular display.

References

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