Name _____ Date _____

WHAT IS LIGHTNING?

The flash you see when lightning strikes is a discharge of static electricity between a cloud and the ground. Moving air in a cloud causes ice and water droplets to rub together and build up an electrical charge. The whole cloud builds up with electric charge, with the positive charges at the top of the cloud and the negative charges at the bottom.

Since opposite charges attract, the negative charge at the bottom of the cloud seeks out the positive charge at the ground in the form of a bolt. At the same time, positive electrical charges build up in objects on the ground. In less than a second, the charge reaching down from the clouds meets up with the charge coming up from the ground, and lightning flashes.

FIND THE WORDS LISTED BELOW

STATIC **CHARGE** **POSITIVE** **NEGATIVE**

VOLTS **BOLT** **DISCHARGE**

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

DID YOU KNOW?

A bolt of lightning can carry up to one million volts of electricity, with a temperature of up to 54,000° F.

TO FIND OUT

how far away a storm is, count the seconds between a flash of lightning and a thunder clap. It is thought that every five seconds equals a distance of one mile.

BOOM!