**IV. Air Circulation and Precipitation**

1. Moving Air

* Belts of rising and sinking air form a pattern around Earth
* Air rises near the Equator, sinks at the edge of the tropics, rises in the temperate zones, and sinks over the poles
* There tends to be more precipitation in areas of rising air than areas of sinking air

B. Cause of Wind

* Heat from the sun warms the air
* Warm air is lighter than cold air causing it to rise
* Cool air is pushed up and away by rising warm air, forming winds high above the Earth
* Eventually, this cool air begins to sink back to the ground

C. Raging Storms

* Most storms occur when two air masses of different temperatures or moisture contents come together
* Some storms bring small amounts of rain or snow
* Others bring large amounts of heavy wind and rain causing great destruction
* **Tropical Cyclone** –
* **Hurricane** –
* The east coast of North America sees a large number of Hurricanes due to its location along the Atlantic Ocean
* **Tornado** –
* Often more dangerous than Hurricanes, but they cover a smaller area
* Blizzards often strike North America during the winter months
* Severe Thunderstorms are common in the spring and summer