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Lightning is a natural phenomenon that occurs when there is an imbalance between the electrical charges in the atmosphere and the ground. When the electrical charges become large enough, they create a spark that travels through the air. This spark is what we see as lightning. Lightning can occur within a single cloud, between two clouds, or between a cloud and the ground 1.

Thunder is the sound created by the rapid expansion of air around the lightning bolt. Thunderstorms sound up to 10 miles away from the lightning strike 2. Calculate by the "flash-to-bang" method can be used. It involves counting the number of seconds between, hearing, and glimpsing, dividing that number by 5 to get the distance in miles 1. In this case, since the person hears the thunder 20 seconds after seeing the lightning, the lightning is approximately 4 miles away.

It is important to remember that lightning can be dangerous and cause damage to property and people. Lightning strikes the Earth's surface about 100 times per second. Lightning can cause fires, power outages, and damage buildings and other structures. It can also be deadly. According to the National Weather Service, lightning kills an average of 27 annually.

In conclusion, when a person sees a lightning strike and hears thunder 20 seconds later, the lightning is approximately 4 miles away from the person. It is important to remember that lightning can be dangerous and cause property damage and to take appropriate precautions during thunderstorms.