

The Secret Life of a Snow Flake

Comprehension Questions

1. Why do snowflakes (as well as sugar, salt and crushed glass) all look white?
2. What are snowflakes made of?
3. Why do snowflakes have SIX branches (but never four, five, seven or eight)?
4. Why are no two large snowflakes exactly alike?
5. Many snowflakes are a perfectly symmetrical (same on both sides) star-shape. What is one *different* way a snow crystal can look?

Find out more about snowflakes at Dr. Kenneth Libbrecht's website:
<http://www.snowcrystals.com/>



1. Small, clear objects look white because they **reflect light** instead of absorbing it.
2. Snowflakes are made from **water vapor** that comes from evaporating **cloud droplets** (at least 100,000 of them per snowflake!). They are NOT frozen raindrops.
3. Snowflakes are always shaped like **hexagons** because of the way the water molecules line up within the ice crystal.
4. Large snowflakes are never alike because **each follows a different path** through the clouds and is changed by the temperature and humidity of the air along the way.
5. Snow crystals can be **lopsided** (when they bump or break while growing), or they can look like ice **ferns** with many side branches, ice **needles**, or **capped columns**.

Answers: