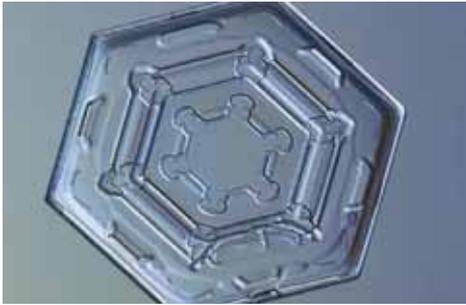


Dashing Through the Snow



SNOWFLAKES ARE TINY works of art. Each one is created by God, who loves to make beautiful things! But what makes them look the way they do?

How Do Snowflakes Form?

A tiny piece of dust floats through the winter sky, minding its own business. Then a tiny drop of water bumps into it and they freeze together. That makes a crystal of ice.

As the ice crystal falls toward the earth, more drops of water freeze onto it. New crystals form. The more crystals get added, the fancier the snowflake. The temperature and humidity of the air also affect the shape of the snowflake.

Snowflake Shapes

Even though no two snowflakes are exactly the same, there are four basic snowflake shapes:

» **Plates** (shown upper left) are the simplest and most common snowflake shape.

» **Columns** (shown lower left) look like the columns that hold up fancy buildings.

» **Needles** (shown upper right) make great snowballs.

» **Dendrites** (shown lower right) are the prettiest snowflake.

If it's snowing where you live, put on a dark-colored coat or sweatshirt and catch some snowflakes on your sleeve. Can you tell which shape they are?

The Snowflake Police

When the people at Disney made the movie *Frozen*, they hired a scientist named Dr. Kenneth Libbrecht to make sure all their animated snowflakes looked real. That sounds like a great job, doesn't it? Watch him explain how he grows snowflakes in his laboratory at tinyurl.com/Libbrecht.

Snow Facts

- » If you had a plastic cube 12 inches (30 cm) wide and 12 inches high, you could fit about a billion snowflakes inside it.
- » In 1963, one spot in southern Alaska got 78 inches (almost 2 meters) of snow in 24 hours!
- » The record for the world's tallest snowman was set by people in the town of Bethel, Maine, in 2008. When it was finished, it was 122 feet (37.21 meters) tall. Its buttons were made of car tires! Read all about it at tinyurl.com/TallSnowman. 



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