

Catch a Snowflake

by Mary Hertz Scarbrough



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Amplify Atlas™

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Level K

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Did you ever try to catch a snowflake?
Did you get to see it up close?

A snowflake is hard to look at because
it melts so fast. If you have not seen one
up close, don't worry! You can see pictures
of snowflakes in books.

Falling snowflakes

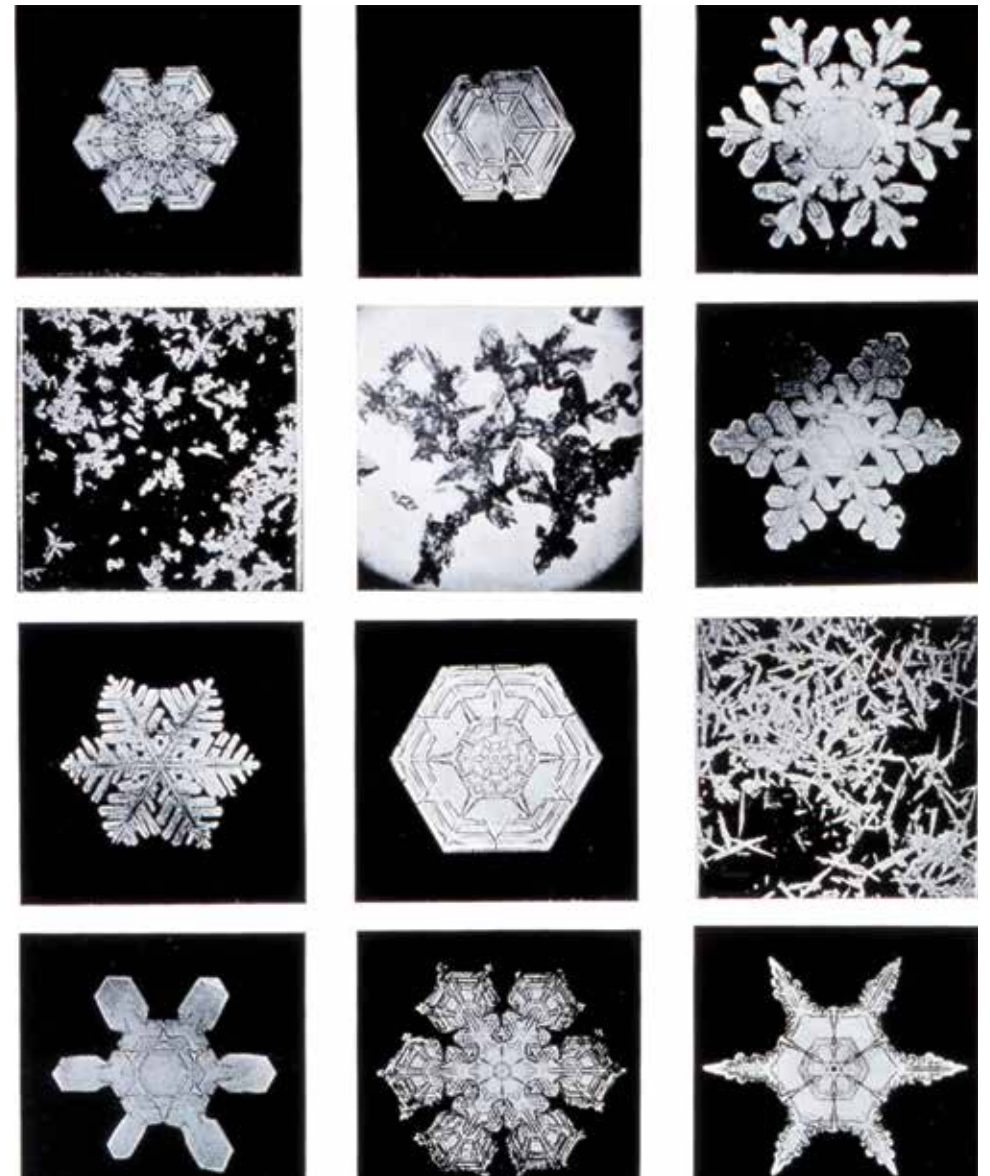


The first person to take a picture of a snowflake was Wilson Bentley. He took the first snowflake picture in 1885. After that, he took more than 5,000 snowflake pictures.



Wilson Bentley

Wilson Bentley's pictures showed that snowflakes are not all the same. Some are small and plain. Others are large and fancy.



Some of Wilson Bentley's snowflake pictures

Snowflakes have different shapes.
Some snowflakes look like plates. Others
look like trees or stars.



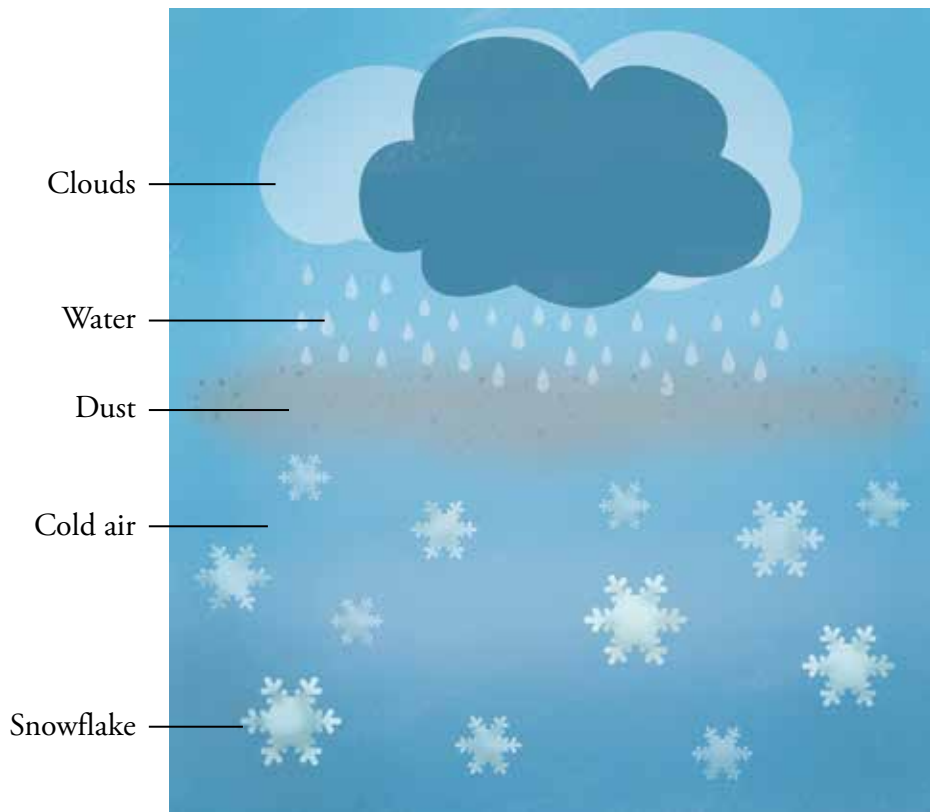
A star snowflake

Others look like needles. Snowflakes
have different shapes because they
each form in different ways.



Needle snowflakes

A snowflake starts high in the sky. It happens when a water drop meets a bit of dust. The water freezes and turns to ice in cold air. Ice is heavy. The new snowflake falls to the ground.



Low, dark clouds can bring snow.

Snowflakes have different sizes. Some are small. Some become bigger. They are tossed around in a cloud. There is water in the clouds. This water freezes around the small flake. Soon the small flake grows into a big flake.

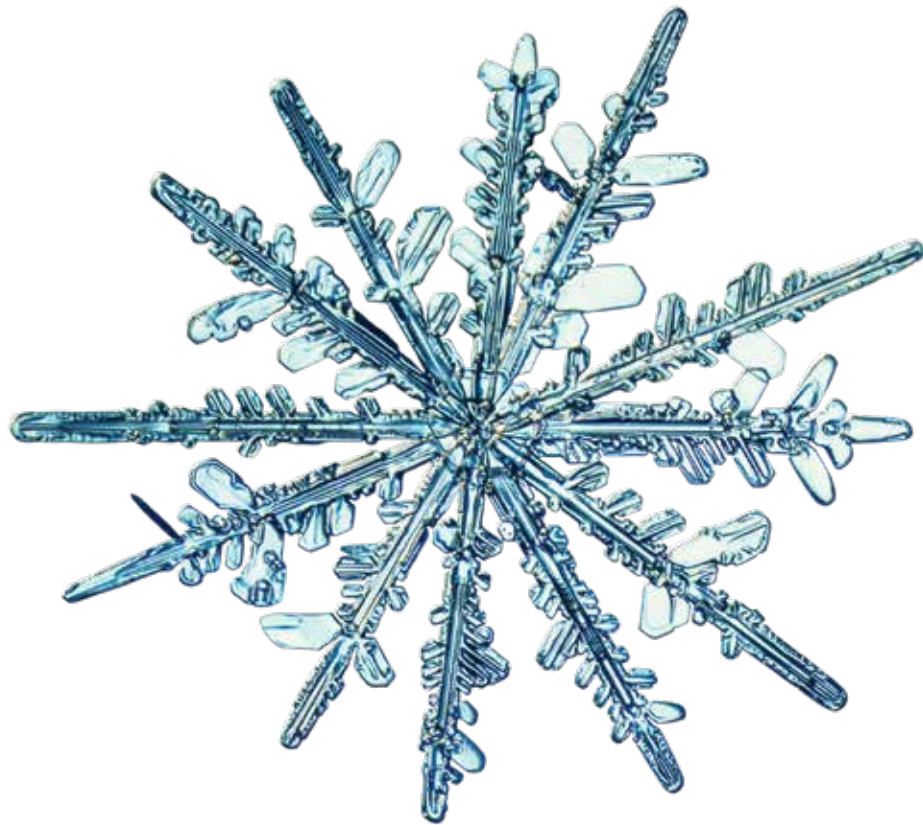




Snowflake shapes

As snowflakes fall, the air temperature may change. It may become cooler or warmer. The air may also become more wet or dry. These changes in the air also cause snowflakes to have different shapes.

Many snowflakes form arms. All the arms are alike. Most snowflakes have six arms. Some have twelve.



A snowflake with twelve arms

What happens when snowflakes land? Snowflakes will not stick to each other in dry air. In wet air, the snowflakes will stick. If a lot of wet snow falls, you can make a snowman!



The next time it snows, try to catch a snowflake. Take a look at it if you can. If the snowflake melts, you can always see snowflakes in a book!



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