



## MINIS AT HOME

volume 1, issue 14

**Greetings kids, parents, grandparents, guardians, friends and neighbors!**

**Welcome to issue 14 of Minis at Home newsletter.** Each newsletter features a special theme and offers pertinent information, a craft, and recommended reading. Grownups: please work on projects together with your children. Your pARTicipation is important! We will offer hints and tips for ways to create art as a twosome or a family.

**This week's theme = Snow Wonderful!**

It's that time of year when we *might* see some SNOW falling from the sky! Here in Easton, it does not snow very much, but you never know. Every winter is different. There's something about watching snow fall that is very exciting. Those little white flakes are magical!



Playing in the snow is great fun. You can make snow angels, build snowmen, have snowball fights, make snow forts, go sledding or skiing or just roll around.

Snow is also very pretty to look at. It glitters in the sun.





What exactly is snow, though? If it's really cloudy and cold outside, water in the clouds will turn to snow instead of rain. Snowflakes are made when the water freezes into tiny crystals. They fall to the ground, sometimes getting bigger as they drop. Snowflakes get their beautiful designs because the water freezes onto teeny bits of dirt in the air.

Each snowflake is different and is symmetrical with six points. (Symmetry means that one side of something is exactly like the other side just like a mirror image.) A single snowflake can be made up of as many as 200 crystals!

Snow is not only fun to play in or look at, it is also important for the ecosystem. Snow has a lot of air in it—which is why it is fluffy like a cotton ball. When snow covers the ground, the air inside traps heat and protects the soil just like a blanket. This shields plants and animals as well as any seeds that may be underground waiting to grow in the springtime. If you have ever built or spent time in a snow fort, you have probably felt warmer than you would have in a wooden fort due to the air pockets found in snow. Snow also keeps the soil and seeds moist over the winter. When snow melts, the water feeds into lakes, rivers and streams, creating more water for us humans to drink.

### **Activity: Quick Science Lessons**

Have you ever noticed how quiet it is outside when it snows? This is because all those air pockets inside the snow almost "eat up" or capture sounds. Try covering your ears with something fluffy, like a thick quilt or pillow. Ask someone to talk softly to you. How well can you hear what they are saying? Now try covering your ears with something that is not fluffy, like a thin towel, and ask the person to repeat. Can you hear them better?

If you're lucky enough to see snow this winter, head outside with a piece of black paper. Hold the paper flat to "catch" snowflakes on top of your paper. Take a look at the beautiful snowflake designs. You will see them even better if you have a magnifying glass.

Did you know that snow isn't really white? Snowflakes appear white as they fall through the sky or accumulate on the ground, but they are really clear. Snow crystals function like prisms to break up the sun's light into the entire color spectrum. Here's the amazing thing: You might think that mixing all the colors together would make black or dark

brown. They do if you mix up all of the paint or markers you have, but when all the colors of **light** mix together, they form white! Light, and so color, travels in **wavelengths**. When light hits the ice crystals that make snow, it bounces off. The snow doesn't "keep" any colors, so it looks white. Try looking at real snow or photos or paintings of snow. The shadows may look blue, purple, pink or gray.

Want to see how white light is really made up colors? Here is a fun way that uses just 3 things you're sure to have at home:

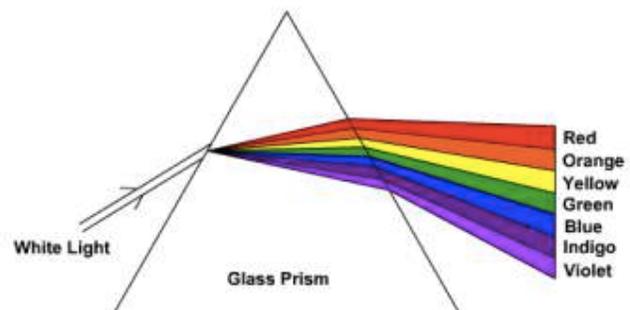
- A transparent glass of water (about three quarters full)
  - A piece of white paper
  - A sunny day (You may have to wait for one of those, as it's often cloudy in winter :-)
1. Find a room (probably near a window) where the sunlight is streaming in.
  2. Hold your glass of water above the paper (careful not to spill it)
  3. Watch as sunlight passes through the glass of water. It will **refract** (bend) and form a rainbow of colors on your paper.
  4. Try moving the glass of water slightly to change the distance from the paper or the angle at which the light hits it and see if anything looks different.

What's happening? White light refracts (bends) as it enters a prism, which is usually a transparent object with an angled surface, but in this case, it's the glass of water. As the wavelengths of light bend, they separate into the colors of the rainbow: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet.

(Adapted from [https://www.michigan.gov/documents/explorelabscience/Make\\_your\\_own\\_Rainbow\\_606397\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/explorelabscience/Make_your_own_Rainbow_606397_7.pdf))

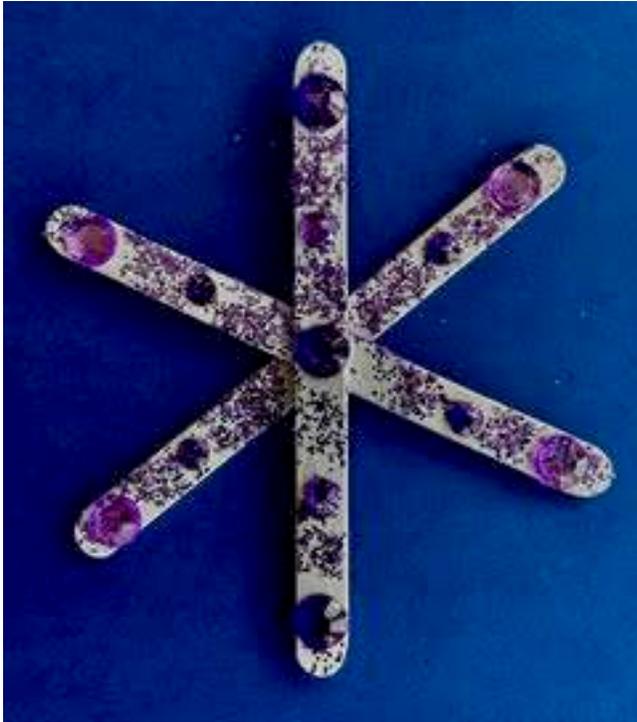
You can learn more about how prisms separate colors here: <https://buggyandbuddy.com/rainbow-science-for-kids-exploring-prisms/>

You can find some really cool science experiments involving snow (including ways to eat it!) here: <https://littlebinsforlittlehands.com/winter-science-ideas-kids/>



**Activity: Craft**

**Symmetrical Snowflake**



**Materials:**

**3 craft or popsicle sticks**

**Aleene's Tacky Glue**

**Assorted sequins, beads or buttons**

**Procedure:**

Glue the centers of the sticks in the middle, spacing them evenly across one another into a snowflake shape.

Decorate the snowflake "arms" with sequins, beads, and buttons. Make sure you make each arm exactly like the one opposite it.

**Activity: Craft**

**Snowy Tree Scene**

**Materials:**

**Blue construction paper**

**Thin sticks and twigs from your yard**

**Aleene's Tacky Glue**

**Red construction paper scrap**

**Scissors**

**Black pen**

**White acrylic or finger paint**

**Cotton swab**



**Procedure:**

Head outside to collect a variety of small thin twigs.

Arrange your sticks and twigs into trees, being careful to use the thicker sticks for the trunks and the thinner twigs for the branches. Glue your trees onto the blue construction paper. Let dry for a few minutes.

Dab your cotton swab into the white paint and dot snow all over your paper, making sure you dot some snow on your tree branches and on the ground.

Note: It's best to dot the paint rather than spreading it, so it will look like snowflakes.

Take a small piece of red paper and cut out a bird shape which you can glue onto one of your tree branches. Add a little black dot for its eye using the black pen.

**Fun Facts:**

- The biggest snowfall ever recorded was about 100 feet on Mt. Rainier in Washington State. That's a lot of snow! The largest snowflake ever found was 15 feet across and 8 inches thick. I wonder how much it weighed.
- The first person to take a photo of a snowflake was a farmer named Wilson Bentley from the small town of Jericho, Vermont in 1885. Mr. Bentley took pictures of over 5,000 snowflakes over his lifetime. (See the book, *Snowflake Bentley*, in our recommended reading section on the last page)
- Inuit people (native to northern Canada, Alaska and Greenland) have over 53 words for snow! "Pukak" refers to crystal-like snow that looks like salt, "matsaaruti" describes wet snow used to ice a sleigh's runners, and "qanik" is used for falling snow. If you could invent a word for a kind of snow, what would it sound like? What kind of snow would it describe?
- Some people believe that if you put a spoon under your pillow before bed or wear your pajamas inside-out, snow will come. So, when it looks like snow, try these for snow luck. Let's hope for snow this winter in Maryland!

If it doesn't snow this winter, you can watch snow falling here: <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/learn-about/weather/types-of-weather/snow/10-facts-about-snow>

## Activity: Move and Sing

### **Snowflake, Snowflake** (original author unknown)

(sung to *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*)

**Snowflakes, snowflakes, falling down** (wiggle fingers in the air)

**Falling, falling to the ground** (wiggle fingers while moving them to the ground)

**Can you catch them on your nose?** (wiggle fingers on your nose)

**Will they fall and touch your toes?** (wiggle fingers to touch your toes)

**Snowflakes, snowflakes, falling down**

**Falling, falling to the ground** (wiggle fingers to the ground and lay them quietly on the ground)



(from [pre-kpages.com](http://pre-kpages.com))

### **I'm a Little Snowman**

(sung to *I'm a Little Teapot*)

**I'm a little snow man**

**Look at me**

**These are my buttons, 1, 2, 3** (point to 3 imaginary buttons on your belly)

**These are my eyes, and this is my nose** (point eyes and nose)

**I wear a hat and scarf** (point to imaginary hat and scarves)

**Brrrr it's cold!**

## Literacy: POEM TO SHARE

### **Wishing for Snow**

by Constance Del Nero

Hey there, snow  
Please stay: don't go!

I want to have  
some time outside,  
lie on the ground  
my arms spread wide—

make an angel  
with giant wings,  
then do a bunch  
of other things:

sled down the hill,  
have a snowball fight,  
make a snowman  
with scarf pulled tight



craft a cave  
and hide myself,  
pretend that  
I'm a snowy elf

This noonday sun  
is way too warm  
I'd rather have  
a swirly storm

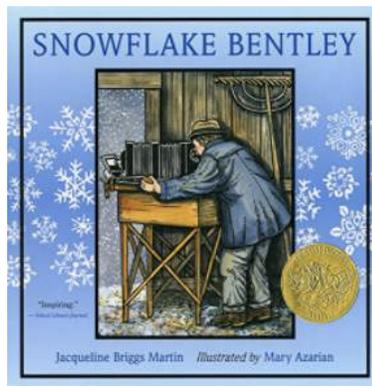
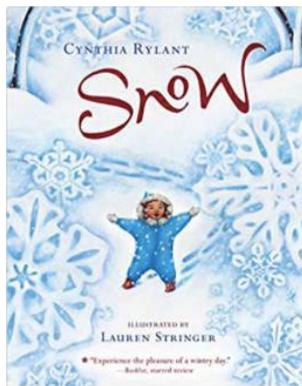
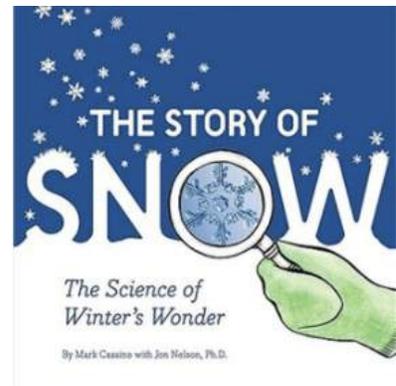
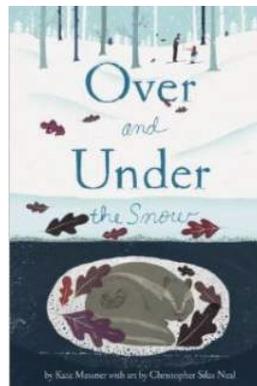
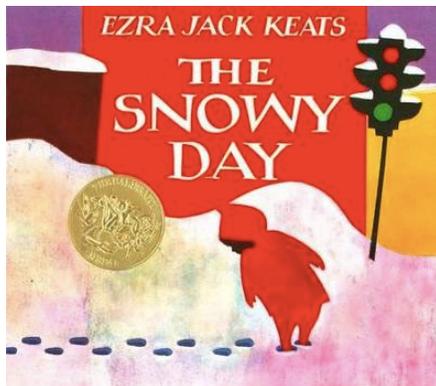
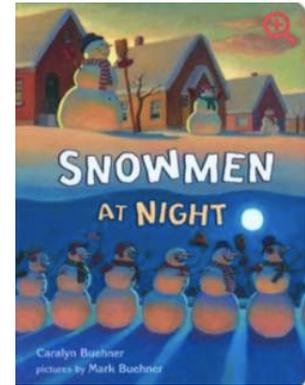
We could have  
such fun together  
with some magical  
winter weather

Snow, please,  
please, please,  
please, please  
stay for at least  
another day!

**Literacy: RECOMMENDED BOOKS**

**Snuggle up in a big comfy chair and read together**

- Snowmen at Night** by Mark & Caralyn Buehner
- The Snowy Day** by Ezra Jack Keats
- Over and Under** by Kate Messner
- The Story of Snow** by Jon Nelson
- Snow** by Cynthia Rylant
- Snowflake Bentley** by Jacqueline Briggs Martin



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See you next week with issue 15 of **Minis at Home!**

Share your work on <https://www.instagram.com/minimastersaam/>

or email pictures to Ann Hansen  
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or Constance Del Nero [cdelnero@academyartmuseum.org](mailto:cdelnero@academyartmuseum.org)

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