



# The Snowy Day

## Adventures in Reading:

*Family Literacy Bags from Reading Rockets*

### Contents:

- Two books — one fiction, one nonfiction
- Parent information sheet
- Three activity sheets
- Bookmarks
- Parent survey

## for teachers and librarians

*This Reading Rockets Activity Packet is designed to support reading activities at home. We've chosen a fiction and nonfiction book about snow, appropriate for a kindergarten listening level, and included related activities to encourage some hands-on fun and learning. Just assemble the packet in a two-gallon zip top bag, and send home with your students.*

Reading Rockets carefully chose books that are widely available and appealing to young readers. The titles selected should be available in your school library. If the two featured titles are not available, or you prefer another title, feel free to substitute books related to the theme. You'll find a list of suggested alternative titles included in the bookmark.

The featured books are ***The Snowy Day*** written and illustrated by Ezra Jack Keats and the nonfiction book ***Snow Is Falling*** written by Franklyn Branley and illustrated by Holly Keller. ***The Snowy Day***, winner of the 1963 Caldecott Medal, tells the story of a young boy, Peter, who wakes up to discover that a beautiful blanket of snow has fallen during the night. Right after breakfast, Peter excitedly puts on his red snowsuit and goes out into his city neighborhood to explore what feels like a whole new world. In ***Snow Is Falling***, we learn how snow can help plants, animals, and people to survive a harsh winter and thrive in the spring, as well as how snow can be dangerous.

The parent information sheet includes an introductory note that you can personalize, instructions about how to use the packet, and tips for sharing fiction and nonfiction books with children.

The activities are designed to encourage further exploration and learning at home:

- >> Creativity Activity: a hands-on craft project
- >> Imagination Activity: encourages imaginative play, writing, or drawing
- >> Get Real Activity: focuses on real-world experiences for parent and child
- >> The bookmark lists both the featured titles and additional titles

### Putting it all together

Print out copies of the parent information sheet, the activities, the survey, and a master for making bookmarks. Cut the bookmark page into strips. You may wish to print the activity pages and bookmark on card stock for durability.

Into a two-gallon zip top bag, place:

- >> Two books — one fiction and one nonfiction
- >> Parent information sheet
- >> Three themed activity pages
- >> Bookmark
- >> Survey for parents

Send the packet home with your student. Encourage parents to keep the parent information sheet, the activities, and bookmark, and return the books and survey to you.

Let Reading Rockets know what you think of the family activity packets by e-mailing us through our website: [www.readingrockets.org/sitecontact](http://www.readingrockets.org/sitecontact). Click on "Family Literacy Bags"

## ADVENTURES IN READING!

# Welcome

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Exploring new ideas and enjoying books with you sends a powerful message to your child: Reading and learning are fun, and happen everywhere — not just at school. This Reading Rockets Activity Packet about \_\_\_\_\_ was created to help you and your child enjoy reading and learning together.

Start your learning adventure by reading some books with your child about this popular topic. Then explore the topic with three activities. Enclosed you'll find what you need:

- >> Two books to share with your child
- >> Three related activities
- >> Bookmark with a list of other books to extend the fun, if you wish
- >> Short survey to tell me if you enjoyed using the packet

The simple steps on the back explain how to use the packet.

The bookmark, this parent information sheet, and the activities are yours to keep.

When you've finished with the materials, please return the books and the completed survey to school in your child's backpack. Please return the Reading Rockets Activity Packet by \_\_\_\_\_.

I hope you'll enjoy reading and learning together!

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*Teacher signature*

**To learn more about children's books, reading with your child, and information about helping kids become confident readers, please visit [www.ReadingRockets.org](http://www.ReadingRockets.org)**

# ADVENTURES IN READING!

## Instructions

### *How to use your Reading Rockets Activity Packet*

#### **Getting ready**

**1.** Before you read the books to your child, be sure to read them yourself. One book is fiction — a “make-believe” story. The other book is nonfiction, or informational and true. Reading the books first will give you the “inside scoop” to the twists and turns of the story, the interesting information inside, and the parts of the books that will appeal most to your child.

**2.** Next, read the three activities to see which of them you think your child will enjoy most, and which one you have the time and materials on-hand to do right away. Chances are, after you read one (or both) of the books with your child, he or she may want to do an activity right away.

#### **Start the fun**

**3.** When you know you’ll have at least enough time to read and talk about one of the books, grab your child and a book, and dive right in. Start with the fiction selection. Talk about the cover of the book with your child — can he guess what it is about? Have they ever read a book by the same author or illustrator or about the same topic?

Read the book to your child. Take time to ask and answer questions, explore the pictures, and wonder what will happen next. Read it again, if your child asks you to. Then, try the nonfiction book or one of the activities.

**4.** When you read the nonfiction book, take a moment to explain to your child the difference between the two types of books. The first book told a made-up, make-believe story, and a nonfiction book is about real people, places, and things. The information in nonfiction books can answer lots of questions.

**5.** Feel free to pick and choose from the activities, or change them to suit your child’s interests. Read the books again over the next few days and try different activities. Most important: have fun!

#### **When you’re done...**

**6.** Keep the bookmark, the activities, and this page. Complete the survey and return it with the books to your child’s school.

Make the most of the excitement the books create, and try some hands-on learning or make-believe fun. Exploring new ideas alongside you lets your child see you learning — and reading — too, and gives your child personal experiences to support her growing knowledge.

#### **Tips for reading nonfiction books with kids:**

- >> *Wonder out loud. As you are reading, or afterward, talk about facts you find interesting or questions you have.*
- >> *Show your child how to use the table of contents, section headings, index, and word list (glossary) to find the answer to a specific question.*
- >> *Don’t be afraid to jump around, reading pages that especially interest your child. You don’t have to read a nonfiction book straight through.*

#### **Tips for reading fiction books with kids:**

- >> *Take your time and talk about the story with your child. Ask your child questions.*
- >> *Explore the pictures with your child.*
- >> *Read with expression. Change your voice or how fast you read to create excitement. Ham it up!*
- >> *You don’t need to read every word. Keeping your child interested is the goal.*



# make a cut-paper collage

In *The Snowy Day*, Keats uses simple cut paper and printmaking stamps to create the colorful collage illustrations for his story. He also uses descriptive words to describe the sounds you might hear on a walk in the snow. Together, the words and pictures capture the feeling of this quietly magical experience.

***“Crunch, crunch, crunch, his feet sank into the snow.”***

In this activity, your child will create a cut paper collage that illustrates a snowy adventure outdoors. [If your child has never experienced snow, you can substitute what it feels like to explore outside after a big rainstorm.]

## Supplies:

- >> White and colored construction paper
- >> Old magazines (you can also use old postcards, wallpaper samples, shelf paper, newspapers, or maps)
- >> Glue
- >> Scissors
- >> Tape
- >> Ink pen or fine black marker
- >> Kitchen sponges (optional)
- >> Poster paint (optional)
- >> Paper plate (optional)

## During reading

While you read *The Snowy Day*, talk about the simple shapes in the illustrations and ask your child how he thinks the author created these. How did the author create the texture in Peter’s pajamas?

## After reading

After you finish the story, ask your child to think about a time when he played in the snow in your neighborhood. What kinds of pictures come into his mind? Ask him to describe the experience in detail, using descriptive words. Here are some questions you might ask:

- >> How did the air feel? And sound?
- >> Describe what your nose felt like. What did you smell in the cold air?
- >> How did your hands and feet feel in their mittens and boots?
- >> How does snow taste?
- >> Describe the colors you saw
- >> What sounds did you hear outside?
- >> Describe the trees, birds, and any other wildlife that you saw

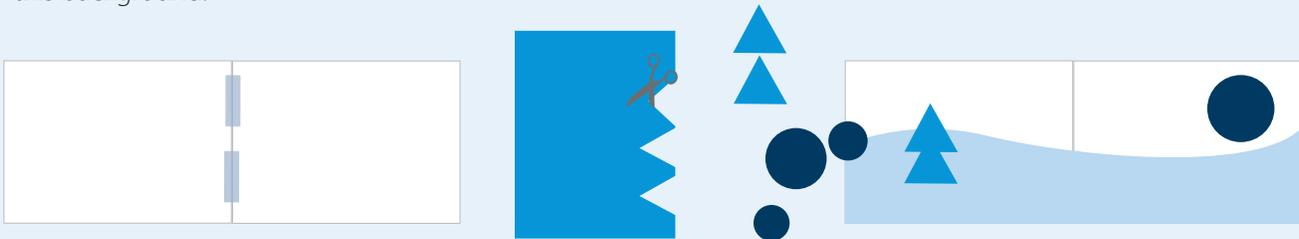
*[continued on next page]*

## make a cut-paper collage

**After reading**

Choose 5 descriptive words from your conversation and have your child describe the scene he wants to create out of cut paper. Explain how he will cut out shapes from the colored paper to create his picture. Old magazines and other printed material can be used to add texture and detail.

**1.** Tape two pieces of paper together to make one big landscape sheet. Your child will add cut paper shapes to this background.



**2.** Encourage your child to cut out big, simple shapes and make an arrangement on the background sheet.

**3.** You or your child can write the 5 descriptive words on the paper.

**4.** When the composition feels just right, you can help your child glue down the pieces of paper.

**[Optional:** Cut small pieces of sponge and moisten slightly. Squeeze poster paint onto the paper plate and dab the damp sponge into the paint. Lightly “stamp” the sponge onto parts of your collage to add texture.]

# 1: the great ice melt race

To hold on to the magic of the day, Peter puts a snowball in his pocket to save for later. What happens to the snowball? Why?

Does your town spread salt on the streets and sidewalk after a big snowstorm? Ask your child to guess why. [Here's the answer why: Salt lowers the freezing point of water. That means it takes colder air to keep the ice frozen. ] Try this simple and colorful experiment to see how salt affects ice:

### Supplies needed:

- >> Empty half-gallon milk carton
- >> Ice cream salt, also called "rock salt" (you can get this at the grocery store)
- >> Food coloring

### Directions:

1. Freeze a block of ice in the milk carton and peel off the carton.
2. Lay the block of ice on its side or stand it on end.
3. Add a spoonful of ice cream salt on the top in several places, then add a little food coloring, using a different color on each of the salted areas.

Ask your child to predict what will happen. Sit back and watch the colors work their way down into the ice!

As you observe the colors move in the ice, talk about the way that colors look when you are outside in the snow. Was it easy to find Peter in his red snowsuit? Why? Peter found a brown stick in the snow — would it be harder to find a stick on the ground in the summer or the winter? Ask your child to think about why.

Animals often help protect themselves by NOT being seen. Talk with your child about how some animals stay hidden (or "camouflaged") in the winter snow. The Arctic fox, for example, will change the color of its fur as the seasons change. In the warmer months, the Arctic fox will grow brown fur to hide in the trees, and in the winter, it will grow white fur to hide in the snow. Check out this slide show of winter wildlife at National Geographic: <http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/photos/winter-wildlife/>



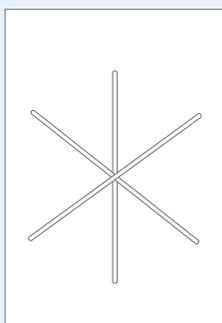
## 2: kitchen snowflakes

Have you ever really looked at snow up close? A handful of snow is made up of thousands of tiny snowflakes. Each snowflake is made up of as many as 200 tiny ice crystals — frozen water that has formed around tiny bits of dirt. So snowflakes are really soil particles wearing a pretty coat of ice! Most snow crystals have 6 sides or points, but each one looks a little bit different.

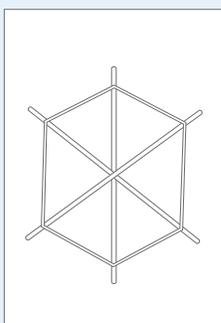
Here's a simple way to make a "snowflake crystal" right in your kitchen, any time of year.

### Supplies needed:

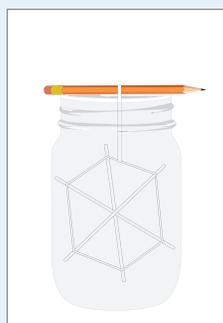
- >> Wide-mouthed jar
- >> 3 white pipe cleaners
- >> String
- >> Scissors
- >> Pencil
- >> Boiling water (have an adult do this part)
- >> Spoon
- >> Borax (buy **20 Mule Team Borax Laundry Booster** at the grocery store in the laundry detergent section.)



Make 6-pointed shape with pipe cleaners



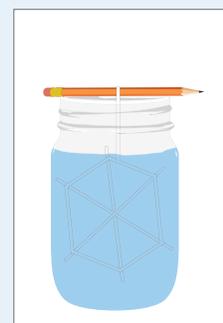
Wrap string around the pipe cleaners



Be sure the "snowflake" fits in the jar



Mix Borax and hot water



Hang snowflake in water overnight

1. Make a giant snowflake frame from 3 white pipe cleaners and string. Twist the 3 pipe cleaners together in the center to make a 6-sided, spiky figure. Be sure the pipe cleaners can fit inside the wide-mouthed jar.
2. Tie the string around the pipe cleaners to look like a snowflake shape. Cut off the extra string.
3. Tie a few inches of string to one of the pipe cleaners. Tie the other end of the string to a pencil, so that the snowflake will hang from the pencil and dangle inside the jar. Take the snowflake out of the jar.
4. Pour boiling water into the jar (have an adult do this part) and gradually add 3 tablespoons of Borax to the hot water in the jar. You will see undissolved Borax at the bottom of the jar.
5. Hang the snowflake in the jar and wait at least overnight. In the morning, your snowflake will be covered with beautiful crystals!

To learn more about snowflakes, read the true story of Snowflake Bentley who devoted his life to taking beautiful photographs of snowflake crystals: <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0547248296/readingrocket-20>

And you can explore even more at the Snowflake Bentley website: <http://snowflakebentley.com/>

# blanket of snow

In ***The Snowy Day***, Peter dresses in his red snowsuit and boots to stay warm while he explores outside. Snow and ice feel cold, but they can also keep you warm.

Eskimos build their houses — called igloos — out of hard, packed snow. In ***Snow Is Falling***, you find out that worms, mice, chipmunks, and moles stay underground all winter, and that the blanket of snow on top keeps the wind and cold away. Other animals also burrow underground in winter: raccoons, turtles, badgers, bats, prairie dogs, and skunks! These animals have a “fall feast” so that they can store up energy for the long winter.

Ask your child what burrowing animal she would like to be. What will you need to do to get ready for winter? Eat a healthy snack so that you don’t get hungry. Dress warmly in your softest, most comfortable sweater and pants. Create a special burrow just for you perhaps under a bed or table. Spread a white blanket of “snow” on top of your burrow. Curl up to keep extra warm.

*Why do animals curl up in their burrow? Try this simple experiment: Put two towels in a hot dryer for 5 minutes. Fold one towel in half, then in half again, then roll up. Take the other towel and hang it up flat on a towel rack or kitchen chair. After 5 minutes, feel the towel that is hanging up, then unroll the other towel. Which is warmer? Can your child guess why? When an animal curls up, less skin is exposed to the cold air so the animal stays warmer.*

You might want to leave “tracks” cut from paper for your mom and dad so that they can find you in your secret nest. Here’s a great website full of all kinds of animal tracks: <http://www.bear-tracker.com/>



After your child “wakes up” from her winter sleep, treat yourselves to some home-made ice cream that you can make in less than 10 minutes, no special machines required!

### Supplies needed:

- >> 1 quart size plastic zip top bag
- >> 1 gallon size plastic zip top bag
- >> Ice cubes
- >> 1/4 cup ice cream salt or “rock salt” (you can buy this in the grocery store)
- >> 1/2 cup milk
- >> 1/4 teaspoon vanilla flavoring
- >> 1 tablespoon sugar

### Directions:

1. Fill the large bag half full of ice cubes and add the salt.
2. Put milk, vanilla, and sugar into the small bag and zip it closed.
3. Place the small bag inside the large one and zip it closed. Shake until the mixture turns into soft ice cream, about 7 minutes.
4. Open and enjoy!



# THE SNOWY DAY



## Featured titles

### Fiction

*The Snowy Day*, written and illustrated by Ezra Jack Keats

### Nonfiction

*Snow Is Falling* by Franklyn M. Branley

### Additional fiction titles

*Snow* by Cynthia Rylant

*Snow* by Uri Shulevitz

*Snow Music* by Lynn Rae Perkins

*Winter Eyes* by Douglas Florian (poetry)

*White Snow, Bright Snow* by Alvin Tresselt

*Peter Spier's Rain* by Peter Spier [if you don't have snow!]

### Additional nonfiction titles

*Animals in Winter* by Henrietta Bancroft & Richard Van Gelder

*Big Tracks, Little Tracks: Following Animal Prints* by Millicent E. Selsam

*Footprints in the Snow* by Cynthia Benjamin

*Hibernating Animals* by Pamela Hickman and Pat Stephens

*In the Snow: Who's Been Here?* by Lindsay Barrett George

*Snowflake Bentley* by Jacqueline Briggs

*The Story of Snow: The Science of Winter's Wonder* by Mark Cassino

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