

Let It Snow!

WR News talks to an award-winning snowflake expert.

Most people stay indoors during a snowstorm, but Kenneth Libbrecht is not most people. When flurries start drifting down from the sky, the scientist heads out into the cold. He takes his camera with him.

Outside, Libbrecht waits for snowflakes that are just right. Finally, he spots the glittery ice crystals he's been waiting for. As the snowflakes fall, Libbrecht catches them. Then he points his camera and shoots.



Kenneth Libbrecht
Libbrecht caught these cool crystals on camera.

The scientist's shiny snapshots recently earned him an award. The award is given to top science photographers around the world.

Libbrecht takes pictures of snowflakes to learn more about their shapes. The crystals form when **water vapor**, or steam, in a cloud freezes. Every snowflake grows into a **hexagon**. That is a six-sided shape. However, no two snowflakes look the same. Experts are not sure why.

To solve the mystery, Libbrecht has traveled to snowy places around the world. He has taken pictures of snowflakes in Canada, Alaska, and Vermont. He takes his research back to his science lab. That is in California.

Libbrecht has collected nearly 10,000 snowflake **images**, or pictures. He spends most of the winter studying them. The scientist's outdoor adventures are far from over, though. Libbrecht continues to journey to other snowy places to take more photos.

"I really enjoy ... watching the snow fall and trying to see what I can find," he told *WR News*. "It's a bit of a treasure hunt."

Meet the Snow Man

Read to learn about scientist Kenneth Libbrecht's snowy side.



Kenneth Libbrecht

***WR News:* How do you take pictures of snowflakes?**

Kenneth Libbrecht: When I find a good one, I'll [catch it] using a little paintbrush. I then stick it under my microscope and take a picture.

***WR News:* What advice do you have for kids who want to study snowflakes?**

KL: You don't need a lot of fancy equipment. With a simple magnifying glass on a snowy day, you can really see quite a bit if you just stop and look.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What does Libbrecht use a paintbrush for when he is photographing snowflakes?

- A He uses a paintbrush to paint snowflakes.
- B He uses a paintbrush to make snow shapes.
- C He uses a paintbrush to catch snowflakes.
- D He uses a paintbrush to draw on his camera.

2. What does the text describe?

- A how images are captured by cameras
- B how a snowflake forms
- C Libbrecht's education
- D different examples of science photography

3. Weekly Reader News asked Kenneth Libbrecht what advice he has for kids who want to study snowflakes. This was his reply:

"You don't need a lot of fancy equipment. With a simple magnifying glass on a snowy day, you can really see quite a bit if you just stop and look."

Based on his reply, what might Libbrecht think about studying snowflakes?

- A He thinks it is a mysterious experience.
- B He thinks it is a boring experience.
- C He thinks it is relatively easy.
- D He thinks it is relatively hard.

4. Read the following quote from Kenneth Libbrecht: "I really enjoy watching the snow fall and trying to see what I can find. It's a bit of a treasure hunt."

Why does Kenneth Libbrecht use the phrase "treasure hunt"?

- A to suggest he is looking for something hidden
- B to suggest he is searching for something valuable
- C to suggest he wants to find snowflakes made of gold
- D to suggest he just really enjoys what he does

5. The primary purpose of this passage is to describe

- A the work of a scientist who studies snowflakes
- B the reasons that no two snowflakes look alike
- C the places around the world with the most snow
- D the best pictures ever taken of snowflakes

6. What has Libbrecht done to learn why no two snowflakes look the same?

7. What word might the author use to describe Kenneth Libbrecht? Be sure to explain your answer with evidence from the text.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Kenneth Libbrecht plans to visit lots of snowy places _____ he wants to take more pictures of snowflakes.

- A but
- B although
- C because
- D if

9. Answer the questions based on the sentence below.

Kenneth Libbrecht takes pictures of snowflakes to learn more about their shapes.

Who? Kenneth Libbrecht

What does Kenneth Libbrecht do? _____

Why? _____

10. Read the vocabulary word and definition below and complete questions 10a and 10b.

Vocabulary Word: expert (ex • pert): a person who knows a lot about something.

10a. Read the five sentences below and underline the word **expert** in each sentence.

1. Someday, I would like to be an expert on dogs because they are my favorite animal.
2. My teacher has studied so much about United States history that she is now an expert.
3. My father is a chef, which means he is an expert at cooking.
4. When the projector in our classroom broke, the principal called an expert to come and fix it.
5. An art history expert usually works at a museum or in an art gallery to study art from long ago.

10b. Use the word "expert" in a sentence.
