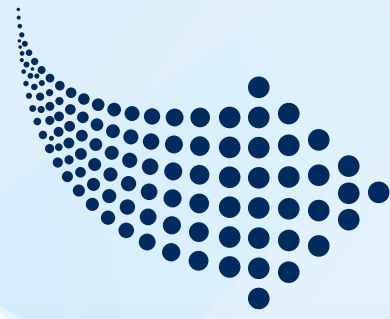


Let it snow!

Water droplets become supercooled – they are in liquid form even though it's below 0°C – and condense in cloud layers.



As they **hit small particles of dust or salt** – known as condensation nuclei – they form airborne ice crystals.

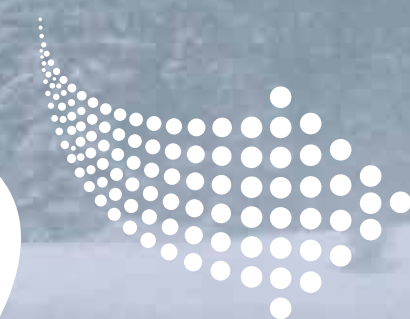
These crystals fall very slowly, and are **essentially very small snowflakes** – averaging under 0.5 millimetres.



Over time **these crystals get larger** and fall more rapidly as single snowflakes, or as a larger agglomeration of several flakes. This is snowfall.

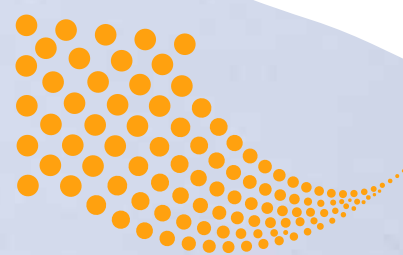


Once on the ground the **ice crystals continuously change size**, shape, and bonding, quickly losing most of their snowflake characteristics. This is broadly called **snow metamorphism**.



The **snow pack is an important water resource** for life, supplying melt water to streams and rivers during the drier seasons.

Water in rivers and streams then **evaporates under the heat** of the sun.



These facts, and more, can be found on **Oxford Reference** in the following articles:
'Snow' from the *Encyclopedia of Climate and Weather* (2nd edition)
'snow' from *A Dictionary of Environment and Conservation* (2nd edition)
'snow' from *A Dictionary of Geography* (5th edition)
'snowfall' from *A Dictionary of Weather* (2nd edition)