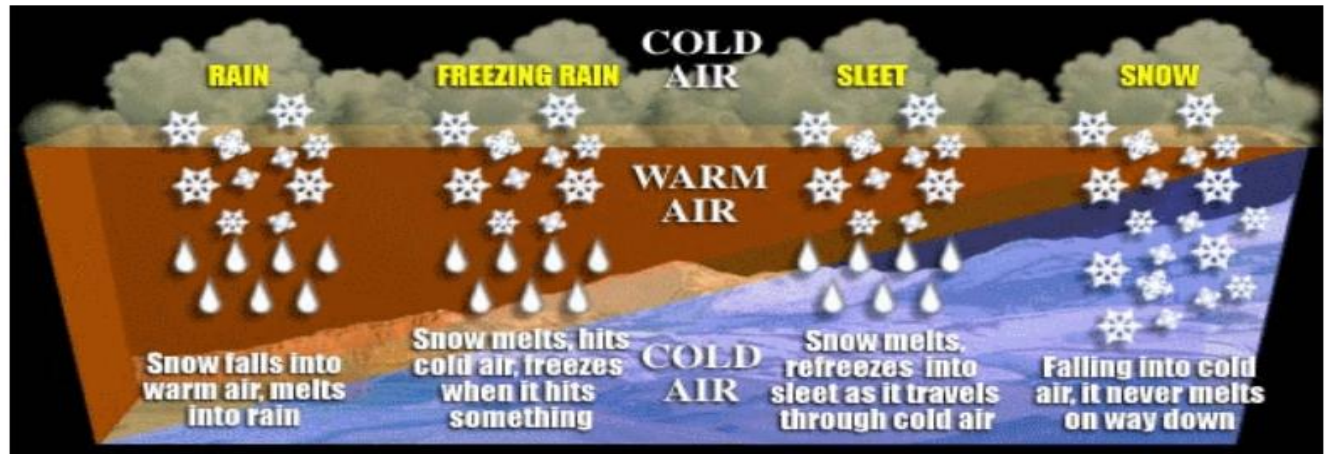


Winter Storms

How do winter storms form?

Winter storms derive their energy from the clash of two air masses of different temperatures and moisture levels. Winter storms usually form when an air mass of cold, dry, Canadian air moves south and interacts with a warm, moist air mass moving north from the Gulf of Mexico. The point where these two air masses meet is called a front. If cold air advances and pushes away the warm air, it forms a cold front. When warm air advances, it rides up over the denser, cold air mass to form a warm front. If neither air mass advances, it forms a stationary front.



Weather Flashcards

Weather Jokes

Weather Folklore

Weather Words

Weather Instruments

Weather Photos

Career Corner

Ask Crystal

About Crystal

Kids Questions

Weather Links

How is snow formed?

Snow is commonly formed when water vapor undergoes deposition, which is when water vapor changes directly to ice without first becoming a liquid, high in the atmosphere at a temperature of less than 32°F and then falls to the ground.



How do blizzards form?

A blizzard is a long-lasting snowstorm with very strong winds and intense snowfall. You need three things to have a blizzard; cold air at the surface, lots of moisture, and lift. Warm air must rise over cold air.

What are snowflakes?

Snowflakes are made of ice crystals. Each snowflake is six-sided and made of as many as 200 ice crystals. Snowflakes form in clouds where the temperature is below freezing. The ice crystals form around tiny bits of dirt that has been carried up into the atmosphere by the wind. As the snow crystals grow, they become heavier and fall toward the ground.



Why is snow white?

Bright snow blinds us with its gleaming white color because it reflects beams of white light. Instead of absorbing light, snow's complex structure prevents the light from shining through its lattice formation. A beam of white sunlight entering a snow bank is so quickly scattered by a zillion ice crystals and air pockets that most of the light comes bouncing right back out of the snow bank. What little sunlight is absorbed by snow is absorbed equally over the wavelengths of visible light thus giving snow its white appearance. So while many natural objects get their blue, red, and yellow colors from absorbing light, snow is stuck with its white color because it reflects light.