

# TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE: Stella, Queen of the Snow

PRESENTED BY MERMAID THEATRE OF NOVA SCOTIA

The lessons and activities in this guide are driven by the following **Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (2010)** which help ensure that all students are college and career ready in literacy no later than the end of high school.

RL.K.9, RL.1.9, RL.2.9

W.K.3, W.K.5, W.K.7, W.1.3, W.1.5, W.1.7, W.2.3, W.2.5, W.2.7, W.3.7

SL.K.4, SL.1.4, SL.2.4

21st century skills of creativity, critical thinking and collaboration are embedded in process of bringing the page to the stage. Seeing live theater encourages students to read, develop critical and creative thinking and to be curious about the world around them.

This Teacher Resource Guide includes background information, questions, and activities that can stand alone or work as building blocks toward the creation of a complete unit of classroom work.

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PlayhouseSquare is supported in part by the residents of Cuyahoga County through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture.



# ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

## Stella, Queen of the Snow

Meet Stella and Sam, sister and brother pair extraordinaire! Stella is older and wiser, with an imagination as fiery and exuberant as her curly flame-red hair. Sam is younger, and a bit on the worried side. His favorite question is "WHY" and he asks it a LOT. His constant questions are prompted by watching his first snowstorm, which both intrigues and intimidates him. Stella introduces Sam to the magic of winter as she patiently answers his questions and steals our hearts as she calms his fears. You'll both sympathize with Sam's dilemma (to go out and play or stay inside and watch?) and giggle at Stella's energy, imagination, and explanations ("the water is frozen like a giant silver popsicle"). The pictures are priceless and the dialogue is diverting.

The production features the whimsical puppets, striking scenic effects and evocative original music that have earned international recognition for Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia. Adapted from the Stella and Sam books by Marie-Louise Gay, author, illustrator and one of Canada's best-loved creators of children's books.

## About Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia



Mermaid Theatre was founded in 1972. Their unique adaptations of children's literature have delighted more than four million young people on four continents. Mermaid regularly crosses North America, and has represented Canada in Japan, Mexico, Australia, England, Northern Ireland, Holland, Scotland, Wales, Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Ireland. Mermaid has earned Export Excellence Awards from both Nova Scotia and the Government of Canada in recognition for contributions to the province's culture and economy. The company merited an award for Best Performing Group from the Canadian Arts Presenting Association, and received the Crystal Tourism Ambassador Award from Nova Scotia's tourism industry leaders. Visit their web site at: <http://mermaidtheatre.ca/>.

**"Captures the magic and wonder of nature and its inhabitants."** – *Booklist*



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### Marie-Louise Gay

Marie Louise Gay is an award-winning French-Canadian author and illustrator whose work is available throughout the world. She was born on June 17, 1952 in Quebec City. After graduating high school Gay applied to L'Institut des Arts Graphiques de Montréal and began studying for a degree in Graphic Arts.

Shortly afterwards she transferred to a program at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts School where she majored in animation. After graduation Gay worked as a professional illustrator and graphic designer for a number of years, winning the 1972 Claude Néon Award for the best billboard in Canada.

After several years as a professional illustrator, Gay began illustrating children's books including *Lizzy's Lion* by Dennis Lee in 1984. She wrote her first children's story in 1983. Since then she has written and illustrated many children's picture and storybooks including the popular Stella and Sam picture books.

She has won numerous awards including the Governor General's award for English illustration in 2000. Her books have been translated into more than fifteen languages and are loved by children all over the world. Gay currently lives in Montreal with her husband David Homel and continues to write and illustrate new stories.



For more information on Marie-Louise Gay:  
<http://marielouisegay.com/>



## COMING TO THE THEATER!

PlayhouseSquare is an exciting field trip destination! As the country's largest performing arts center outside of New York, the not-for-profit PlayhouseSquare attracts more than one million guests to 1,000+ performances and events each year. PlayhouseSquare thus acts as a catalyst for economic growth and vitality within the region. When you visit, be sure to note the GE Chandelier, the world's largest outdoor chandelier, and the retro PlayhouseSquare sign with its 9-foot-tall letters!

As audience members, you and your students play a vital role in the success of the performances. You are part of a community that creates the theater experience. For many students, this may be their first time viewing a live theater production. We encourage teachers to discuss some of the differences between coming to the theater and watching a television show, attending a sporting event or viewing a movie at the cinema. Here are a few examples to start the discussion:

- ◆ Students are led into the theater and seated by an usher.
- ◆ Theaters are built to magnify sound. Even the slightest whisper can be heard throughout the theater. Remember that not only can those around you hear you; the performers can too.
- ◆ Appropriate responses such as laughing or applauding are appreciated. Pay attention to the artists on stage; they will let you know what is appropriate.
- ◆ There is no food, drink or gum permitted in the theater.
- ◆ Photography and videotaping of performances is not permitted.
- ◆ When the houselights dim, the performance is about to begin. Please turn your attention toward the stage.
- ◆ After the performance, you will be dismissed by bus number. Check around your seat to make sure you have all of your personal belongings.



# PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES



## Stella's Questions

### College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading Key Ideas and Details

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

28 questions are presented in Marie-Louise Gay's *Stella, Queen of the Snow*. Sam's fears about his first snowstorm are imaginatively answered by Stella, who is delighted by all things snowy. This is an excellent book to use to ignite brainstorming snow activities.

Ask your students some of Sam's questions before reading the book. Write down their answers, and then compare them to Stella's answers after you have seen the show. Some questions from the book include:

- Is the snow cold?
- Where does snow come from?
- Where does a snowman sleep?
- What does a snowman eat?
- Why is fog coming out of my mouth? (Or why does fog come out of your mouth when it's cold?)
- Where does snow go in the summer?
- How many snowflakes are there in a snowball?
- Can you eat a snowflake?
- Do dogs get cold?

### To make a virtual snowflake

<http://snowflakes.barkleyus.com/index.html>



Before you read *Stella, Queen of the Snow* to your class:

- Have your students talk about their favorite book.
- Do they have a favorite place for reading?
- Who do they like to read with?
- Based on the title, what do they think the book will be about?

# PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES

## Building Background

Please share this information with your students before attending the performance.

## Theatrical Effects in This Production

*Stella, Queen of the Snow* is performed entirely through the use of black-light puppetry and narration. Puppetry allows the play to illustrate scenic changes in a fascinating way.

Black-light puppetry uses a stage lit with ultraviolet, or “black,” lights. The puppeteers and some of the architecture of the stage are covered in black velvet, which cannot be seen under the lights. This allows the puppeteers to be completely hidden, while the puppets can be any size and have a large range of motion. The puppets themselves are

fluorescent-colored, so they are fully visible and able to move or float in what sometimes seems to be midair – or even disappear.

The way in which the puppets are manipulated is born out of the ancient tradition of Bunraku Puppetry, originally developed in Japan. This style of puppetry has multiple puppeteers operating one puppet by moving different rods attached to its feet, hands and head. Bunraku puppeteers dress in black clothing to attempt to blend into the background as much as possible.



Pictured: Jillian Matthews and Craig Boutilier



Show your class this video of how *Stella, Queen of the Snow* was created by Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia!

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=ULAFXt2Xvd8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=ULAFXt2Xvd8)

# PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES

## Kindergarten

### Earth and Space Science (ESS)

#### Topic: Daily and Seasonal Changes

This topic focuses on observing, exploring, describing and comparing weather changes, patterns in the sky and changing seasons.

## Grade 2

### Earth and Space Science (ESS)

#### Topic: The Atmosphere

This topic focuses on air and water as they relate to weather and weather changes that can be observed and measured.

## Snow Scene in a Jar

In Ohio, we expect our first snowfall as early as October! If you don't get any snow in your area, you can still make your own snow scene. You will need:

- ◆ Empty small jar (like a baby food jar)
- ◆ Hot glue gun
- ◆ Epoxy glue
- ◆ Small plastic toy animal (they have them in toy stores everywhere)
- ◆ White rocks, big pieces of gravel, plastic tree etc.
- ◆ Glitter (some of the new iridescent kinds are beautiful & available at hobby stores)
- ◆ Water
- ◆ Food coloring if desired

Use a hot glue gun to glue rocks and animals to the bottom of jar. (Have an adult help with the glue gun!) Fill with water and add food coloring if desired. Spoon in some glitter and use epoxy glue to glue lid onto the jar. Be sure to have an adult help with the epoxy glue. Shake to make it snow!



# POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

## Read About Snow!

### College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading K-5

#### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

### College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing

#### Research to Build and Present Knowledge

7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

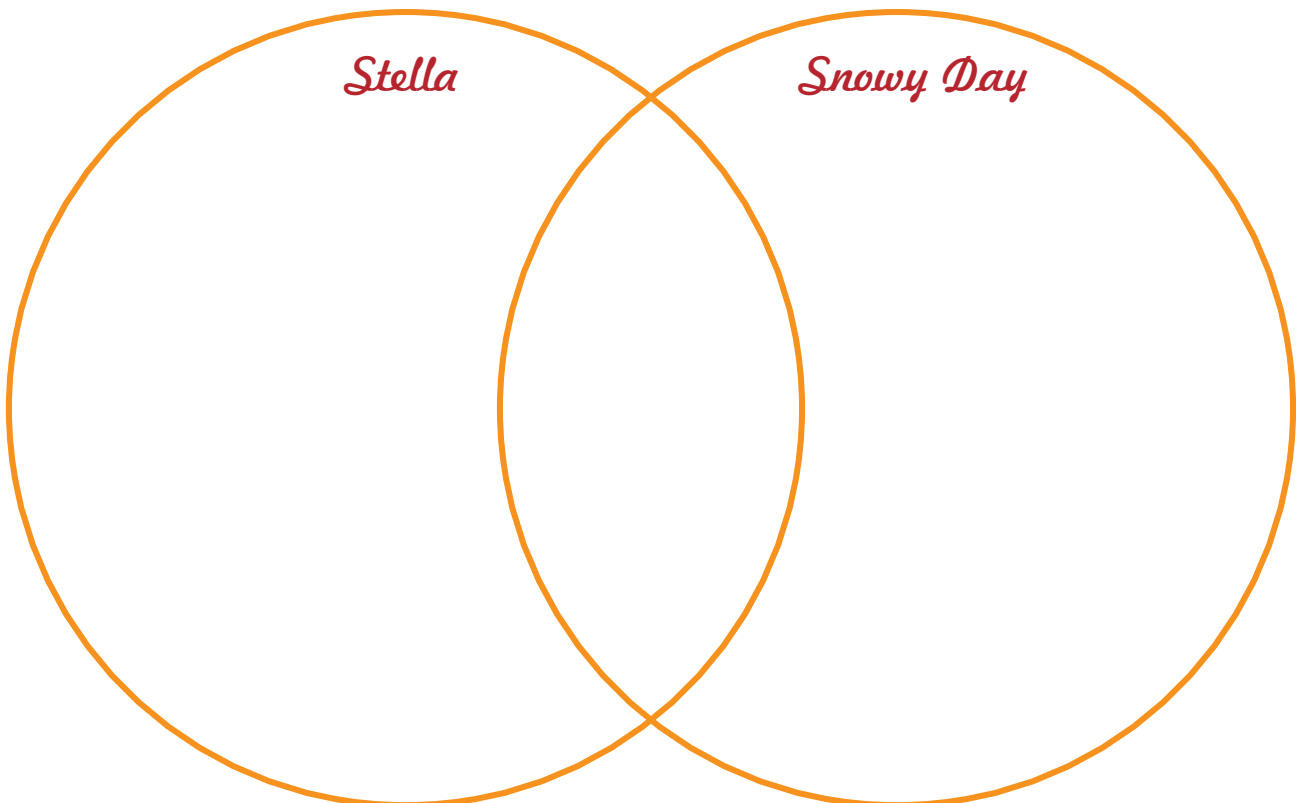
### College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

#### Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

After seeing and reading *Stella, Queen of the Snow*, read a similar book entitled *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats, Puffin Publisher (1976). Compare the two books: How are they the same (e.g., both books are about snow, both are about exploring their neighborhood, both books describe how snow forms)? How are they different (e.g., the artists use different art styles, is only about a little boy, etc.)?

Show your results on a Venn diagram like the one below:



## Why Did My Snowman Melt?

### College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing K-5

#### Text Types and Purposes

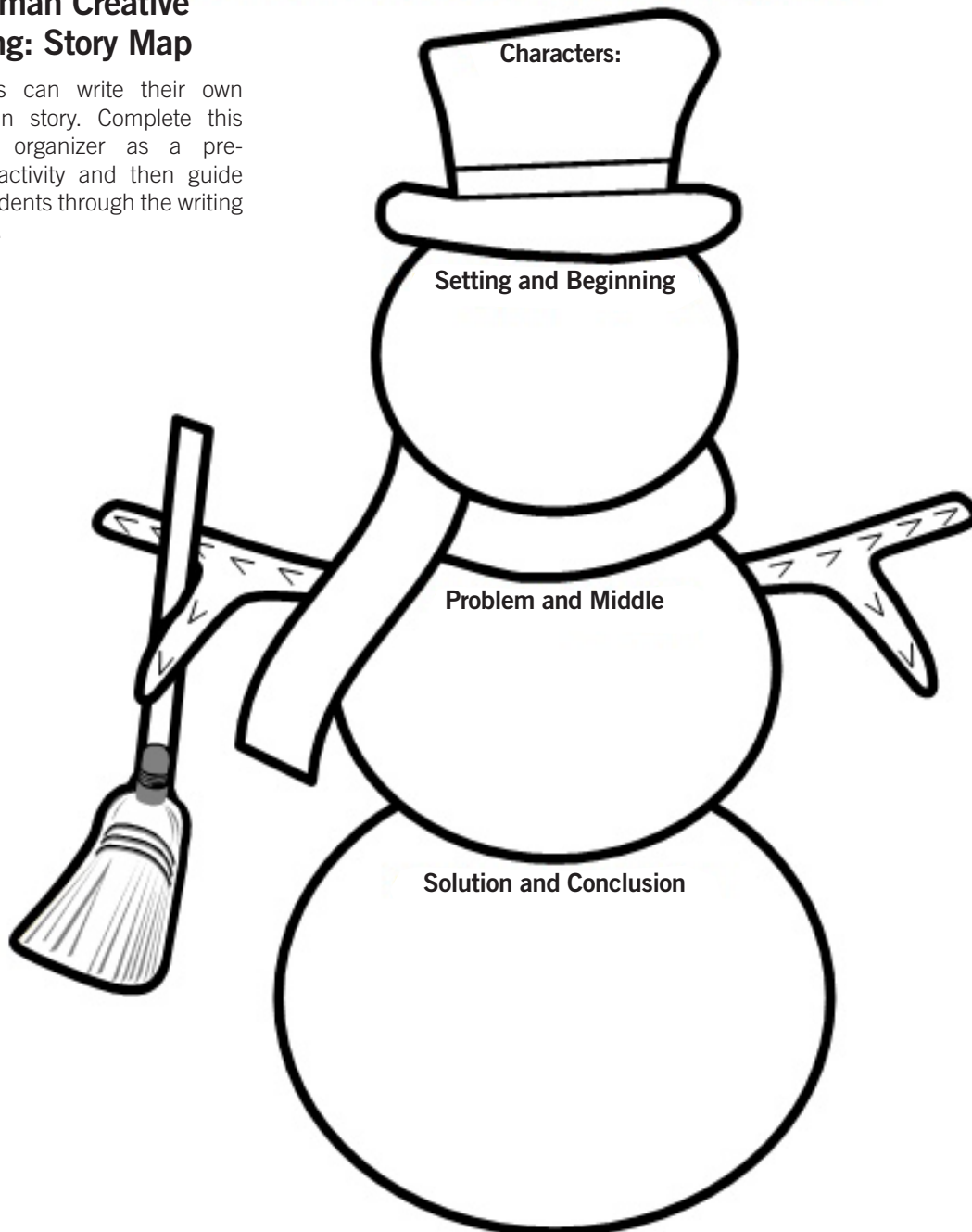
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

### Production and Distribution of Writing

5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

## Snowman Creative Writing: Story Map

Students can write their own snowman story. Complete this graphic organizer as a pre-writing activity and then guide your students through the writing process.



**Grade 3  
Physical Science (PS)**

**Topic: Matter and Forms of Energy**

This topic focuses on the relationship between matter and energy. Matter has specific properties and is found in all substances on Earth. Heat is a familiar form of energy that can change the states of matter.

**Experiment: Melting Ice Cubes**

During the winter, people put salt on icy roads and sidewalks to help make the ice melt. You can do the same thing without snow and without going outside!

**You will need:**

- A Tray of Ice Cubes
- Two Bowls
- Salt
- Timer

1. Put the same number of ice cubes in each bowl. In one of the bowls, stir in some salt with the ice cubes. Do not put salt in the second bowl of ice cubes.
2. Turn your timer on for 15 minutes and watch both bowls, stirring them often.
3. Which bowl of ice melts faster? Why?



**Critical Response Questions**

*Students develop their comprehension when they reflect upon what they wondered, noticed and felt. Ignite a classroom discussion with the following critical thinking questions:*

1. What happened in the story?
2. What do you think happened in the story just before the performance started?
3. What did you like about the show? Why?
4. What did you dislike about the show? Why?
5. What do you know about snow?
6. What do you like and dislike about snow?
7. If you were a character in the story other than Stella or Sam, who would you be?
8. What kind of adventure would Stella and Sam have if they were in our classroom?
9. How is this show like the book? How is it different?
10. If you could ask the main character three questions, what would you ask?

## *Teacher Resource Books*

**Art and Creative Development for Young Children (What's New in Early Childhood)** by J. Englebright Fox (Author), Robert Schirrmacher (Author). Cengage Learning; 7th edition (2011).

**The Big Messy\* Art Book: \*But Easy to Clean Up** by MaryAnn F. Kohl (Author). Gryphon House (2000).

**Child of Wonder: Nurturing Creative & Naturally Curious Children** (Kindle Edition) by Ginger Carlson, Common Ground Press

**Teaching Creativity: Supporting, Valuing, and Inspiring Young Children's Creative Thinking** [Kindle Edition] Abigail Flesch Connors (Author).

**Unplugged Play: No Batteries. No Plugs. Pure Fun.** By Bobbi Conner, Workman Publishing Company, (2007)

**Preschool Art: It's the Process, Not the Product!** by MaryAnn F. Kohl (Author). Gryphon House Publishing (1994).

## *Children's Resource Books*

**Baby Loves Winter!:** A Karen Katz Lift-the-Flap Book (Karen Katz Lift-the-Flap Books) by Karen Katz (Author, Illustrator). Little Simon Publisher (2013). Grade Level: Pre-K

**The Big Snow** by Berta Hader (Author), Elmer Hader (Author). (Aladdin Publishing1993)  
Grade Level: 1-4.

**Biscuits Snowy Day** by Alyss Satin Capucilli (Author) and Pat Schories (Illustrator). HarperFestival Publisher (2005). Grade Level: PreK-3.

**Bright Baby Touch and Feel Winter Board Book** by Roger Priddy (Author). Priddy Books Publishing (2011). Grade Level: Pre-K.

**Clackers: Penguin Board** book by C Nash (Author) and Luana Rinaldo (Illustrator). Robin Corey Books Publishing; (2011)  
Grade Level: Pre-K.

**The First Snowfall** by Anne Rockwell (Author), Harlow Rockwell (Author, Illustrator). Aladdin Publishing (1992). Grade Level: Pre-K-1.

**The Magic School Bus: Lost in the Snow** by Joanna Cole (Author), Carolyn Bracken (Illustrator). Scholastic Publishing (2004). Grade Level: Pre-K-3.

**It's Snowing! Paperback** by Gail Gibbons (Author, Illustrator). Holiday House Publishing (2012). Grade Level: PreK-3.

**Millie in the Snow** by Alexander Steffensmeier (Author, Illustrator). Walker Childrens Publishing (2008). Grade Level: Pre-K.

**Perfect Snow** by Barbara Reid (Author, Illustrator). Albert Whitman & Company Publishing, (2011) Grade Level: 1-4.

**Science Arts: Discovering Science Through Art Experiences (Bright Ideas for Learning)** by MaryAnn F. Kohl (Author), Jean Potter (Author). Bright Ring Publishing (1993).Grade Level: Pre-K-7.

**Snowman** [Kindle Edition] by Maureen Wright (Author), Stephen Gilpin (Illustrator). Two Lions Publishing (2012). Grade Level: Preschool-3.

**Snow** by Uri Shulevitz (Author, Illustrator). Squarefish Publishing (2004). Grade Level: Pre-K-2.

**Snow Family** by Daniel Kirk. Disney-Hyperion Publishing; 1st edition (2000) Grade Level: Pre-K–2.

**The Snowy Day** by Ezra Jack Keats, Puffin Publisher (1976) Grade Level: Pre-K–2.

**Snowy Treasury** by Jan Brett (Author, Illustrator). Putnam Juvenile Publishing (2009)  
Grade Level: PreK-K.

**Snowzilla** [Kindle Edition] by Janet Lawler (Author). Two Lions Publishing (2012). Grade Range: K-4.

**Weather Forecasting** by Gail Gibbons (Author, Illustrator). Aladdin Publishing (1993).  
Grade Range: K-3.

**Welcome Winter** (Little Scholastic) Board Book by Jill Ackerman (Author), Nancy Davis (Illustrator). Cartwheel Books Publishing (2008). Grade Level: Pre-K

**Whiteout!: A Book About Blizzards (Amazing Science: Weather)** by Rick Thomas (Author), Denise Shea (Illustrator). Non-Fiction Picture Books Publishing, (2005), Grade Range: K-3.

**Wild Weather: Blizzards!** by Lorraine Jean Hopping (Author), Jody Wheeler (Illustrator). Scholastic Publishing (1998)  
Grade Range: 1-3.

**Winter Snow (Clavis Toddler: The World) Board Book** by Liesbet Slegers. Clavis Publishing (2012). Grade Range: Pre-K-2.

## *Web Links*

### **FEMA**

<http://www.ready.gov/kids>

### **Mermaid Theater of Nova Scotia**

<http://mermaidtheatre.ca/>

### **Nature**

[www.naturenet.com](http://www.naturenet.com)

### **Story Starters**

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/story-starters>

### **Puppetry**

<http://www.character-shop.com/puppetfx.html>

### **Weather Wiz Kids**

<http://www.weatherwizkids.com/>

### **Web Weather for Kids**

<http://eo.ucar.edu/webweather/>

## *Videos*

### **The Chemistry of Snowflakes**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VYrF3sFBY20>

### **How Does Snow Form?**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BI7K4D3ccfE>

### **Little Snowflake from Super Simple Songs**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tbbKjDjMDok>

### **Snow Flake Watching**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fd-hb2xzvZl>

### **Snow Flakes from BBC**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rbW6MsXfPYU>