

GLACIERS

by Kenni Alden



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WHAT IS A GLACIER?

A glacier is a big sheet or block of ice. Glaciers form in cold places on Earth.



Some glaciers are wide, thick sheets. Some look like large, icy rivers. Most glaciers are very deep. Some are many, many miles long!



HOW GLACIERS FORM

Every glacier starts as a large pile of snow. A lot of snow is needed to form a glacier. How does fluffy, **fleecy** snow change into a glacier?

Where glaciers form, it is so cold that most of the snow does not have a chance to melt. But the edges of some snowflakes melt.



When it gets colder again, the melted flakes freeze in the center. They change into small balls of ice.

These balls of ice are packed down by new snow. Over many years, the packed-down ice forms a glacier.

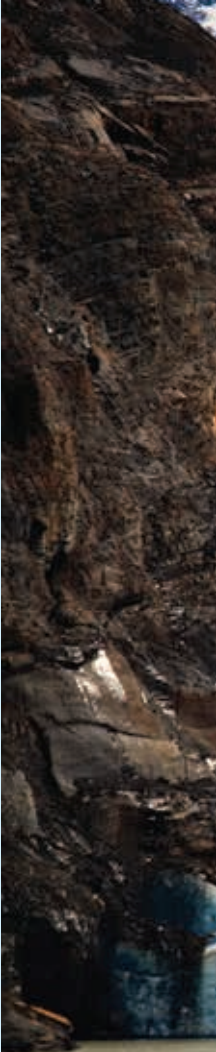


HOW GLACIERS MOVE

Over time, glacier ice gets thicker and thicker. When the glacier is thick and heavy enough, it starts to move.

Even though glaciers are very large and heavy, they move. Gravity makes glaciers move. (Gravity is the **force** that pulls things down toward Earth.) All glaciers flow downhill, toward the sea.

The flow of most glaciers is too slow to see. Some glaciers move as little as 6 feet each year. Others move as far as 1,000 feet—or more!









HOW GLACIERS CHANGE THE LAND

As glaciers **advance**, they change the way the land looks. Most glaciers have enough force to scrape rock and soil from the ground.

Glaciers make new hills by dragging rocks and dirt from one place to another. If a glacier melts and **recedes**, the rocks and dirt stay.





Glaciers change the way land is shaped, too. A glacier can chip off bits of rock and move them. Glaciers can leave holes called **cirques** (say “serks”). A cirque is shaped like a bowl.



Over time, a cirque can fill with water. So, a glacier can make a lake from flat land!



Most people have not walked on a glacier. But most people live on a part of Earth once covered by glaciers. Glaciers help shape our world.



GLOSSARY

advance: move forward

cirques: bowl-shaped holes made by glaciers

fleecy: fluffy and thick, like a sheep's fur

force: strength or power to move something

recedes: moves backward

