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Issue Five: Water, Ice, and Snow (August 2008)

## Floating Ice

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Have you ever put ice cubes into a glass of water? What happens?

That's right! They float! That might not seem like a big deal, but it is just one of the reasons that water is amazing!

Ice is just solid water. When liquid water gets cold enough, it freezes and becomes a solid. Think about making ice cubes. You put water into a tray and place it in the cold freezer. Wait a while and you have ice cubes.

Look carefully at those ice cubes. Do you notice anything?

Right again! The ice cubes take up more room in the tray than the liquid water did!

Water is very special. It gets bigger when it freezes. Water is the only thing on Earth that does this. This is also why ice can float in water.

Ice cubes aren't the only example of floating ice in our world. Think about lakes and ponds in the winter. If it gets cold enough, a layer of ice floats on top of the water.

At the North Pole and South Pole, there are many examples of floating ice. In places like Antarctica and Greenland, **glaciers** can slowly move out over the ocean water and float there. When this happens, we call the floating ice an **ice shelf**.

Sometimes, pieces of ice **calve** off the ends and form **icebergs**. These icebergs float in the ocean. Some icebergs are HUGE – the size of a small state like Delaware! No matter how big they are, they still float. Ice always floats in water.

Flesch-Kincaid RL = 3.0

At the North Pole, a layer of **sea ice** floats over the deep ocean. Animals like polar bears, seals, and walruses hunt, rest, and have babies on the ice.

It's good for all of us that water is so special!

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## Glossary

calve – break off

glacier – a huge sheet of ice that forms on land

iceberg – a huge chunk of ice that breaks off the end of a glacier or an ice sheet and floats in the ocean

ice shelf - a thick, floating platform of ice

sea ice - ice that forms from the saltwater of the ocean

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