Name: _____ Date: _____

Why Does Ice Float?

Reading level 7 (3rd grade) · 177 words

Tim drops an ice cube into his glass. It does not sink. It floats on top of the water.

That seems strange. Most things that freeze get heavier and sink. Water is different.

Water is made of tiny, tiny bits. When water freezes, the bits line up in a pattern. The pattern leaves little gaps.

The gaps spread the bits apart. So ice is a little lighter than water. And lighter things float.

Tim looks closely. About a tenth of the cube sticks out. The rest hides below.

Now think of a pond in winter. The weather turns very cold. Ice begins to form on top of the water.

The ice floats there like a lid. It stops the pond from freezing from the bottom up.

Under the lid, fish live all winter. They swim slowly, and they do not eat much. The water under the lid stays liquid.

Tim taps his glass and grins. "My ice cube is a little lid!"

Here is a question for dinner. What would happen to a pond if ice sank?

Questions

1. What does an ice cube do in a glass of water?

A. It turns red
B. It floats
C. It sinks

2. Why is ice lighter than the same chunk of water?

A. Its pattern leaves gaps
B. It is warmer
C. It is clear

3. How much of the cube sticks up?

A. About half
B. All of it
C. About a tenth

4. In this book, the ice on a pond is like a ...

A. rug
B. lid

C. bridge

5. Why do fish stay alive in a frozen pond?

A. The ice lid stops the pond freezing from the bottom

B. They sleep on land

C. The ice is warm

Words to know

float: stay on top

pattern: a repeating shape

gaps: empty spaces

lid: top cover

pond: small lake

Answer key: Why Does Ice Float?

1. B. It floats
2. A. Its pattern leaves gaps
3. C. About a tenth
4. B. lid
5. A. The ice lid stops the pond freezing from the bottom