Name: _____ Date: _____

# Harvesting Winter Ice Before Refrigerators

Circle group

Today, a cold drink is as close as the kitchen. But a long time ago in the northern United States, cold was a crop. People gathered it in winter and saved it for summer.

When ponds and rivers froze hard, crews went out on the ice. They marked the top into squares. Then they cut along the lines with saws. Sometimes a horse pulled a special plow to score the ice. The loose blocks floated down a channel of open water to the shore. Workers used hooks and ramps to lift them out.

The blocks went into icehouses. These were big buildings with thick wood walls. Workers packed the ice in layers and covered it with sawdust. Sawdust is a good insulator. The ice could last all summer. Some was loaded on ships and sent far away, where it was a luxury.

In towns, an iceman brought ice to homes. He carried a block with heavy tongs. Families kept food in an icebox. This was a wood cabinet with a place for ice and a place for milk, butter, and meat. A card in the window told the iceman how much to leave. The melted water ran into a pan that had to be emptied.

In the early 1900s, electric refrigerators took over. The ice trade faded away.

## Questions

**1. When did crews cut ice?**

_____

_____

**2. How was the ice cut?**

_____

_____

**3. What kept the stored ice from melting?**

_____

_____

**4. What was an icebox?**

_____

_____

**5. Why did families put a card in the window?**

_____

_____

**6. Why did the ice trade fade away?**

_____

_____

## Words to know

insulator: something that slows the movement of heat
luxury: something special that is not needed but is enjoyed
icebox: a cabinet cooled with a block of ice

## Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

# Harvesting Winter Ice Before Refrigerators

Triangle group

Today, a cold drink is as close as the kitchen. A hundred and fifty years ago in the northern United States, though, cold was a crop that people harvested in winter and saved for summer.

When the ponds and rivers froze hard, crews went out onto the ice. First they marked the surface into a grid of squares. Then they cut along the lines with saws, and horses sometimes pulled a special plow to score the ice. Workers floated the loose blocks down a channel of open water to the shore, then used hooks and ramps to lift them out.

The blocks went into icehouses, which were large buildings with thick wooden walls. Workers packed them in layers and covered them with sawdust, which is a surprisingly good insulator. Ice stored this way could last through the heat of summer. Some of it was loaded onto ships and sent to faraway places, where it was a luxury.

In towns, ice was delivered by an iceman, who carried a block into your home with heavy tongs. Families kept food in an icebox, a wooden cabinet with a compartment for the ice and another for milk, butter, and meat. A card in the window told the iceman how much to leave that day. The melted water drained into a pan that had to be emptied.

Electric refrigerators slowly took over during the early 1900s, and the winter ice trade faded away.

## Questions

**1. When did ice cutters do their work?**

_____

_____

**2. How was ice cut from a frozen pond?**

_____

_____

**3. What material kept the stored ice from melting?**

_____

_____

**4. What was an icebox?**

_____

_____

**5. Why would a family put a card in the window?**

_____

_____

**6. Why did the ice trade fade away?**

_____

_____

## Words to know

harvested: gathered in, as a crop is gathered
grid: a pattern of squares made by crossing lines
insulator: something that slows the movement of heat
luxury: something special that is not needed but is enjoyed
icebox: a cabinet cooled with a block of ice

## Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

# Harvesting Winter Ice Before Refrigerators

Square group

Today, a cold drink is no farther away than the kitchen. A century and a half ago in the northern United States, however, cold itself was a crop that people harvested in winter and preserved for the heat of summer.

Once the ponds and rivers had frozen solid, crews ventured out onto the ice. They began by marking the surface into a grid of squares. Next, they cut along the lines with long saws, and horses sometimes dragged a specialized plow to score the ice more deeply. The loosened blocks were floated down a channel of open water to the shore, where workers used hooks and ramps to haul them out.

The blocks were then stored in icehouses, which were large buildings with thick wooden walls. Workers stacked them in layers and covered them with sawdust, a surprisingly effective insulator. Ice kept in this manner could last through the heat of the entire summer. Some of it was even loaded onto ships and carried to distant lands, where it was considered a luxury.

In towns, ice was delivered by an iceman, who carried each block into the house with heavy tongs. Families kept their food in an icebox, a wooden cabinet that contained one compartment for the ice and another for milk, butter, and meat. A card displayed in the window informed the iceman how much to leave that day, and the melted water drained into a pan that had to be emptied regularly.

Electric refrigerators gradually replaced iceboxes during the early 1900s, and the winter ice trade slowly disappeared.

## Questions

**1. When did the ice crews do their harvesting?**

_____

_____

**2. How was ice cut from a frozen pond?**

_____

_____

**3. What material kept the stored ice from melting in the icehouse?**

_____

_____

**4. What was an icebox?**

_____

_____

**5. What was the purpose of the card displayed in the window?**

_____

_____

**6. What caused the winter ice trade to disappear?**

_____

_____

## Words to know

harvested: gathered in, as a crop is gathered
grid: a pattern of squares made by crossing lines
insulator: something that slows the movement of heat
luxury: something special that is not needed but is enjoyed
icebox: a cabinet cooled with a block of ice

## Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

# For the teacher: Harvesting Winter Ice Before Refrigerators

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

### Circle: Harvesting Winter Ice Before Refrigerators

Easier · 218 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.6

1. In winter, when ponds and rivers froze hard.
2. It was marked into squares and cut along the lines with saws.
3. Sawdust packed around the blocks in an icehouse.
4. A wood cabinet with a place for ice and a place for food.
5. To tell the iceman how much ice to leave.
6. Electric refrigerators took its place.

### Triangle: Harvesting Winter Ice Before Refrigerators

This passage · 239 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 6.9

1. In winter, when ponds and rivers were frozen hard.
2. It was marked into squares and cut along the lines with saws.
3. Sawdust packed around the blocks in an icehouse.
4. A wooden cabinet with a place for ice and a place for food.
5. To tell the iceman how much ice to leave.
6. Electric refrigerators took its place.

### Square: Harvesting Winter Ice Before Refrigerators

Harder · 260 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 9

1. In winter, after the ponds and rivers had frozen solid.
2. The surface was marked into a grid and cut along the lines with long saws.
3. Sawdust stacked around the blocks.
4. A wooden cabinet with one compartment for ice and another for food.
5. It informed the iceman how much ice to leave that day.
6. Electric refrigerators gradually replaced iceboxes.