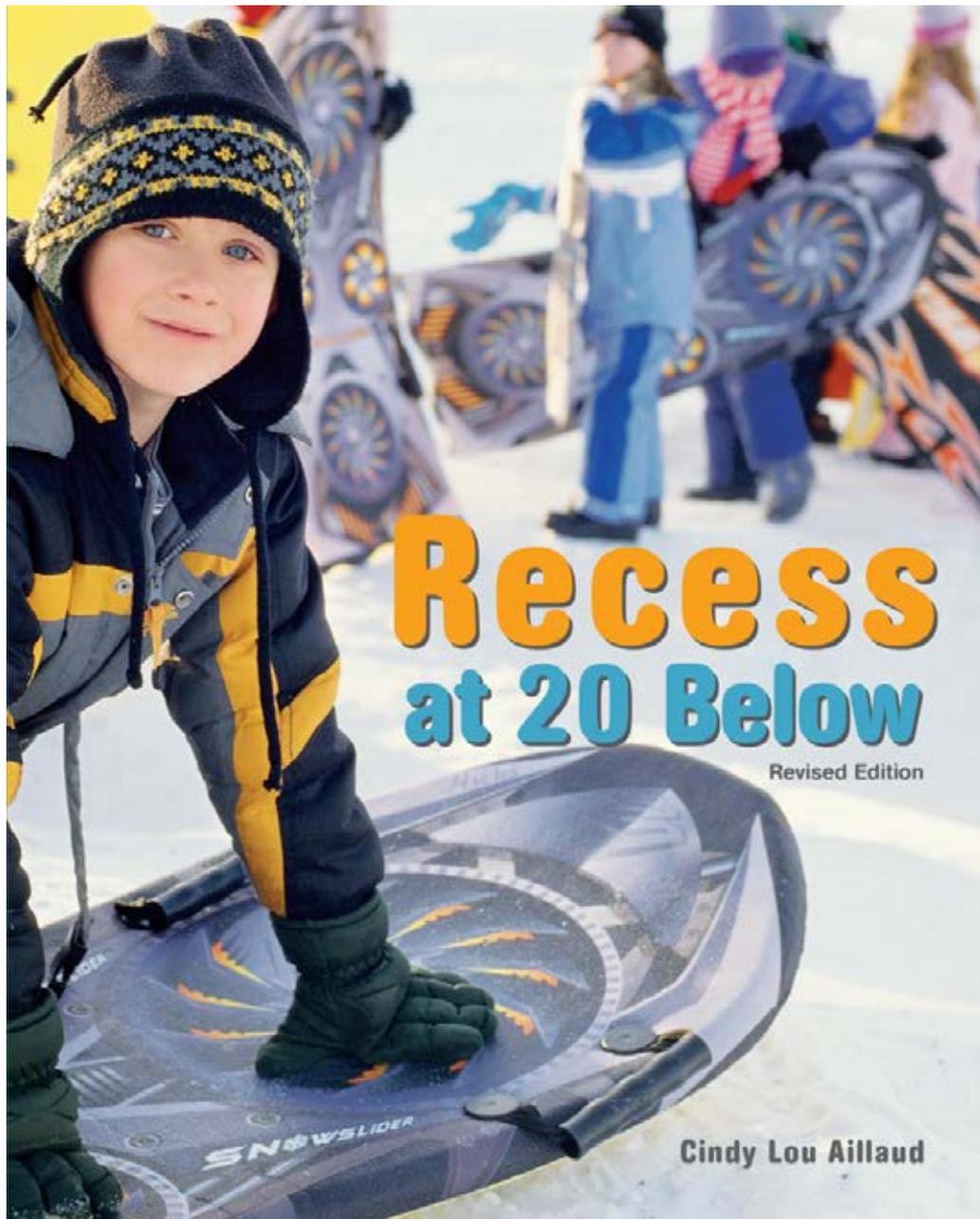




# BOOK GUIDE FOR *Recess at 20 Below*

Written by Cindy Lou Aillaud  
Guide created by Christine Belenski



Fry Readability: 4

Lexile Measure: AD900L

Find more book guides at [WestMarginPress.com](http://WestMarginPress.com)

## SUMMARY

A classroom favorite, *Recess at 20 Below* was written by school teacher Cindy Lou Aillaud to show kids what school and life is like for those who live in Alaska. In places where snow is the norm and people are used to freezing temperatures, how do kids get to school? Do they get to have recess outside? With bright photography, the book shows young readers how kids dress warmly for the cold, the unique weather and amount of sun they get in Alaska, how closely people live to the wilderness, and more.

This revised edition also includes a Q&A with the author, where she takes the most common questions she gets from kids around the world and talks back to them.

### About the Author



Cindy Lou Aillaud grew up in western Washington with rainy winters. She always longed to play in the snow. Shortly after graduating from Washington State University, she headed north to Alaska to teach school north of the Arctic Circle in Arctic Village. Since 1979 she has been living in Delta Junction where she has taught elementary students at nearly every grade, including special education. In 2004, she was chosen as one of thirty-nine Disney Teachers of the Year out of 150,000 nominees.

# READING / WRITING / LANGUAGE ARTS

1. What months out of the year does Alaska have snow?
2. Why do the kids zip their parkas as high as the zippers will go?
3. What article of clothing goes on last? Why?
4. How does the sledding hill grow and grow all winter long?
5. What will happen if you touch your tongue to metal? What will a teacher have to do as a result?
6. Kids in *Recess at 20 Below* wear a lot of clothing to stay warm while they are playing outside. What is a parka? Does it go on your head? Your feet? Where?



# SCIENCE/NATURAL HISTORY

1. Imagine you are playing outside in 20 below weather. Using your five senses (seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting), how would you describe being in this environment?

Share your senses with the rest of the class.

2. What do you notice when you are outside during recess? Make a list of what you see and decide if they are living or nonliving things.

Example: tree—living, swings—nonliving

3. The children in *Recess at 20 Below* are from Delta Junction, Alaska. Can you find Delta Junction, Alaska, on a map? See how far away this city and state are from your home state.

4. What is the Midnight Sun? Why is it called that? Most places don't see the Midnight Sun, so where do you think you have to go in order to see it?

5. When a moose is on the playground in *Recess at 20 Below*, the students have to stay indoors. Why do you think they can't play outside with the moose? What other reason would make the kids stay indoors?

6. What does the title of the book *Recess at 20 Below* mean? Does this have anything to do with temperature? What is the temperature when you are at recess?

7. What other animals are mentioned in *Recess at 20 Below* besides the moose? Do you think any of them have strange habits as mentioned in the book? What are they?

8. Snowflakes are not only beautiful but very fascinating. Do you think all snowflakes are the same? How is snow made?



# MATH

1. Snow is on the ground in Alaska from September through April. How many months total do the children get to play in the snow?
2. The students in *Recess at 20 Below* first go out to recess at noon because that is the lightest part of the day. If they play until 12:45 p.m., how long will they have been at recess?
3. Do you think a snowflake is larger than a raindrop? Smaller? Do you think it is heavier than a raindrop? Lighter? Take a class survey and using the class results, make a graph representing the class's answers.



# ACTIVITIES

Activities provided by [perpetualpreschool.com](http://perpetualpreschool.com)

## Make polar ice cap treats

### Ingredients

- blue Kool-Aid (prepared as directed)
- ginger ale
- vanilla ice cream
- clear glass, straw

Put the Kool-Aid and the ginger ale in the refrigerator until they are cold.

Fill a glass almost halfway with blue Kool-Aid. Add ginger ale almost to the top of the glass. Drop in one big scoop of vanilla ice cream. Enjoy your “Northern” drink with a straw!

## Freeze a bubble

If the weather outside is below 32 degrees, you can take your bubble activities outdoors!

Blow a bubble and catch it on the wand. Wait and watch as it freezes. It will turn into a crystal ball and then shatter like glass! The children will see the ice crystals form.

You can also do this with large bubble wands. Dip the wand into the bubble solution but do not blow a bubble. The crystals will form across the mouth of the wand.

## Create an acrostic

Using the letters of your first name, describe what you like about recess.

Use actions, playground, equipment, and emotions. After you have finished, share with the class!

For example

# CHRIS

**C**limbing monkey bars

**H**appy

**R**unning

**I**ce skating

**S**lide

## Activities continued

### Make crystallized snowflakes

#### Supplies

- white pipe cleaners
- pencil
- Borax
- blue food coloring
- string
- wide-mouth jar
- tablespoon measurement

Cut a white pipe cleaner into 3 equal sections. Twist them together to make a six-sided flake. Tie string from point to point to form a pattern. Tie a piece to the top of one of the pipe cleaners and tie the other end to a pencil, so the snowflake can hang from the pencil.

Fill a wide-mouth jar with boiling water. Mix in Borax one tablespoon at a time (3 tablespoons per cup of water). Stir until dissolved. There may be some settling, but it will be okay. You can add a little blue food coloring at this point to tint the flake.

Insert the snowflake in your solution totally submerging the flake. Rest your pencil on the top of the jar, letting the flake suspend freely in the solution. Wait overnight, and the next day you will have a snowflake covered with tiny crystals.

### Write and draw your recess

Write a story or poem about your favorite thing to do during recess. Do you do the same thing every day, or do you do different activities throughout the week? Draw a picture to go with your story or poem.