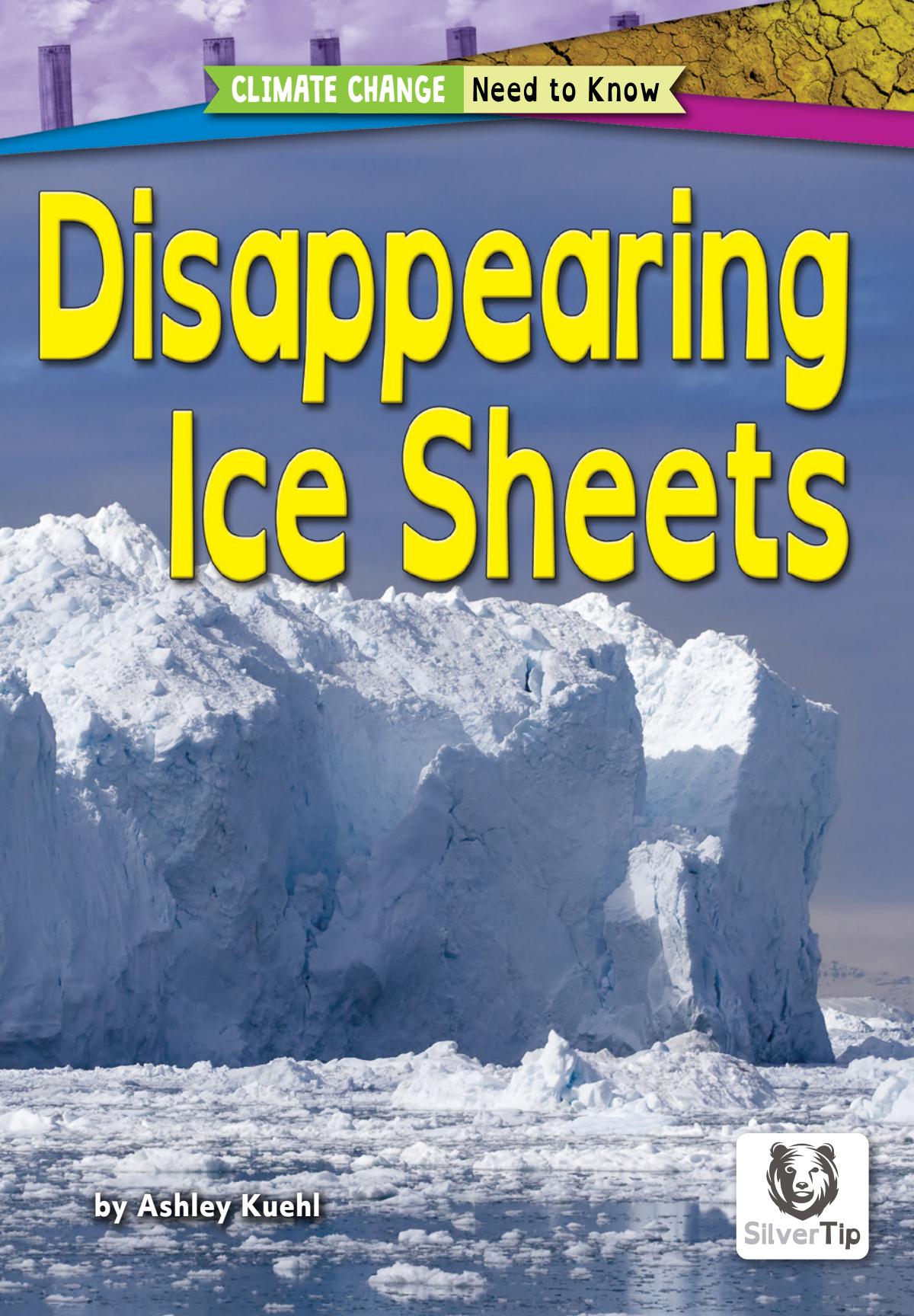




CLIMATE CHANGE

Need to Know

Disappearing Ice Sheets

by Ashley Kuehl



SilverTip

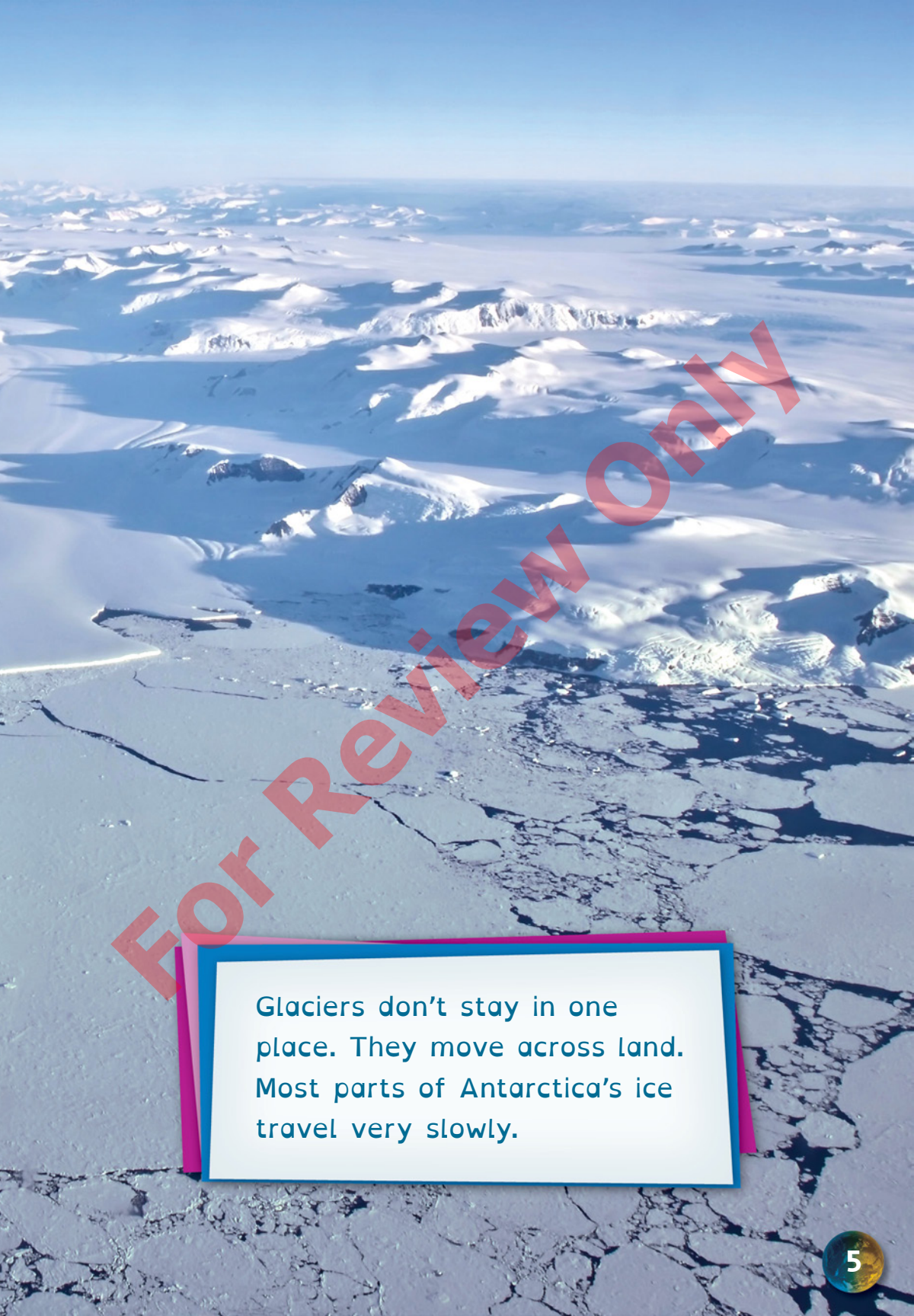
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Ancient Ice

More than 30 million years ago, **glaciers** began forming in Antarctica. The giant pieces of ice grew larger and larger. Over time, a sheet of ice stretched out to cover millions of miles.

But something has changed. Antarctic ice is now disappearing. What is happening?



Glaciers don't stay in one place. They move across land. Most parts of Antarctica's ice travel very slowly.

Sheets of Ice

Glaciers are big chunks of ice that form on land. Some are huge. Large glaciers that spread out in all directions are called **ice sheets**. Earth has two ice sheets. One covers most of Antarctica. Another has formed over much of Greenland.

There are a few kinds of glaciers. Ice caps are similar to ice sheets but smaller. Ice shelves are parts of glaciers that stick out over the oceans.

A wide-angle photograph of the Antarctic ice sheet. The foreground and middle ground are covered in a vast expanse of white ice, characterized by numerous deep, winding crevasses and smaller cracks that create a complex, textured surface. In the far distance, a low, snow-covered mountain range is visible against a clear, pale blue sky. The overall scene conveys a sense of immense scale and cold isolation.

Antarctic ice sheet

A close-up photograph of the Greenland ice sheet. The image shows a series of large, rounded mounds of snow and ice, separated by deep, shadowed crevasses. The lighting is bright, highlighting the granular texture of the snow and the sharp edges of the ice ridges. The perspective is from a low angle, looking across the undulating ice surface.

Greenland ice sheet



Ice sheets melt a little bit during warmer parts of the year. They refreeze when things cool down again. This is part of how they grow and spread. But now ice sheets are melting more than ever before. They are not refreezing as much water. The ice is shrinking.

Glaciers hold almost 70 percent of Earth's fresh water. We collect some of the water from melting glaciers. It is bottled for drinking. People also use it to water crops.

