Name _____ Date _____

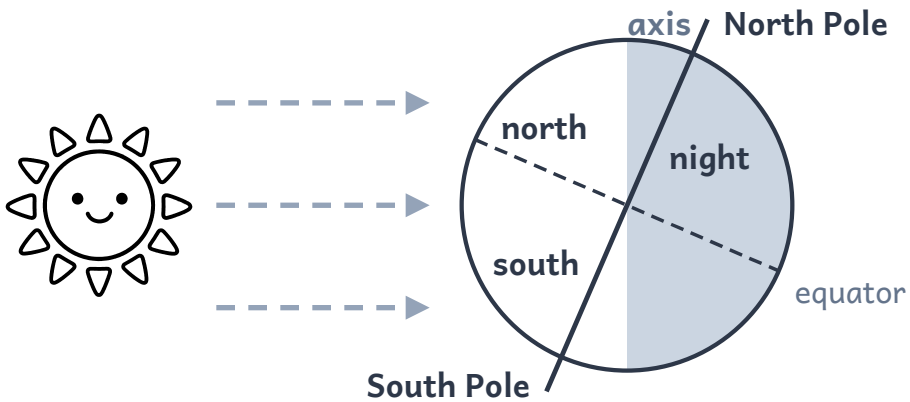


The Winter Solstice

Read the text and look at the picture. Then answer.

Why Do We Have a Solstice?

Earth travels around the sun once a year. Its path is called its **orbit**. As it goes, Earth spins like a top, once each day. It spins around a line from the North Pole to the South Pole, called its **axis**. But Earth's axis is not straight up and down. It leans a little to one side, and it always leans the same way. So for part of the year, the northern half of Earth leans toward the sun. It gets more sunlight and has summer. For the rest of the year, the southern half leans toward the sun. Each half is called a **hemisphere**. A **solstice** comes when one hemisphere leans the most toward the sun. There are two each year, one in June and one in December.



In December, the northern half leans away from the sun. It is winter there.

The southern half leans toward the sun. It is summer there.

1. Earth's axis is straight up and down. **true** **false**

2. Earth goes around the sun once a ____ **day** **week** **year**

3. How many solstices are there each year? **two** **one** **four**

4. Look at the picture. Why is it winter in the north in December?

_____

_____

_____

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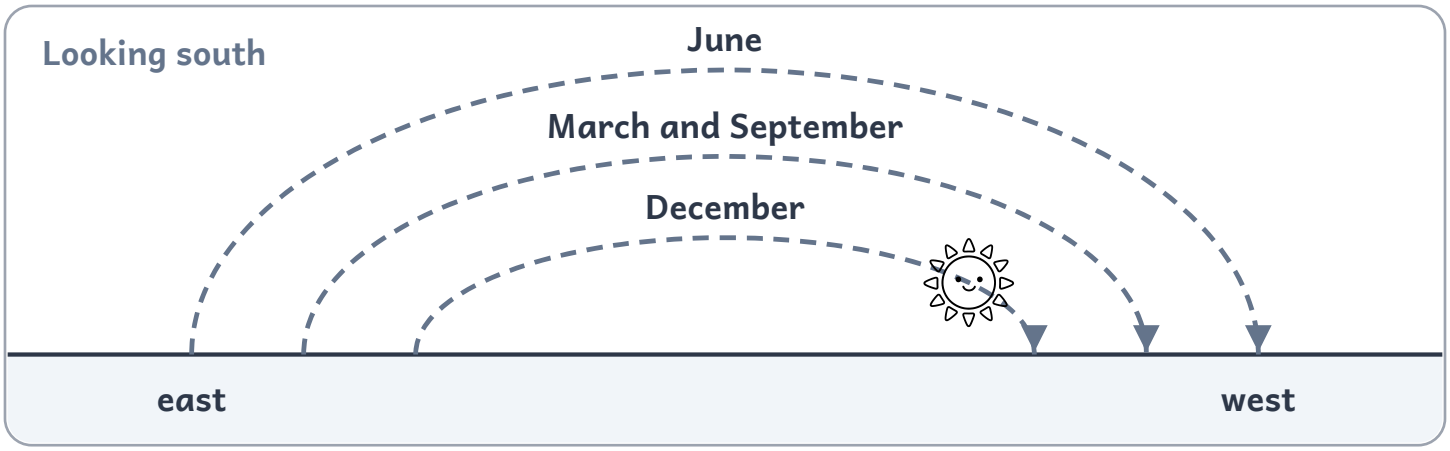
Name _____ Date _____

The Winter Solstice

Read the text and look at the picture. Then answer.

The Shortest Day

In the north, the December solstice comes around December 21. It is the shortest day of the year and the longest night. At noon, the sun is lower in the sky than on any other day, so shadows are long. The word **solstice** means "the sun stands still." All through the fall, the sun's path gets lower each day. On the solstice, it stops sinking. Then it starts to climb, and the days grow a little longer. At the very same moment, the south has its longest day!



1. In the north, the December solstice is the **shortest** **longest** **hottest** ____ day of the year.

2. After the solstice, the days in the north grow longer. **true** **false**

3. What does the word solstice mean?

_____

_____

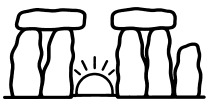
4. Why are shadows long at noon on the solstice?

_____

_____

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Name _____ Date _____



The Winter Solstice

Read about two very old places. Then answer the questions.

Newgrange

Newgrange is in Ireland. People built it more than 5,000 years ago, before the pyramids of Egypt. It is a huge round mound of earth and stone, with a long, narrow passage inside. Over its door is a small opening called the roof box. For a few mornings around the December solstice, the rising sun shines through it. A beam of light creeps down the passage and lights up the room at its end for about 17 minutes.

1. Newgrange is in ___ **Egypt** **Ireland** **England**

2. Newgrange is older than the pyramids of Egypt. **true** **false**

Stonehenge

Stonehenge is in England. It is a ring of giant stones. The biggest are more than twice as tall as a grown-up. People built it in steps, starting about 5,000 years ago. Its stones line up with the sun. The builders lined up the tallest stones with the sunset on the shortest day, in December. In June, on the longest day, the sun rises near a big stone outside the ring, called the Heel Stone. People still gather there to watch.

3. Stonehenge is a ring of giant ___ **towers** **stones** **trees**

4. At Stonehenge, the tallest stones line up with the sunset in June. **true** **false**

5. How can you tell that the builders watched the sun closely?

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Name _____ Date _____



The Winter Solstice

Read about two winter festivals. Then answer the questions.

Dongzhi

In China, the December solstice is called **Dongzhi** (dong-jur). Its name means "the peak of winter." It is a very old festival, and many families still gather for it. They share warm food on the longest night of the year. In the south of China, many families eat **tangyuan**. These are sweet balls of sticky rice in a warm soup. The round balls stand for a family being together. In the north, many eat dumplings.

1. Tangyuan are sweet balls of ___ **sticky rice** **meat** **ice**

2. In the north of China, many families eat dumplings for Dongzhi. **true** **false**

Yalda Night

In Iran, the longest night of the year is called **Yalda** (yal-DAH) Night. Families gather, often at a grandparent's home. They stay up late together. They eat red fruits, such as **pomegranates** and watermelon, with nuts and dried fruit. Many read poems out loud by Hafez, a poet from long ago. When the night ends, the days in Iran start to grow longer. Families in nearby lands, such as Afghanistan and Tajikistan, keep this night too.

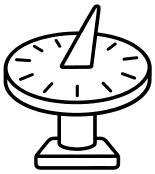
3. On Yalda Night, families eat red fruits such as ___ **bananas** **pomegranates** **lemons**

4. In Iran, Yalda is the shortest night of the year. **true** **false**

5. How are Dongzhi and Yalda Night alike?

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Name _____ Date _____



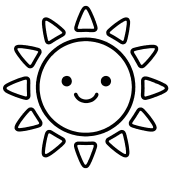
The Winter Solstice

Draw a line from each word to what it means.

solstice	an imaginary line around the middle of Earth
orbit	the line Earth spins around, from pole to pole
axis	a dark shape made where something blocks the light
hemisphere	the longest or the shortest day of the year
equator	the path Earth travels around the sun
shadow	one half of Earth, the north or the south

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Name _____ Date _____



The Winter Solstice

It is December. Circle where each one is true.

In December, the northern half of Earth leans away from the sun. Is each one true in the north or the south?

1.	It is winter.	**North**	**South**
2.	It is summer.	**North**	**South**
3.	The days are long and the nights are short.	**North**	**South**
4.	The sun sets early, before dinner.	**North**	**South**
5.	Shadows at noon are long.	**North**	**South**
6.	The sun is high in the sky at noon.	**North**	**South**
7.	Many children have their long summer break from school.	**North**	**South**
8.	Families in Iran gather for Yalda Night.	**North**	**South**
9.	The rising sun lights up the passage at Newgrange.	**North**	**South**
10.	At the South Pole, the sun shines all day and all night.	**North**	**South**

11. Why are the seasons opposite in the north and the south?

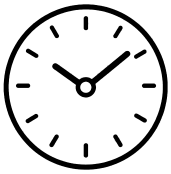
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Name _____ Date _____



The Winter Solstice

Keep a daylight log. Is the day getting longer or shorter?

Each day for a week, find the time of sunrise and sunset in your town. Then work out the hours of daylight, from sunrise to sunset.

	Date	Sunrise	Sunset	Hours of daylight	Longer or shorter?
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					

1. Look at your log. Did the days get longer or shorter? How can you tell?

_____

_____

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Name _____ Date _____



The Winter Solstice

How would you spend the longest night? Draw and write.

In many places, families gather on the longest night of the year. How would you spend it with your family or friends?

On the longest night, I would

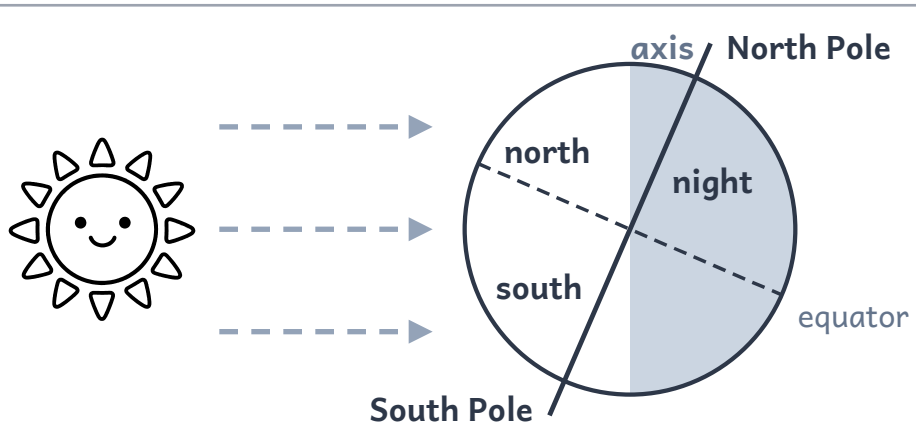
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The Winter Solstice

Read the text and look at the picture. Then answer.

Why Do We Have a Solstice?

Earth travels around the sun once a year. Its path is called its **orbit**. As it goes, Earth spins like a top, once each day. It spins around a line from the North Pole to the South Pole, called its **axis**. But Earth's axis is not straight up and down. It leans a little to one side, and it always leans the same way. So for part of the year, the northern half of Earth leans toward the sun. It gets more sunlight and has summer. For the rest of the year, the southern half leans toward the sun. Each half is called a **hemisphere**. A **solstice** comes when one hemisphere leans the most toward the sun. There are two each year, one in June and one in December.



In December, the northern half leans away from the sun. It is winter there.

The southern half leans toward the sun. It is summer there.

1. Earth's axis is straight up and down. **true** **false**

2. Earth goes around the sun once a ____ **day** **week** **year**

3. How many solstices are there each year? **two** **one** **four**

4. Look at the picture. Why is it winter in the north in December?

In December, the northern half of Earth leans away from the sun, so it gets less sunlight.

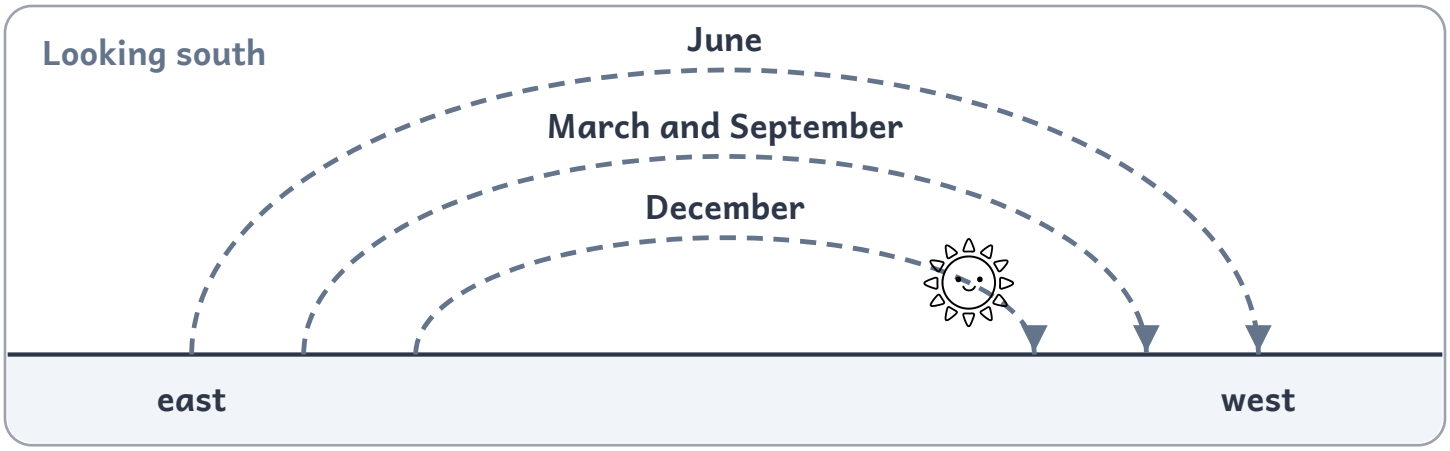
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The Winter Solstice

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1. In the north, the December solstice is the ____ day of the year. **shortest** **longest** **hottest**

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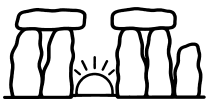
3. What does the word solstice mean?

The sun stands still.

4. Why are shadows long at noon on the solstice?

The sun is lower in the sky than on any other day.

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The Winter Solstice

Read about two very old places. Then answer the questions.

Newgrange

Newgrange is in Ireland. People built it more than 5,000 years ago, before the pyramids of Egypt. It is a huge round mound of earth and stone, with a long, narrow passage inside. Over its door is a small opening called the roof box. For a few mornings around the December solstice, the rising sun shines through it. A beam of light creeps down the passage and lights up the room at its end for about 17 minutes.

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3. Stonehenge is a ring of giant ____ **towers** **stones** **trees**

4. At Stonehenge, the tallest stones line up with the sunset in June. **true** **false**

5. How can you tell that the builders watched the sun closely?

They built Newgrange and Stonehenge to line up with the sun at the solstice.

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The Winter Solstice

Read about two winter festivals. Then answer the questions.

Dongzhi

In China, the December solstice is called **Dongzhi** (dong-jur). Its name means "the peak of winter." It is a very old festival, and many families still gather for it. They share warm food on the longest night of the year. In the south of China, many families eat **tangyuan**. These are sweet balls of sticky rice in a warm soup. The round balls stand for a family being together. In the north, many eat dumplings.

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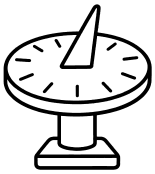
3. On Yalda Night, families eat red fruits such as ___ **bananas** **pomegranates** **lemons**

4. In Iran, Yalda is the shortest night of the year. **true** **false**

5. How are Dongzhi and Yalda Night alike?

Both are on the longest night of the year, and families gather to share food.

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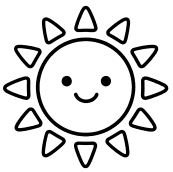


The Winter Solstice

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The Winter Solstice

It is December. Circle where each one is true.

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1. It is winter. **(North)** South

2. It is summer. North **(South)**

3. The days are long and the nights are short. North **(South)**

4. The sun sets early, before dinner. **(North)** South

5. Shadows at noon are long. **(North)** South

6. The sun is high in the sky at noon. North **(South)**

7. Many children have their long summer break from school. North **(South)**

8. Families in Iran gather for Yalda Night. **(North)** South

9. The rising sun lights up the passage at Newgrange. **(North)** South

10. At the South Pole, the sun shines all day and all night. North **(South)**

11. Why are the seasons opposite in the north and the south?

When one half of Earth leans toward the sun, the other half leans away from it.

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