

Vocabulary: Seasons: Why do we have them?



Vocabulary

- Direct sunlight – sunlight that strikes Earth’s surface at close to a 90° angle.
- Earth’s axis – an imaginary line through the center of Earth that connects the North Pole to the South Pole.
 - Earth rotates about its axis once every 24 hours.
 - Earth’s axis is tilted at an angle of 23.5 degrees.
- Equator – an imaginary horizontal line around the middle of Earth.
- Northern hemisphere – the half of Earth north of the equator.
- North Pole – the northernmost point on Earth.
- Indirect sunlight – sunlight that strikes Earth’s surface at an acute angle (less than 90°).
- Season – one of the major divisions of the year, usually based on regular weather changes.
 - In most places, the year is divided into four seasons: winter, spring, summer, and autumn (fall). Each season is three months long.
 - In tropical regions, average temperatures do not change much during the year. In these regions, it is common to refer to the “rainy season” and the “dry season.”
- Solstice – one of two days during the year on which the direct rays of the Sun reach the farthest from the equator.
- Southern hemisphere – the half of Earth south of the equator.
- South Pole – the southernmost point on Earth.
- Summer solstice – the first day of summer.
 - The summer solstice is the longest day of the year. North and south of the tropics, it is also the day when the noon Sun is highest in the sky.
 - In the northern hemisphere the summer solstice occurs on or near June 21.
 - In the southern hemisphere the summer solstice occurs on or near December 21.
- Winter solstice – the first day of winter.
 - The winter solstice is the shortest day of the year. It is also the day when the noon Sun is lowest in the sky.
 - In the northern hemisphere the winter solstice occurs on or near December 21.
 - In the southern hemisphere the winter solstice occurs on or near June 21.