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A FREE ELEMENTARY RESOURCE FROM EDMENTUM

Winter Solstice



Grade Range

What Does This Pack Include?

This pack has been created by teachers, for teachers. In it you'll find high quality teaching resources to help mark the Winter Solstice, understand its history and why it is celebrated.

To go directly to the content, simply click on the title in the index below:

FACT SHEETS:	
Pre-K – Grade 2	Grades 3-6
Explore what the Winter Solstice is and why it is celebrated.	

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS:	
Pre-K – Grade 2	Grades 3-6
Discuss whether days are longer in the Summer or Winter.	Discuss why the Winter Solstice occurs at a different time of year in Australia.

POSTERS:	
Winter Solstice	

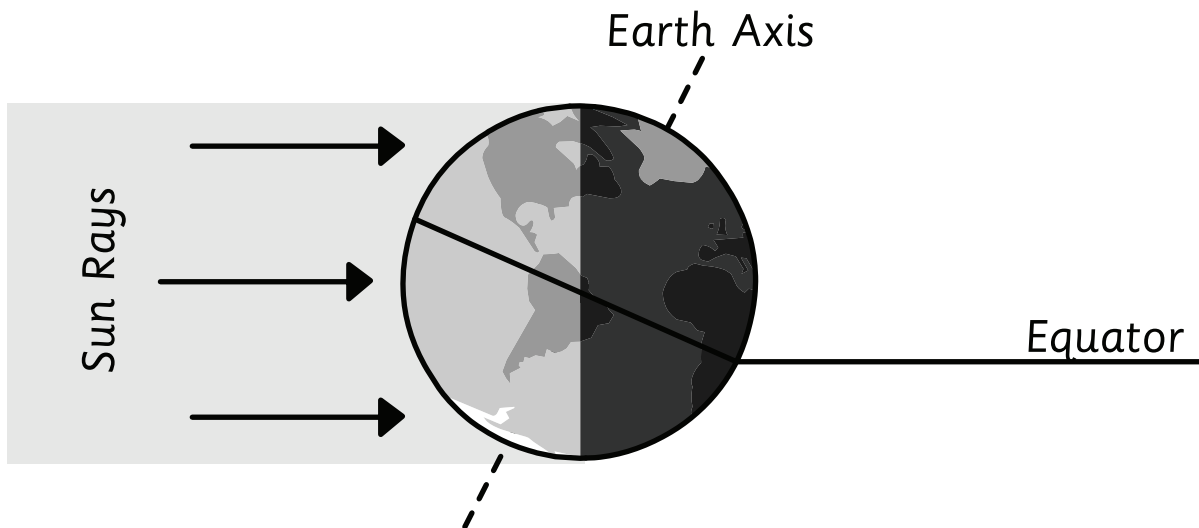
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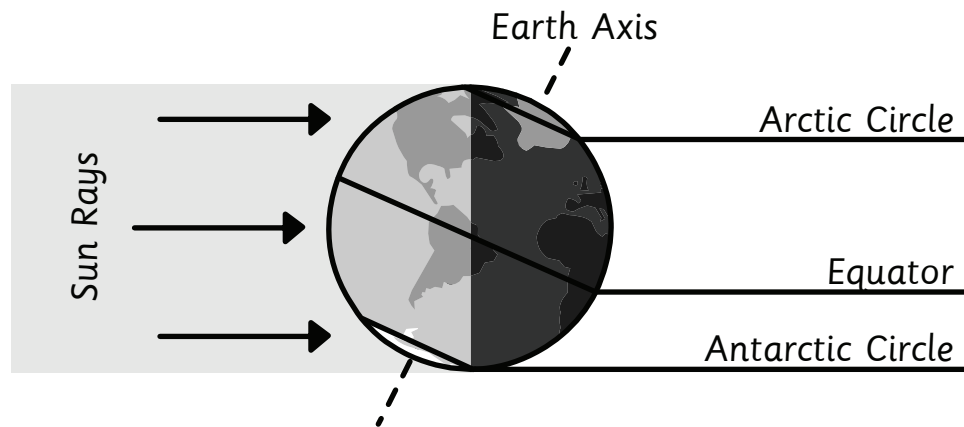


- Winter solstice is the first official day of winter.
- It happens on December 21st or 22nd.
- Solstice means “standing still Sun.”
- In ancient times, people were afraid that the Sun’s light would not return unless they kept watch and had a celebration for the solstice.
- Winter solstice is the shortest day of the year. This is because Earth’s North Pole leans farthest away from the Sun on that day. Most of the U.S. will get only about 9.5 hours of sunlight. In Fairbanks, Alaska, there are only about 3.75 hours of sunlight!





- Winter solstice is the first official day of winter.
- It happens on December 21st or 22nd.
- Solstice comes from two Latin words—“sol,” which means Sun, and “sistere,” which means to cause to stand in place. The winter solstice is the day when the Sun is at its lowest point on the horizon at midday.
- In ancient times, people were afraid that the Sun’s light would not return unless they kept watch and had a celebration for the solstice.
- Winter solstice is the shortest day of the year. This is because Earth’s North Pole is tilted farthest away from the Sun on that day.
- In the winter, the days feel shorter because we get less sunlight. On the day of the winter solstice, most of the U.S. gets about 9.5 hours of sunlight. Fairbanks, Alaska, only gets about 3.75 hours!



- Although the winter solstice is the shortest and darkest day of the year, it is not the coldest. Because it takes some time for Earth’s surface to cool after absorbing the summer Sun, most of the U.S. doesn’t see its coldest day until January.



Are the days longer in summer or winter?



All days last 24 hours, but there is more daylight in the summer, so the daylight hours last longer.



Can you think of any other differences between the two seasons?

Why is the winter solstice in Australia on June 21st? That's summer!



Seasons are caused because Earth moves around the Sun on a tilted imaginary axis. The U.S. and Australia are on opposite sides of Earth, so their seasons are opposite.



Why is winter solstice called the shortest day of the year?

Happy Winter Solstice!





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