

Vocabulary



axis an imaginary line that passes from the North Pole to the South Pole through Earth's center

The Earth's axis is invisible. It is the central line around which the whole planet spins.

hemisphere one half of a sphere, or one half of Earth

Earth is divided, at the equator, into a Northern and Southern hemisphere. When a hemisphere is tilted toward the Sun, it has summer. When it is tilted away from the Sun, it has winter.

revolve to travel in a circle or oval around another object

Earth revolves around the Sun about every $365\frac{1}{4}$ days (one year).

summer solstice the day with the most hours of sunlight in the year

The summer solstice occurs when a hemisphere is facing most directly toward the Sun. The summer solstice is on June 21 or 22 in the Northern Hemisphere. This same day is the winter solstice in the Southern Hemisphere.

tilt to lean in one direction

Earth's axis is tilted compared to its orbit. The tilt stays the same as Earth revolves around the Sun. The tilt is the reason Earth has seasons. In the winter, our hemisphere is facing slightly away from the Sun. In the summer, our hemisphere is facing slightly toward the Sun.

winter solstice the day with the fewest hours of sunlight in the year

The winter solstice occurs when a hemisphere is facing most away from the Sun for the whole year. The winter solstice is on December 21 or 22 for the Northern Hemisphere. This same day is the summer solstice for the Southern Hemisphere.