

Vocabulary



orbit the path that an object in space takes around a larger object
Earth moves around the Sun.
The path that Earth takes around the Sun is called Earth's orbit.

rotation the spinning of a planet or moon on its axis
Earth spins around. The imaginary line that it spins on is called Earth's axis. The spinning movement is called Earth's rotation. As Earth rotates, different parts face the Sun. Over 24 hours, sunlight will have a chance to shine on every part of Earth. During the day, Earth's rotation makes the Sun appear to move across the sky.

sundial an instrument that uses shadows cast by the Sun to measure time

Before the invention of clocks, people used sundials to tell time. A sundial has a pointer that sticks up out of a flat disk. Sundials are placed in sunny areas. When the Sun moves in the sky, the shadow cast by the pointer also moves. The location of the shadow can be used to tell how much time has passed.