

Name:

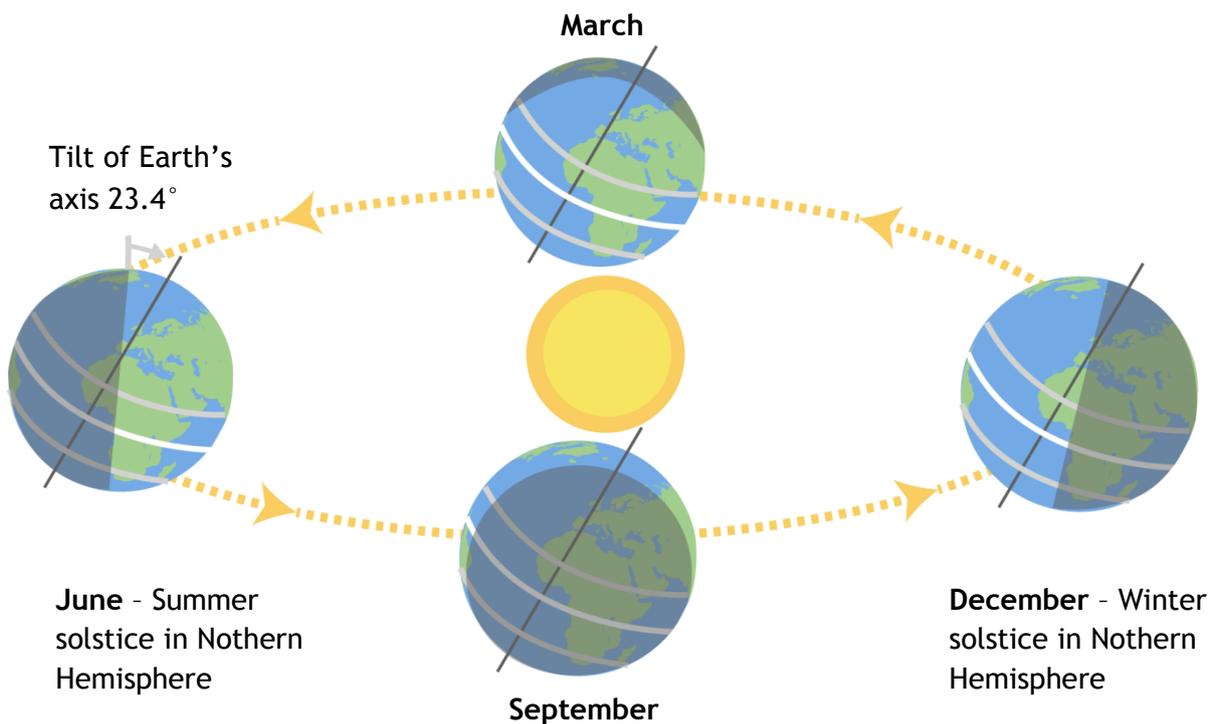
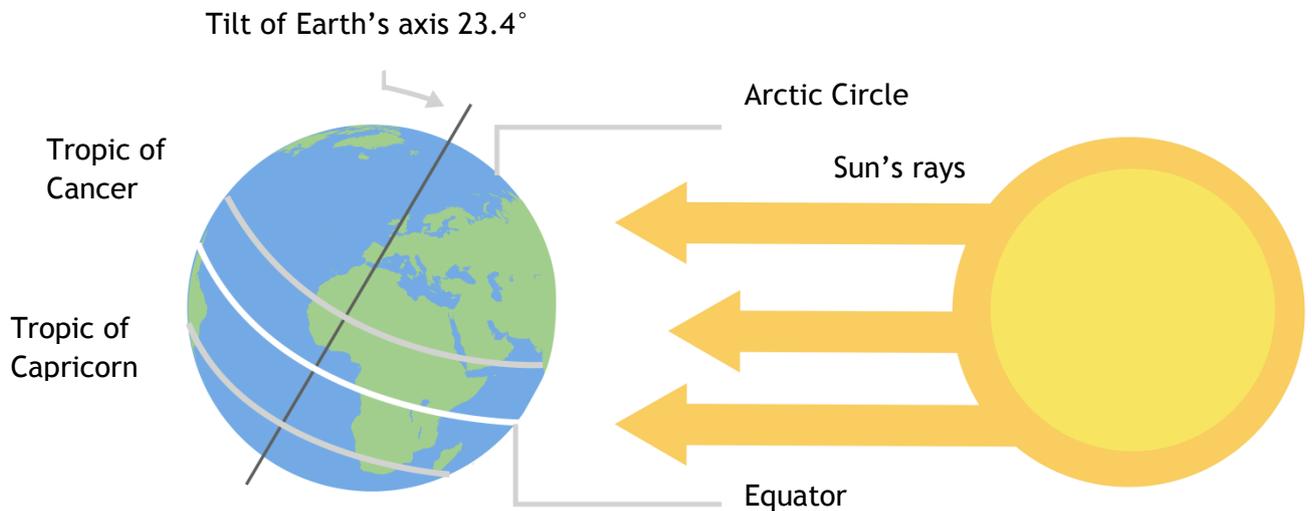
Date:.....

The Summer Solstice

In the Northern Hemisphere, the Summer Solstice occurs between the 20th June and 22nd June.

But what is the Summer Solstice?

- a. It is the longest day of the year.
- b. The word solstice comes from the Latin words; sol- meaning “the sun” and; sistere meaning “to stand still”.
- c. Because of the way the Earth spins on a tilted axis as it orbits the Sun, the amount of sunlight each region of the Earth receives changes throughout the year.



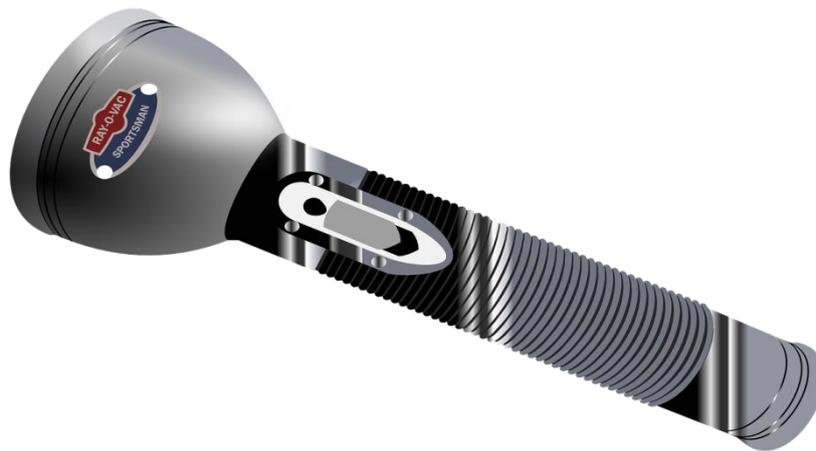
Activity 1

Let's create a visual representation of how the summer solstice happens.

You will need:

Torches, blue and green play dough and pencils.

1. Make a play dough Earth, about the size of a golf ball. Begin by making a blue ball and then squashing the green 'continents' onto it afterwards.
2. Push a pencil through the ball, at an angle to represent the tilt of the earth (as shown in the diagram above).
3. Etch lines into the ball using the tip of a pencil to show where the equator is and where the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn are.
4. Now locate where you live and mark it with an x.
5. Next, pretend to be the sun by shining the torch onto your Earth, as shown by the diagram above.
6. Discuss your findings with a partner or with your table group.

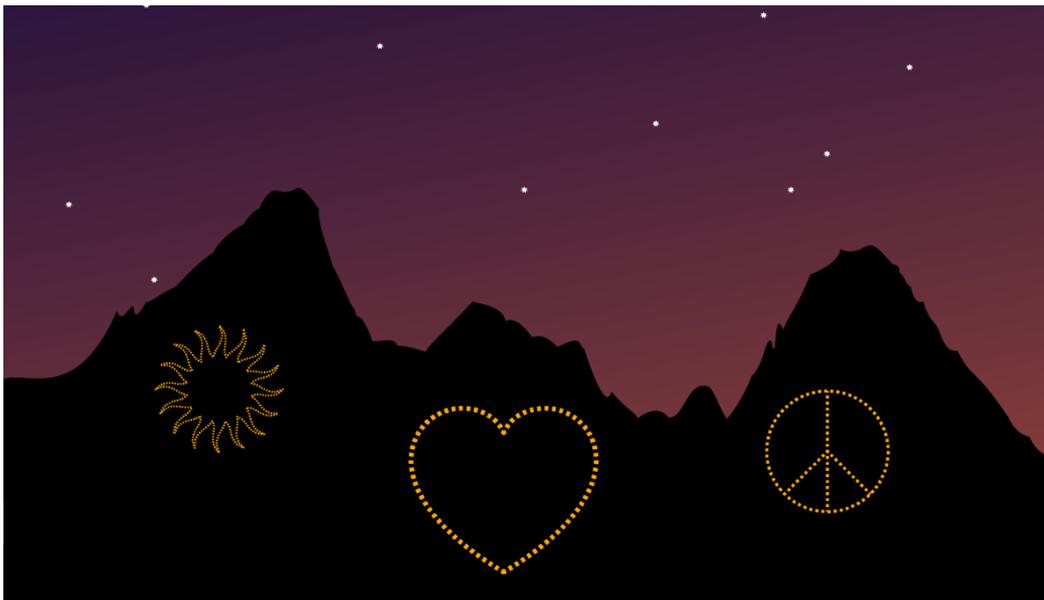


The summer solstice around the northern hemisphere

In different countries, the summer solstice is celebrated in different ways. Fire, nature, magic and dancing are common threads that link the countries. We will be looking at how the summer solstice is celebrated in Austria, Sweden and Iceland.

How is the Summer Solstice celebrated in Tirol, Austria?

In Tirol, Austria, they light bonfires in the mountains to celebrate the summer solstice. This tradition goes back to the Middle Ages.



Activity 2

You will be designing a Tirol's fire masterpiece. For some truly inspirational designs, look at: www.bergfeuer.at/

You will need:

White paper, dark card, a large pin or a nail, paper clips and a foam board (or similar) to press the nail or pin into without damaging your table.

1. Draw your design onto the white paper. Try and link your design to the summer solstice (sun, warmth, longest day...)
2. Put the board onto the table. Place the dark card onto it. Place your white paper design on the top. You might need to secure it all with paper clips or blue tac.
3. Take your nail and press holes through your white paper, into the dark card, following the lines of your design. This will give you a dotted outline of your picture.
4. Once you have finished, take the dark card and place it onto a window. Look how the sunlight shines through, creating your beautiful design.

How is the Summer Solstice celebrated in Sweden?

In Sweden, to celebrate the summer solstice, many believe that the idea of creating flower crowns goes back to its agricultural roots. The idea is also that by gathering flowers, you are harnessing nature to ensure good health through the year.

Activity 3

You will be creating your own flower crown.



You will need:

Some florist tape, florist wire, string and a collection of flowers and greenery. In order to collect flowers responsibly, Plantlife UK suggest only picking one-in-twenty from a given spot. They provide the following list of suggested flowers that are common throughout the UK and can be picked sustainably: **daisy; dandelion; primrose; common dog violet; greater stitchwort; cow parsley; meadow buttercup; red campion; oxeye daisy; yarrow; common knapweed; meadowsweet.** Use a spotter's guide to identify them.

1. Go for a nature walk to celebrate the longest day of the year and collect your materials. Make sure that you only choose flowers from the list.
2. Make the base of the crown. This can be made with the florist wire. Wrap it around your head. Secure the circle using the florist tape.
3. Attach the flowers and leaves to the crown, using the florist tape or string.
4. Wear your flower crown with pride!

Even Shakespeare writes about the summer solstice!

The Summer Solstice is all about magic, nature, dancing and fire. Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' encompasses so much of this.

Activity 4

Look at this extract, and see if you can see any mention of magic, nature, dancing or fire. Highlight or underline any sections that relate to magic, nature, dancing or fire.

Fairy

Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire.
I do wander everywhere
Swifter than the moon's sphere.
And I serve the fairy queen
To dew her orbs upon the green.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be.
In their gold coats spots you see.
Those be rubies, fairy favors.
In those freckles live their savors.
I must go seek some dewdrops here
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.
Farewell, thou lovest of spirits. I'll be gone.
Our queen and all our elves come here anon.

ROBIN

The king doth keep his revels here tonight.
Take heed the queen come not within his sight.
For Oberon is passing fell and wrath
Because that she, as her attendant hath
A lovely boy stolen from an Indian king.
She never had so sweet a changeling.
And jealous Oberon would have the child
Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild.
But she perforce withholds the loved boy,
Crowns him with flowers, and makes him all her joy.

