

December solstice

- 1 Make a list of 10 words that are connected with *December*.
- 2 Ask and answer the following questions with a partner.
 - 1 When does winter begin in your country?
 - 2 What are the other three seasons of the year?
 - 3 What date is the shortest day where you live?
 - 4 Are the days longer or shorter after this date?
 - 5 What festivals do you celebrate in your country in December?
- 3 Now read the infographic about the December solstice and compare your answers.
- 4 Find words in the infographic that mean the following.
 - 1 to change the direction in which you are moving _____, _____
 - 2 to move something so that one side is lower than the other _____
 - 3 light and heat from the sun _____
 - 4 a particular place _____
 - 5 to do the same as another person _____
 - 6 12 o'clock at night _____
 - 7 things you give to someone as a present _____
 - 8 a black substance used to make fires _____
 - 9 containers that you fill with water to wash yourself in _____
 - 10 a member of your family _____
- 5 Complete the following paragraph with words from the box. Now read the infographic again to check your answers.

hemispheres the Arctic Circle the Equator the Tropic of Capricorn
 the Antarctic Circle the Tropic of Cancer


(1) _____ is an imaginary line that goes round the Earth and divides it into the northern and southern (2) _____. The line is between two other imaginary lines, (3) _____ to the north and (4) _____ to the south. This area is the hottest part of the Earth. The coldest parts of the world are (5) _____, an imaginary line around the South Pole, and (6) _____, an imaginary line around the North Pole.

- 6 Look at the celebrations section in the infographic again. Write the information from the infographic in the correct column below.


Things that people do	Food that people eat or offer

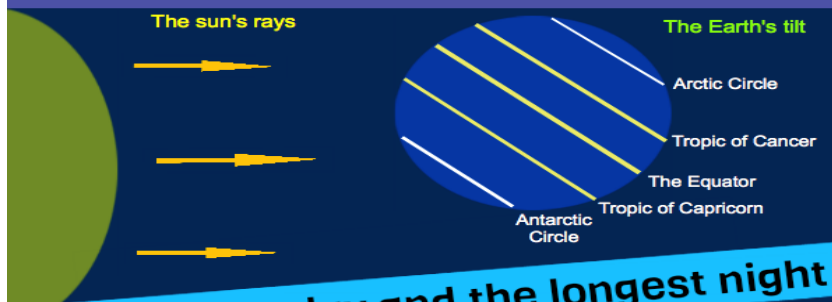
- 7 Think of one tradition or festival that you and your family or friends celebrate. Answer the following questions.
 - What do you do?
 - What food do you eat or offer as gifts?
 - Tell a partner about your celebration.

DECEMBER SOLSTICE

 The period between December 21 and 23 is a very important time for our planet and its relationship with the sun. In the northern hemisphere winter begins and in the southern hemisphere summer begins. In the north this time is called winter solstice - in the south it is called summer solstice.

The Earth's tilt

 As the Earth goes round the sun it tilts. This means that for half of the year the North Pole turns away from the sun and the South Pole turns towards the sun. For the other half of the year the North Pole turns towards the sun again. This means that one part of the Earth receives more of the sun's rays than the other. When this happens the seasons change - we change from summer to autumn to winter and to spring.



The shortest day and the longest night

The winter solstice marks the shortest day and the longest night of the year. On this day the sun is at its lowest point in the sky. The word 'solstice' comes from the Latin word 'solstitium'. 'Sol-' means sun and '-stitium' means a stop.



History and cultural significance



The winter solstice has been very important to people since ancient times and today we continue to follow many of those ancient traditions at this time of the year. After the winter solstice the days are lighter and longer. That is a good reason to celebrate.

CELEBRATIONS

1 **DONGZHI** - East Asia
Families meet and eat balls of rice. These balls represent the reunion of the family. After this celebration many people say they are 1 year older.

2 **Yalda** - Iran
People don't sleep on this night. They have small parties and eat the last fruits of summer. Lovers exchange gifts on this night.

3 **HOGMANAY** - Scotland
It was originally a winter solstice celebration from Viking times. People visit family and friends after midnight. They take gifts, normally cake and coal.

4 **Chaomos** - Pakistan
People have baths, sing, dance, eat and make fires. Families offer bread and fruit to dead relatives.

