



# Winter Solstice

Non Fiction Article &  
Comprehension Questions  
3rd Grade - 5th Grade





# Winter Solstice

A simple definition of winter solstice is it's the shortest day of the year. There are still 24 hours in the day but there are fewer hours of daylight. Daylight is the hours between sunrise and sunset. Another way of explaining it would be to say it is the longest night of the year. When is this dark day going to happen? For those of us living in the Northern Hemisphere winter solstice 2019 is going to occur on December 21 at 11:19 p.m. This marks the first day of winter. After December 21 the days will begin to get longer. This will continue until we reach summer solstice on June 20, 2020. At the same time the Northern Hemisphere has winter solstice the Southern Hemisphere has summer solstice.

How does this happen? In scientific terms it occurs when the Earth's North Pole is tilted farthest from the Sun. How many hours of sunlight you get on the solstice depends on where you live in relationship to the equator. The farther north you are from the equator the less sunlight you will have. In Hawaii they will have over 10 ½ hours of sunlight. If you live in Fairbanks, Alaska you will have only 3 ½ hours of sunlight. In the contiguous United States (all states except Alaska and Hawaii) the hours of sunlight range from 8 to 10.5 hours. How many hours of sunlight will you have on December 21?

# Test Your Thinking Skills

1. According to the article what does contiguous United States mean?

- A. The states with the most hours of daylight on solstice
- B. The states closest to the North Pole
- C. The states that are in the Northern Hemisphere
- D. All the states except Alaska and Hawaii

2. The article stated that in the United States \_\_\_\_\_ has the most hours of sunlight on winter solstice.

- A. Michigan
- B. Alaska
- C. Florida
- D. Hawaii

3. Which of the following statements is false?

- A. There is only one day of solstice a year.
- B. Winter solstice is the longest night of the year.
- C. The number of hours of sunlight you have depends on where you live in relationship to the equator.
- D. Winter solstice is the shortest day of the year.

4. Write 2 things you learned about winter solstice from this article. Use complete sentences in your answer.

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## Test Your Thinking Skills - Answer Key

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Answers will vary.

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