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| **The Earth's Four Seasons  By Brandi Waters** |  | http://www.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/edhelp1.gif |

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**Directions:**  Fill in each blank with the word that best completes the reading comprehension.  
  
     Spring. Summer. Fall. Winter. Most places on Earth have four seasons. What each season means to you depends on where in the world you live. To you, winter might mean that there will be snow. It could also mean temperatures around sixty degrees. Spring may mean sunshine and melting snow. It could also mean clouds and thunderstorms. For many, summer begins in the month of June. However, in some parts of the world, summer begins in December!  
     Why do we have four seasons here on Earth? Why do the four seasons mean different things in different parts of the world? To find the answer, you need to know about the solar *(1)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  . You also need to know a little about geography. If you looked at the Earth from space, you would see that it is *(2)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  . The North Pole is not at the top of the Earth. It is off to one side. This *(3)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   is what creates the Earth's four seasons. During the year, the Earth moves around the sun. Sometimes the North Pole is tilted toward the sun. Sometimes it is tilted away from the sun.  
     We can draw a line to divide the Earth into two pieces. Each piece is called a hemisphere. If we draw a line around the middle of the Earth at the *(4)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   we can divide the top half of the Earth from the bottom half. The top half is the *(5)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   hemisphere. The bottom half is the southern hemisphere. Each hemisphere has *(6)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   seasons. When the North Pole is tilted toward the sun, the South Pole is tilted away from the sun. In July, it is summer in the northern hemisphere. In the southern *(7)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  , it is winter! Summer and winter happen at the same time! They just happen in different parts of the world.  
     As the Earth moves around the sun, it also spins. There is an invisible line that runs through the Earth. It runs from the North Pole to the South Pole. It is Earth's axis. The Earth spins on its axis to give us day and night. It takes twenty-four hours for the Earth to make a full *(8)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  . Earth's spinning is what makes the sun *(9)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   to rise and set each day. The sun does not move. Earth does! As the Earth spins, each place on Earth faces a different direction in *(10)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  . This is true for everywhere on Earth, except for the *(11)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  . The poles are at the top and bottom of the Earth's axis. They do not face a new *(12)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   as the Earth spins. This means that the sun does not rise and set each day at the poles. Instead, the sun rises and sets with the seasons. The poles only face different *(13)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   in space as the Earth orbits around the sun. At the poles, there is one sunrise and one sunset each year! The sun rises in the spring and shines all summer long. It sets during the fall. Winter is like night. There is no sun.  
     Summer means warmer weather. It *(14)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   means longer days. The amount of daylight in a day varies a lot. It all depends on where you are. Near the equator, the days are about the same length *(15)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   round. Each day is about twelve hours long. The days last a few minutes longer during the summer. They are a few minutes shorter during the winter. As you move from the equator toward the poles, the days during the summer *(16)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   longer. The days during the winter become shorter. A summer day in Hawaii is about thirteen hours long. A summer day in Alaska could be twenty hours long! So why is it so cold in Alaska?  
     The weather near the equator is warm. The weather near the poles is cold. This is because the sun heats the Earth. The sun's energy is made up of light and heat. It moves from the sun to Earth in a *(17)*  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_   path. Most of the sun's energy hits the Earth near the equator. The poles only get a small amount of the sun's energy. It isn't enough to melt the ice and warm the oceans and land, even in the summer. This is why places near the equator are warmer than places near the poles.  
     There is a lot to know to understand the seasons! The tilt of the Earth makes the seasons possible. As the Earth orbits the sun, the tilt causes changes in the amounts of light and energy from the sun that reach all of the different areas of the Earth. Every place on Earth sees the four seasons differently. Two seasons can happen on Earth at the same time! The seasons are pretty amazing!

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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | 1. | The Earth can be divided into two halves by drawing a line around the Earth at the equator. The two halves are the northern and southern \_\_\_\_\_\_. http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblea.jpg  Poles http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbleb.jpg  Seasons http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblec.jpg  Hemispheres http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbled.jpg  Axis | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | 2. | In August, \_\_\_\_\_\_. http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblea.jpg  It is summer in the northern hemisphere http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbleb.jpg  It is summer in the southern hemisphere http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblec.jpg  It is winter at the North Pole http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbled.jpg  All of the above | |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | 3. | During the year, the amount of daylight each day changes the most \_\_\_\_\_\_. http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblea.jpg  At the poles http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbleb.jpg  In the northern hemisphere http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblec.jpg  In the southern hemisphere http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbled.jpg  At the equator | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | 4. | What is special about the Earth that gives us the four seasons? http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/wordline.gif  http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/wordline.gif | |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | 5. | Places near the equator are usually warm because \_\_\_\_\_\_. http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblea.jpg  They always face the sun http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbleb.jpg  Heat move toward the equator as Earth spins http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblec.jpg  They are closer to water http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbled.jpg  Most of the sun's energy hits the Earth around the equator | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | 6. | The sun's energy is made up of \_\_\_\_\_\_. http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/wordline.gif  http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/wordline.gif | |

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| **Answer Key** |

     Spring. Summer. Fall. Winter. Most places on Earth have four seasons. What each season means to you depends on where in the world you live. To you, winter might mean that there will be snow. It could also mean temperatures around sixty degrees. Spring may mean sunshine and melting snow. It could also mean clouds and thunderstorms. For many, summer begins in the month of June. However, in some parts of the world, summer begins in December!  
     Why do we have four seasons here on Earth? Why do the four seasons mean different things in different parts of the world? To find the answer, you need to know about the solar *(1)*  system  . You also need to know a little about geography. If you looked at the Earth from space, you would see that it is *(2)*  tilted  . The North Pole is not at the top of the Earth. It is off to one side. This *(3)*  tilt   is what creates the Earth's four seasons. During the year, the Earth moves around the sun. Sometimes the North Pole is tilted toward the sun. Sometimes it is tilted away from the sun.  
     We can draw a line to divide the Earth into two pieces. Each piece is called a hemisphere. If we draw a line around the middle of the Earth at the *(4)*  equator   we can divide the top half of the Earth from the bottom half. The top half is the *(5)*  northern   hemisphere. The bottom half is the southern hemisphere. Each hemisphere has *(6)*  opposite   seasons. When the North Pole is tilted toward the sun, the South Pole is tilted away from the sun. In July, it is summer in the northern hemisphere. In the southern *(7)*  hemisphere  , it is winter! Summer and winter happen at the same time! They just happen in different parts of the world.  
     As the Earth moves around the sun, it also spins. There is an invisible line that runs through the Earth. It runs from the North Pole to the South Pole. It is Earth's axis. The Earth spins on its axis to give us day and night. It takes twenty-four hours for the Earth to make a full *(8)*  rotation  . Earth's spinning is what makes the sun *(9)*  appear   to rise and set each day. The sun does not move. Earth does! As the Earth spins, each place on Earth faces a different direction in *(10)*  space  . This is true for everywhere on Earth, except for the *(11)*  poles  . The poles are at the top and bottom of the Earth's axis. They do not face a new *(12)*  direction   as the Earth spins. This means that the sun does not rise and set each day at the poles. Instead, the sun rises and sets with the seasons. The poles only face different *(13)*  directions   in space as the Earth orbits around the sun. At the poles, there is one sunrise and one sunset each year! The sun rises in the spring and shines all summer long. It sets during the fall. Winter is like night. There is no sun.  
     Summer means warmer weather. It *(14)*  also   means longer days. The amount of daylight in a day varies a lot. It all depends on where you are. Near the equator, the days are about the same length *(15)*  year   round. Each day is about twelve hours long. The days last a few minutes longer during the summer. They are a few minutes shorter during the winter. As you move from the equator toward the poles, the days during the summer *(16)*  become   longer. The days during the winter become shorter. A summer day in Hawaii is about thirteen hours long. A summer day in Alaska could be twenty hours long! So why is it so cold in Alaska?  
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     There is a lot to know to understand the seasons! The tilt of the Earth makes the seasons possible. As the Earth orbits the sun, the tilt causes changes in the amounts of light and energy from the sun that reach all of the different areas of the Earth. Every place on Earth sees the four seasons differently. Two seasons can happen on Earth at the same time! The seasons are pretty amazing!

Answers to Reading Comprehension Questions  
  
**1**  http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblec.jpg  Hemispheres  
**2**  http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblea.jpg  It is summer in the northern hemisphere  
**3**  http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblea.jpg  At the poles  
**4**  It is tilted.  
**5**  http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbled.jpg  Most of the sun's energy hits the Earth around the equator  
**6**  light and heat