

Why We Have Seasons

Read the text. Then answer the questions on the next page.

- 1 In summer the days are long and hot. In winter they are short and cold. Many people think Earth is closer to the sun in summer. That is not the reason. In fact, Earth is closest to the sun in January, in the middle of winter in the United States!
- 2 The real cause is Earth's tilt. Earth spins like a top, but it does not stand up straight. It leans to one side. Earth also travels around the sun once each year. Due to the tilt, different parts of Earth lean toward the sun at different times of the year.
- 3 In June, the northern half of Earth leans toward the sun. Sunlight hits it more directly, and the days are longer. As a result, the land and air warm up. It is summer there.
- 4 Six months later, Earth is on the other side of the sun. Now the northern half leans away. The sunlight is spread out and weak, and the days are short. Therefore, the air turns cold, and winter begins.
- 5 The southern half of Earth has the opposite seasons. Since it leans toward the sun in December, that is summer in Australia. Children there can swim at the beach on New Year's Day!



Why We Have Seasons: Questions

Go back to the text to find your proof. Underline it in the color shown.

1. Why do different parts of Earth lean toward the sun at different times of the year?

red

- ☐ Earth is tilted.
- ☐ Earth stops spinning.
- ☐ The sun moves around Earth.

2. What happens because sunlight hits the northern half more directly in June?

orange

- ☐ The days get shorter.
- ☐ Earth moves closer to the sun.
- ☐ The land and air warm up.

3. Why does the air turn cold in the northern half of Earth in winter?

yellow

4. Finish the chart. A cause is why something happens. An effect is what happens.

CAUSE

The northern half leans toward the sun.



EFFECT

CAUSE



EFFECT

The air turns cold.

CAUSE

The southern half leans toward the sun in December.



EFFECT

5. Which words in paragraph 2 tell you that a cause is coming?

green

- ☐ due to
- ☐ the sun
- ☐ each year

Why We Have Seasons: Answer Key

Answers are in green. The proof is where to find each answer in the text.

1. Why do different parts of Earth lean toward the sun at different times of the year?

red

☒ **Earth is tilted.**

☐ Earth stops spinning.

☐ The sun moves around Earth.

Proof Paragraph 2: “Due to the tilt, different parts of Earth lean toward the sun at different times of the year.”

2. What happens because sunlight hits the northern half more directly in June?

orange

☐ The days get shorter.

☐ Earth moves closer to the sun.

☒ **The land and air warm up.**

Proof Paragraph 3: “Sunlight hits it more directly, and the days are longer. As a result, the land and air warm up.”

3. Why does the air turn cold in the northern half of Earth in winter?

yellow

The northern half leans away from the sun. The sunlight is spread out and weak, and the days are short.

4. Finish the chart. A cause is why something happens. An effect is what happens.

CAUSE

The northern half leans toward the sun.

→

EFFECT

It is summer in the northern half.

CAUSE

The sunlight is weak, and the days are short.

→

EFFECT

The air turns cold.

CAUSE

The southern half leans toward the sun in December.

→

EFFECT

It is summer in Australia in December.

5. Which words in paragraph 2 tell you that a cause is coming?

green

☒ **due to**

☐ the sun

☐ each year

Proof Paragraph 2: “Due to the tilt, different parts of Earth lean toward the sun”