

Free causes of the seasons essay example

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Seasons are caused by the tilting of the earth's axis in relation to its orbit around the sun. Moreover, the angle from which the sun hits the earth exposes some areas to longer periods of sunlight than others. In addition, the intensity of the sun's heat varies from place to place depending on the direction of the sun.

Equinoxes denote the axis of the earth being analogous to the direction of its revolution. The Vernal (spring) equinox occurs on March 21st while the Autumnal (fall) equinox takes place on September 21st. During equinoxes days and nights are equal in length except at the south and north poles.

Solstices mark the beginning of summer or winter. The summer solstice in the northern hemisphere occurs on June 21st and is the longest day.

Conversely, the winter solstice takes place on December 21st and is the shortest day. During the summer solstice the Arctic experiences 24 hours of daylight while the Antarctic has the reverse. The exact opposite is true of the winter solstice. The sun is directly overhead at noon at the Tropic of Cancer (23.5° north of the Equator) and at the Tropic of Capricorn (23.5° south of the Equator) on the summer and winter solstices respectively.

In Tucson during the winter solstice, the day is only 10 hours long and the sun can only reach an elevation of 35° by noon as compared to 58° during equinoxes at a similar time. Comparatively Minneapolis is colder as it experiences only 8 hours of sunlight and the sun rises to about 20° at noon. The summer solstice in Minneapolis is longer but Tucson is warmer.