



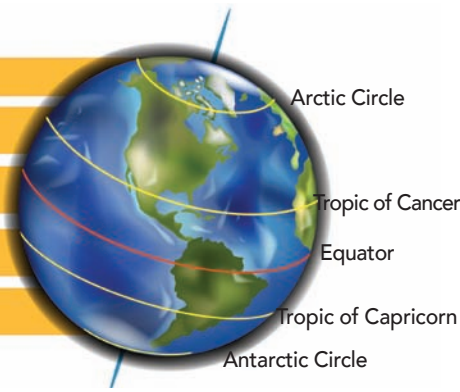
# The Mini Page

**Next Week:**  
Solar eclipse

Issue 11, 2024

Founded by Betty Debnam

## The Vernal Equinox



courtesy Dreamstime

### Mini Fact:

The sun is directly perpendicular to the equator during the spring equinox.

There are many ways that we recognize the change of the seasons. In the spring, we notice plants emerging from the frozen earth, buds on trees and animals becoming more lively.

During the year, there are four signs of coming changes: the spring, or **vernal equinox**, the **summer solstice**, the **autumnal equinox** and the **winter solstice**. The spring equinox happens around March 21 in the Northern Hemisphere.

This week, The Mini Page learns more about these events that affect our Earth.

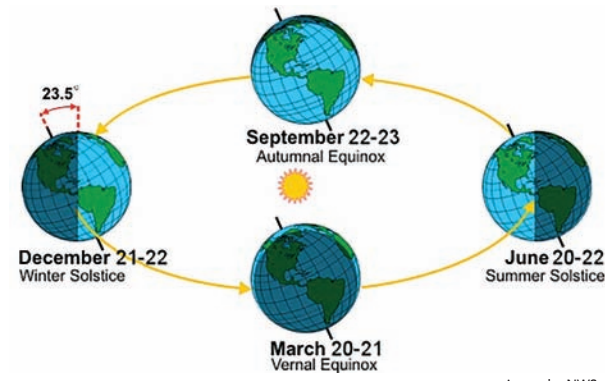


image by NWS

### What is an equinox?

An **equinox** is a time when both the Northern and Southern hemispheres have about equal amounts of daytime and nighttime.

Our Earth is tilted on an **axis**. But during the spring and autumnal equinoxes, the axis is not tilting toward or away from the sun. The sun's rays are directly perpendicular to the equator at noon.

### What about solstices?

During the summer and winter solstices, the sun is at its most southern or northern position compared to our equator. Thus, during the summer solstice, people in the Northern Hemisphere experience the longest period of daylight (around June 21), and during the winter solstice (around Dec. 21), we have the shortest period of daylight.

### Polar regions

At the North and South poles, people experience **midnight sun** and **polar night**. Midnight sun means that the sun never completely sets below the horizon. Polar night describes a time when the sun never rises above the horizon.



image by Victor Gabyshev

This time-lapse photo from the north of Russia shows the sun never quite setting — a midnight sun.

### The seasons

We have seasons on Earth because the planet is tilted on its axis. Although the Earth moves around the sun and rotates on its axis, the axis is always pointed in the same direction. In the summer, the sun spends more time shining on the Northern Hemisphere, which gives us warmer temperatures.

### Equinox Fact-a-Roonies

- "Equinox" is from two Latin words: *aequus*, which means equal, and *nox*, which means night.

- During the equinoxes, no matter where you are on the planet, the sun rises at due east and sets at due west (unless you're at the North or South pole).

- Sunrises and sunsets — how long it takes for the whole sun to rise or fall above the horizon — are faster during the equinoxes than at any other time.



image by Fabio Basagni

- As the sun seems to shift toward the north (in the Northern Hemisphere), you may notice birds migrating north.

- This year, the vernal equinox is at 10:07 p.m. Central time on March 19.

- Early Egyptians positioned the Great Pyramids so that they pointed toward the rising sun on the vernal equinox.

- During the equinoxes, people on Earth may experience the effects of "sun outages," or times when satellites are disrupted. In the Northern Hemisphere, these occur in the days before the vernal equinox and the days after the autumnal equinox.

### Resources



#### On the Web:

- [bit.ly/MPequinox](https://bit.ly/MPequinox)

#### At the library:

- "The Wheel of the Year" by Fiona Cook
- "The Reasons for Seasons" by Gail Gibbons

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## Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of the vernal equinox are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:



- AXIS, EARTH, EAST,
- EQUATOR, EQUINOX,
- HEMISPHERE, HORIZON,
- MIDNIGHT, OUTAGE,
- PERPENDICULAR,
- PLANET, POLAR, ROTATE,
- SATELLITE, SEASON,
- SOLSTICE, SPRING, SUN,
- VERNAL, WEST.

T H G I N D I M H O R I Z O N  
 E Q U I N O X Q V E R N A L U  
 P E R P E N D I C U L A R J S  
 W H Q A E T I L L E T A S J C  
 R E U M E R E H P S I M E H E  
 A S S E A S O N D D S I X A T  
 L O U T A G E A S T D O R V A  
 O V N M S O L S T I C E A M T  
 P L A N E T R O T A U Q E Q O  
 S P R I N G T S H T R A E S R

## Cook's Corner

### Spring Chicken Salad

#### You'll need:

- 2 cups diced cooked chicken
- 2 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
- 1/4 cup slivered almonds
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon mustard

#### What to do:

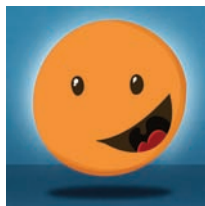
1. Combine all ingredients except mayonnaise and mustard in a medium bowl. Mix well.
2. Stir in mayonnaise and mustard. Mix well. Serves 4.



\* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

## 7 Little Words for Kids

Use the letters in the boxes to make a word with the same meaning as the clue. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in the solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.



1. not as good (5) \_\_\_\_\_
2. Australian star Irwin (5) \_\_\_\_\_
3. not paying attention (8) \_\_\_\_\_
4. getting closer (6) \_\_\_\_\_
5. mechanical device (7) \_\_\_\_\_
6. movie with Poppy and Branch (6) \_\_\_\_\_
7. crush into little pieces (5) \_\_\_\_\_

ND	NE	DI	MA
CHI	WOR	ING	ESS
REL	GRI	LLS	SE
BIN	TRO	COM	CA

Answers: worse, Bindl, careless, coming, Troll's, grind.

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## Mini Jokes



**Robby:** What did summer say to spring?

**Roseanne:** "Help, I'm going to fall!"

## Eco Note



A new study finds that Africa's large birds of prey are now facing a human-driven extinction crisis, even in protected areas. Researchers say the raptors have experienced widespread population collapses during recent decades. The declines were found to be the most extensive in western and central Africa, where the expansion of agriculture and underfunding of protected areas contributed to the losses. Threats to the birds include shooting, trapping, poisoning and electrocutions or collisions with power lines.

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### For later:

Look in your newspaper for items about spring coming.

**Teachers:** Follow and interact with The Mini Page on Facebook!



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