

Name: _____

LEAP YEAR!

It takes 365 days for the Earth to travel around the sun. Well, almost.

Actually, it takes 365 days, 5 hours, 49 minutes and over 12 seconds for the Earth to orbit the sun. An actual new year occurs each time the Earth returns to the same spot in its solar orbit.

But because we observe the new year every 365 days, we are really celebrating a little sooner than when the Earth returns to that spot in its orbit.

After four years, our calendar is about one day behind the Earth's actual orbit. To make up time, a 29th day is added to February to leap the calendar ahead. On February 29, the Earth is back to the same position where it was four years earlier. Almost.

Code Clue

Each leap year, we fall about 5 minutes and 49 seconds short. Eventually, this will add up to 24 hours.

CODE 3 = ♡
 1 = ☆ 4 = ☞
 2 = ⚙ 6 = ✨

Use the code below to find out about how many seconds we are behind each leap year.

Standards Link: Earth Science: Students know that objects in the sky move in regular and predictable patterns.

