NAME: _____ DATE: _____

# THE WINTER SOLSTICE

December marks the official arrival of winter in the Northern Hemisphere.
During this month, temperatures drop, daylight hours grow shorter, and trees lose their remaining leaves.
One of the most notable astronomical events in December is the Winter Solstice, which usually occurs on December 21 or 22.

The Winter Solstice occurs when the Earth's axis tilts the Northern Hemisphere furthest away from the Sun.
As a result, this day has the fewest hours of daylight and the longest night of the entire year.
After the solstice passes, the days gradually begin to grow longer once again, bringing a few extra minutes of sunshine each day as winter progresses toward spring.

People throughout history have celebrated the winter solstice in various ways.
Ancient cultures built stone monuments, such as Stonehenge in England and Newgrange in Ireland, specifically aligned with the sunrise or sunset on the solstice. For many ancient communities, the solstice marked a turning point—a celebration of the return of light and the promise that warmth would eventually return to the earth.

Today, December remains a month filled with global traditions, seasonal shifts, and winter celebrations around the world.

---

1. According to the passage, when does the Winter Solstice usually take place?

_____

2. Why does the Winter Solstice have the fewest hours of daylight during the year?

_____

3. What starts to happen to the length of the days after the Winter Solstice passes?

_____

4. Why was the solstice celebrated as a positive turning point by ancient communities?

_____