

Santa's Lapland

What is the summer solstice?

The summer solstice is the longest day of the year and is celebrated every June for those of us who live in the northern hemisphere. The reason we have a summer solstice is because the Earth has a tilt! The Earth orbits the sun at an angle of about 23.5 degrees and when the northern hemisphere is facing the sun it experiences the summer solstice. Those who are in the southern hemisphere, for example Australia, will have a summer solstice in December.

Did you know that the word solstice comes from two Latin words? Sol which means 'sun' and sistere which means 'to stand still'.

What is a sundial?

A sundial is the oldest known instrument for telling the time and works by the power of the sun! The sundial has a clock face on it and in the centre it has a stick, which is called a gnomon. As the sun moves across the sky, it causes a shadow to appear from the gnomon which tells you the time of the day. You need to make sure the number 12 is pointing towards north to get the correct time.

Did you know the earliest sundial was made by the ancient Egyptians in 3500BC?

Make your own sundial

What you'll need

Paper plate
Pencil
Clock face
Paint
Sunglasses and
suncream

How to make it

1. Cut out the clock face and glue it on the back of the plate.
2. Ask a parent to pierce a hole through the centre.
3. Stick a pencil through the hole and head outdoors.
4. Position 12 towards north to determine the current time.

