

What Makes Night Fall?



Nighttime means a lot of things. For you, it probably means bedtime. For some animals—like foxes, owls, and possums—it means time to get up. At night, the moon and stars are visible but the sun is not. Nighttime means lights are turned on, candles are lit, bikers and walkers should wear reflective clothing. The earth cools. Bats fly. Fireflies dance.

The cycle of day and night is called the Diurnal Cycle. This cycle occurs because of the way Earth spins on its axis. The axis is an imaginary line that passes from the North Pole to the South Pole through the center of the Earth. The way the Earth spins on this invisible line is called rotation.

Earth rotates from west to east, so the sun always appears to rise in the east as Earth turns toward it and set in the west as earth turns away from it. We don't have exactly 12 hours of sunlight and 12 hours of night every day because of the way the axis tilts and points the northern hemisphere toward the sun for part of the year and the southern hemisphere toward the sun for the other part. Each hemisphere has warmer

temperatures and longer days when it is pointed toward the sun, creating what we know as seasons.

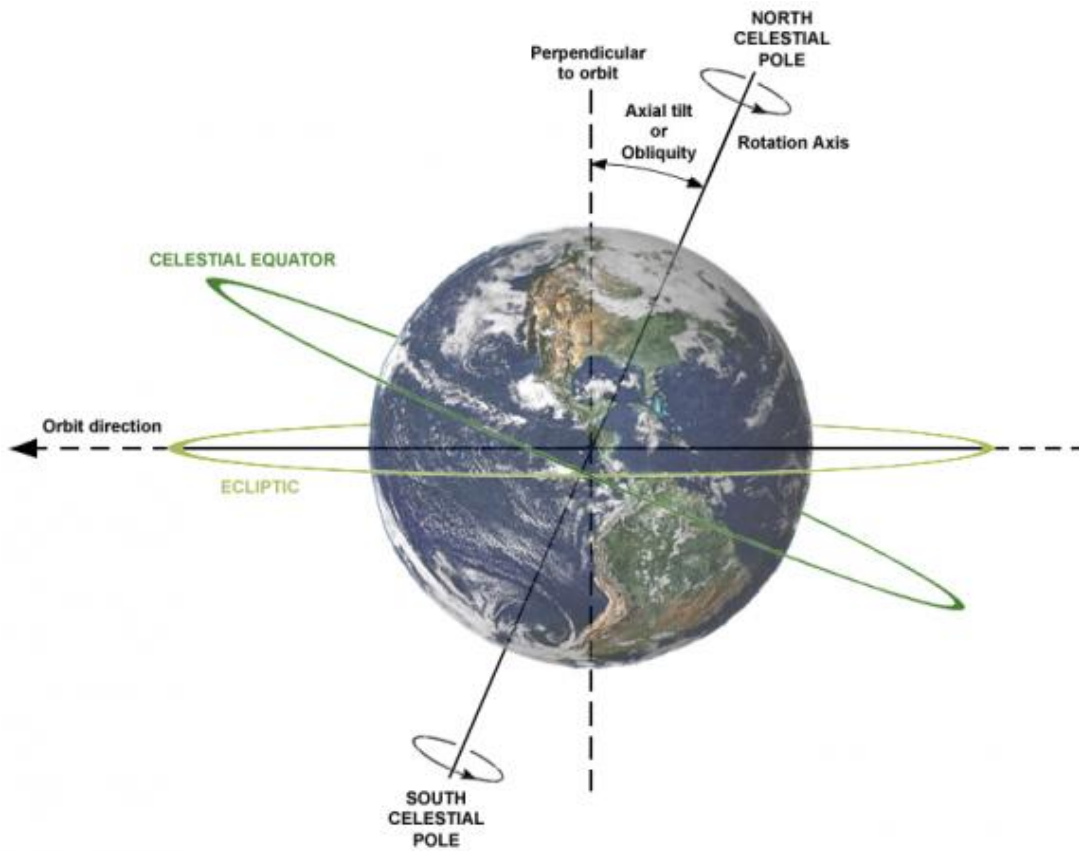
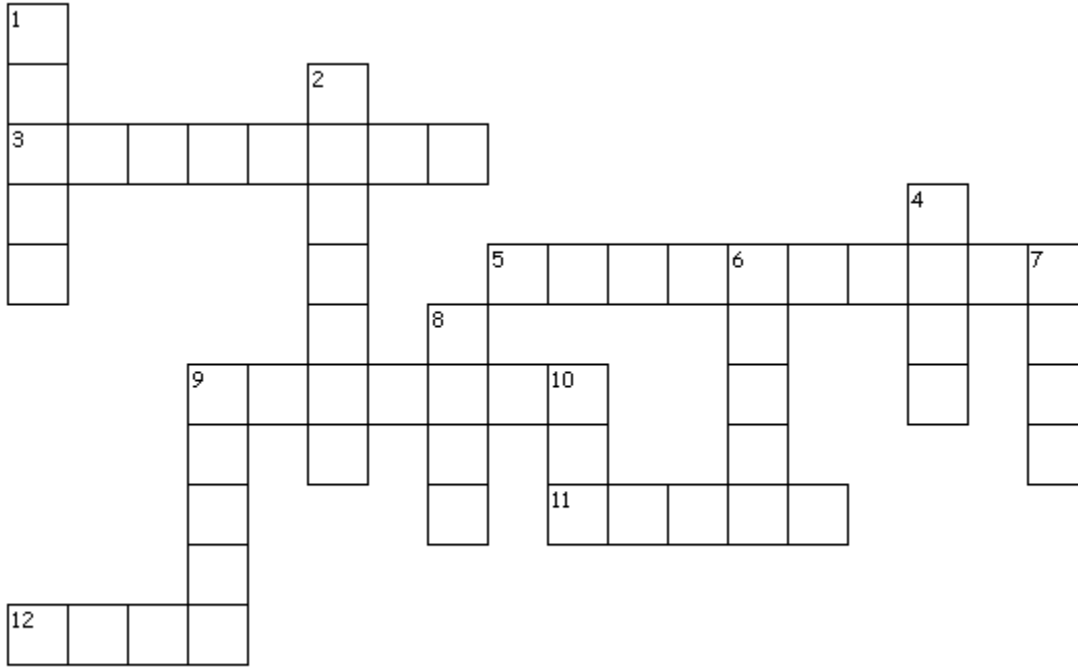


Image from Universe today

Night doesn't really 'fall.' When it gets dark outside, what's happening is that your part of the world is turning away from the sun. When the brightness of the sun isn't interfering, it becomes easier to see the moon and stars. It's bedtime.

Night Time Crossword



Across

- 3. the way Earth spins on its axis
- 5. one half of the globe of Earth
- 9. times of year caused by the tilt of the sun
- 11. time of day when it is dark outside
- 12. imaginary line on which Earth spins

Down

- 1. pole the northernmost point of Earth
- 2. day and night are called the ____cycle
- 4. direction where the sun sets
- 6. pole the southernmost point of Earth
- 7. direction where the sun rises
- 8. object that moves around Earth and is mostly visible at night
- 9. celestial bodies visible at night
- 10. closest star to Earth which gives us light

Word Bank

hemisphere	moon	night	rotation	diurnal
stars	axis	east	west	north pole
south pole	seasons	sun		