Polar Regions – Day and Night

Reading/discussion

A long time ago a poet named Robert Louis Stevenson wrote a poem called **Bed in Summer**. The first verse goes like this:

In winter I get up at night
And dress by yellow candle-light.
In summer, quite the other way,
I have to go to bed by day.

If you lived in the polar regions, which are the areas around the north and south poles, you would feel just like the child in the poem. Except that right at the poles Polar Day lasts all summer and Polar Night lasts all winter. How does this work? Well our seasons are caused by the way the earth tilts on its axis. The **hemisphere** which is tilted towards the sun experiences summer, while the hemisphere which is tilted away from the sun experiences winter. As the earth travels around the sun both hemispheres get a chance to tilt towards or away from the sun. (Hemisphere means ½ of a sphere, or ball shape – so the earth has two hemispheres)

At the equator there are no seasons, because the sun reaches the earth at the same angle throughout the year. The further you get from the equator, though, the colder the winter and the shorter the days become. In Barrow, Alaska, it is dark for 2 months during the middle of winter and right at the north (and south) pole, the sun does not rise until spring and it sets again in Fall, so in summer there is sunshine right through the season and in winter it doesn’t shine at all.

Imagine going to bed in the daytime or going to school and playing out of doors during the long winter night.
Activities:

A. Let’s see how much you remember.

Answer the following questions using full sentences:

1. What causes the seasons?
2. What is a hemisphere?
3. What hemisphere do you live in?
4. Where do you get a Polar day and a Polar night?
5. Why does the equator have no seasons at all?

B. Why I like the Polar night.

Use the sentence above as a title for your story. Now pretend that you live at the North Pole and explain why you enjoy having 6 months of darkness. (If you really cannot think of anything good about the Polar night perhaps you can change your title to: Why I don’t like the Polar night)
Answer Sheet

Activity A

1. The tilt of the earth causes the seasons.
2. A hemisphere is half of a sphere.
3. We live in the northern hemisphere.
4. You get polar day and polar night at both of the poles.
5. The equator has no seasons because the sun strikes it at the same angle all through the year.

Activity B

Since this is a creative activity there is no right or wrong way to write the essay.