

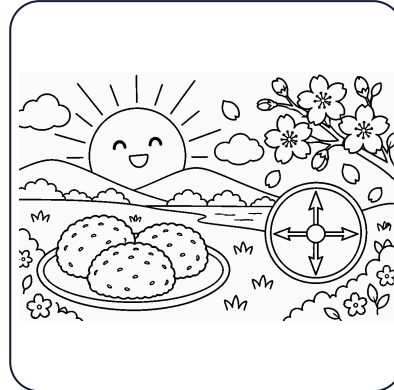


The Day the Sun Goes Straight West

Read the story. 英文を読もう。

Class _____ No. _____ Name _____

① On one day in March, the sun rises exactly in the east and sets exactly in the west. This is the spring equinox. In Japan, it is a national holiday called Vernal Equinox Day. Schools and many offices are closed.



② But the holiday has no fixed date. The law only says the day of the spring equinox. Each

year, scientists at the National Astronomical Observatory of Japan figure out the exact moment. The date is then announced one year early, usually March 20 or 21. In 2026, the equinox came at 11:46 at night, only 14 minutes before midnight.

③ This day is also the middle of Higan, a special week in Japanese Buddhism. Higan means the other shore, a peaceful world beyond this life. Many families visit their family graves. They wash the stones, give flowers, and pray for the people they lost. Higan is found only in Japan, not in India or China.

④ People also eat botamochi, rice balls covered with sweet red bean paste. The name comes from the botan, a big spring flower. In fall, the same sweet is called ohagi. Some families make it at home, and others buy it at Japanese sweet shops.

⑤ Many people say day and night are the same length on this day. But in Tokyo, the day is about 15 minutes longer. After this, the days keep getting longer, and spring really begins. In Iran, this day is even the start of a new year.

Words 単語

equinox 春分・秋分（分点）

vernal 春の

national holiday 国民の祝日

fixed 決まった、固定された

scientist 科学者

figure out （考えて・計算して）求める、わかる

announce 発表する

moment 瞬間

grave 墓

shore 岸

bean paste （豆の）あん、ペースト

length 長さ



Reading Check

Choose the best answer. 正しいものを選ぼう。

Class _____ No. _____ Name _____

1. What is the main idea of the passage?

- (A) Vernal Equinox Day is a Japanese holiday about the sun, family, and spring. (B) Vernal Equinox Day is a festival only for scientists.
- (C) Vernal Equinox Day is always on March 21. (D) Vernal Equinox Day came to Japan from India.

2. Who figures out the exact moment of the equinox?

- (A) Buddhist monks (B) School teachers
- (C) Scientists at the National Astronomical Observatory (D) The Prime Minister

3. What time was the equinox in 2026?

- (A) 6:00 in the morning (B) At noon
- (C) 11:46 at night (D) Just after midnight

4. Why is the sweet called botamochi in spring?

- (A) Because it is made in a big pot. (B) Because its name comes from a spring flower.
- (C) Because it is only eaten by children. (D) Because it is white like snow.

5. In paragraph 3, what does "the other shore" mean?

- (A) A beach in another country (B) A peaceful world beyond this life
- (C) The east side of a river (D) A new school year

6. Which is true according to the passage?

- (A) The law says the holiday is on March 20. (B) Higan is a custom in India and China.
- (C) The same sweet is called ohagi in fall. (D) In Tokyo, the night is longer than the day.

7. Why does the date of the holiday need to be announced one year early?

- (A) Because people like long vacations. (B) Because the date is chosen by a lottery.
- (C) Because the holiday is very old. (D) Because it changes and people need to plan their year.

8. In the dialogue, why does Sakura say "it's an autumn equinox for you"?

- (A) Because Australia is in the southern half of the world. (B) Because Noah likes fall more than spring.
- (C) Because Noah will visit a grave in autumn. (D) Because Australia has no spring.

True or False? 正しいければ T、ちがえば F に○

Vernal Equinox Day is a national holiday in Japan.	T / F
The date of Vernal Equinox Day is written in the law.	T / F
On this day, the sun rises in the east and sets in the west.	T / F
Higan is a Buddhist custom in India and China.	T / F
Many families visit their family graves during Higan.	T / F
Day and night are exactly the same length on this day.	T / F



Word Work

Words & phrases. 単語のれんしゅう。

Class _____ No. _____ Name _____

① Match the pictures and the words. 絵と単語を線で結ぼう。



●

● telescope



●

● sprout



●

● flower



●

● night



●

● calendar



●

● compass



●

● tea



●

● sunrise

② Unscramble the words. 文字を並べ替えて単語にしよう。

1. S R G N I P

2. O E U I X Q N

3. A V R E G

4. E S N U T S

5. H Y O D I A L

6. H S R E O

③ Fill in the blanks. 語群から選んで () に入れよう。

Christmas

breakfast

grave

flowers

east

west

window

botamochi

north

longer

snowman

Spring

tea

Ren's Equinox Morning

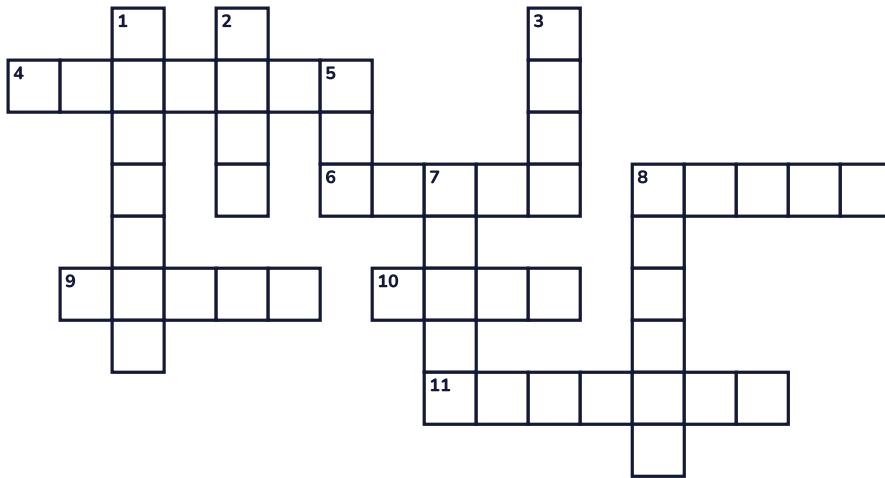
Today is Vernal Equinox Day. Ren wakes up early and looks out the (1) _____. The sun is rising in the (2) _____. "It will set in the (3) _____ tonight," says his mother. After (4) _____, the family goes to visit his grandfather's (5) _____. They wash the stone and put (6) _____ in front of it. Then they go home and eat (7) _____ with green (8) _____. Ren's sister says, "The days will be (9) _____ from now on." Ren smiles. (10) _____ is really here.



Crossword Puzzle

Read the clues and fill in the puzzle. ヒントを読んで、クロスワードを完成させよう。

Class _____ No. _____ Name _____



Across →

- 4 Families bring these to a family stone. They are colorful. (7)
- 6 The dark time after the sun goes down. (5)
- 8 The land at the side of the sea or a river. (5)
- 9 The third month of the year. (5)
- 10 The sun rises in this direction. (4)
- 11 The day when day and night are almost the same length. (7)

Down ↓

- 1 A day with no school or work. (7)
- 2 A small seed. Sweet red paste is made from it. (4)
- 3 The sun sets in this direction. (4)
- 5 The big star that gives us light in the day. (3)
- 7 A place where a person who died is buried. (5)
- 8 The season after winter. (6)



Word Search

Find the hidden words. かくれた単語を探そう (→ ↓ ↘ ↗)。

Class _____ No. _____ Name _____

A	N	O	S	C	C	U	T	W	E	F	G	A
H	I	H	H	D	H	E	A	D	L	L	F	F
K	G	O	O	G	Y	Q	J	B	J	O	K	W
O	H	L	R	S	B	U	Y	E	S	W	G	D
R	T	I	E	D	D	I	V	A	V	E	F	T
S	V	D	V	N	Y	N	D	N	R	R	I	N
D	P	A	H	H	G	O	Y	A	T	S	A	S
S	V	Y	C	E	I	X	D	M	O	O	N	P
P	F	R	F	A	V	N	S	U	N	L	B	R
E	A	I	H	W	E	A	E	I	M	W	I	I
M	A	L	T	L	Y	O	F	W	E	S	T	N
P	J	S	A	F	S	A	K	C	A	N	U	G
G	K	C	T	S	B	P	J	G	R	A	V	E

Find these words! 14

- ☐ BEAN
- ☐ CALENDAR
- ☐ EAST
- ☐ EQUINOX
- ☐ FLOWERS
- ☐ GRAVE
- ☐ HOLIDAY
- ☐ MARCH
- ☐ MOON
- ☐ NIGHT
- ☐ SHORE
- ☐ SPRING
- ☐ SUN
- ☐ WEST

Secret Code 暗号を解こう！記号を文字に直すと、メッセージが出てくるよ。



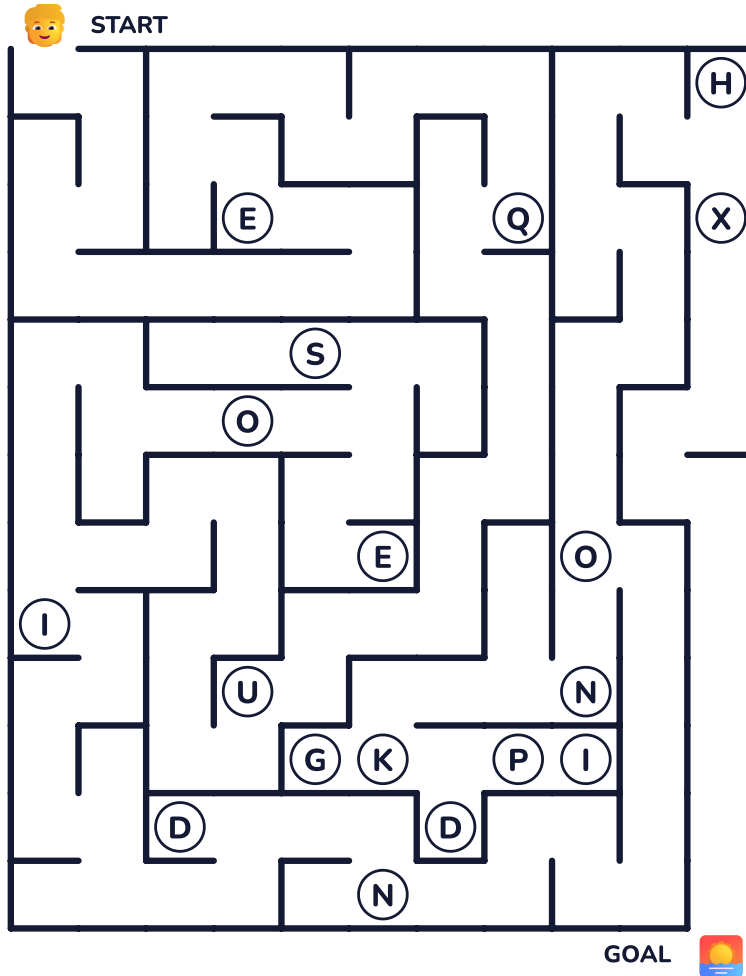


Maze & Sentences

Class _____ No. _____ Name _____

Help Yuto walk toward the rising sun!

Collect the letters on the right path. What is the secret word? 正しい道の文字を集めると、ひみつの言葉になるよ。



Secret word: _____

Put the words in order. 並べ替えて正しい文にしよう。

1. rises / the / The / east / in / sun .

2. is / Equinox / national / holiday / Vernal / Day / a .

3. family / visit / spring / our / grave / in / We .

4. little / year / every / changes / date / The / a .

5. equinox / after / longer / the / days / The / get .



Class Activity & Writing

Class _____ No. _____ Name _____

Find Someone Who... クラスで聞いて回ろう！ Ask: "Do you ...?" / "Have you ...?"

Find someone who ...	Name
... has visited a family grave	
... likes botamochi or ohagi	
... knows the date of Vernal Equinox Day this year	
... can point to the east from this room	
... has seen a sunrise	
... likes spring better than fall	
... knows what equinox means	
... has been to a planetarium	

Let's Write! 英語で書いてみよう。

On Vernal Equinox Day, I want to _____ because _____.

My favorite thing about spring is _____.

To explain Vernal Equinox Day to a friend from abroad, I would say, "_____."



Trace & Color

Trace the words. Then color the picture! なぞって書こう。絵に色を塗ろう。

Class _____ No. _____ Name _____



sunrise

flower

calendar

night

