The Earth in Space

Directions: Summarizing  Read this section in your textbook to fill in the blanks below.

The inner planets are relatively (1) _____________ and (2) _____________, while the outer planets are (3) _____________ and composed mostly or entirely of (4) _____________. Each planet follows its own path, or (5) _____________, around the sun. Earth takes about 365 ¼ days to make one (6) _____________, or complete circuit, around the sun. As Earth orbits the sun, it (7) _____________ on its axis, making one complete rotation every 24 (8) _____________.

Because Earth is tilted on its axis, (9) _____________ change as it orbits the sun. People in a hemisphere enjoy summer when they receive the (10) _____________ rays of the sun. The summer solstice marks the day with the (11) _____________ hours of sunlight. The winter solstice is the day with the (12) _____________ hours of sunlight. (13) _____________ occur twice a year, when day and night are of equal length.

Earth’s temperatures also are affected by the sun. The sun’s direct rays hit places in the (14) _____________, so these low-latitude areas tend to be very warm. At (15) _____________ latitudes near the North and South Poles, the sun’s rays hit (16) _____________; thus, temperatures are cool or cold there.