

Dictation - Leap years

A leap year is a calendar year containing one additional day. The day is added to keep the calendar year synchronized (synchronised) with the astronomical year.

The true length of a year on Earth, which is the time it takes for our planet to move in its orbit around the Sun, is 365.25 days.

We keep our calendar synchronized (synchronised) with the seasons by making most years 365 days long, but also making a quarter of all years "leap" years, with 366 days. This is done by extending February to 29 days.

The name "leap year" probably comes from the following fact. A fixed date in our calendar - for example, Christmas Day - normally advances one day of the week from one year to the next. Thus Christmas Day fell on a Monday in 2017, a Tuesday in 2018, and will fall on a Wednesday in 2019. But 2020 will be a leap year, so, in that year, Christmas Day will "leap" over Thursday and fall on a Friday.