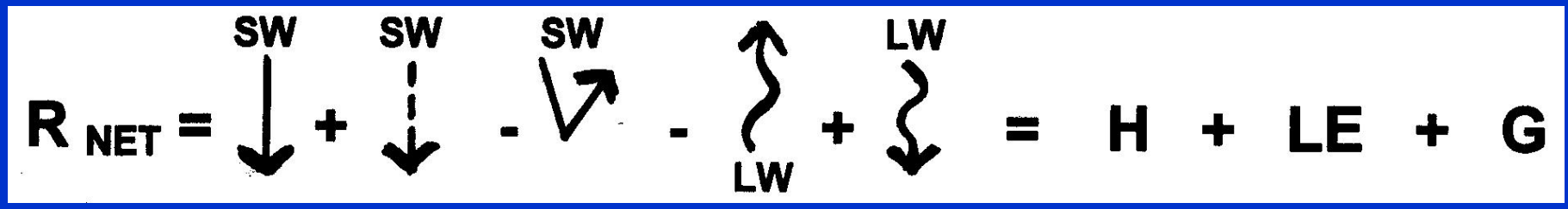
Topic # 12
Natural Climate Processes

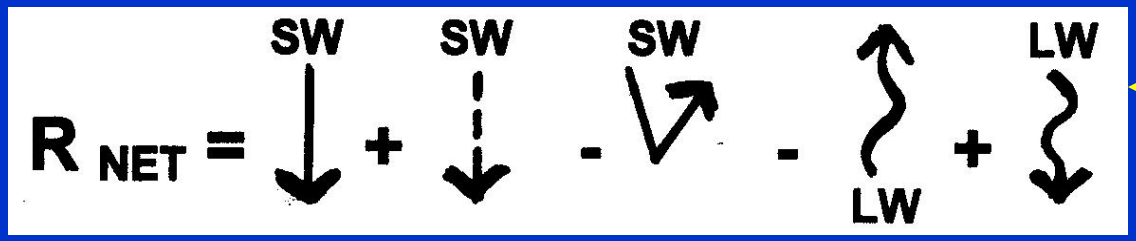
A "Primer" on
How the Energy Balance Drives
Atmospheric & Oceanic Circulation,
Natural Climatic Processes

pp 63-68 in Class Notes

RADIATION / ENERGY BALANCE



"Radiation Balance" part



All components are referring to electromagnetic radiation

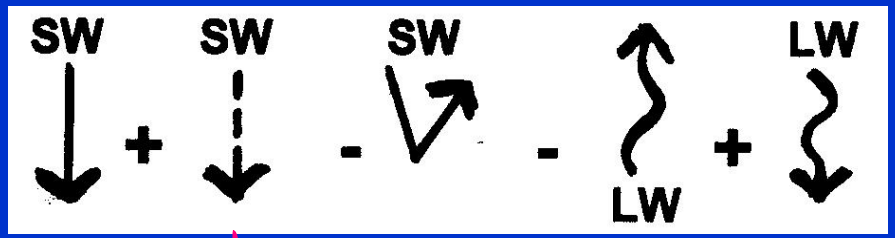
All components are referring to modes of heat energy transfer or heat energy storage involving matter

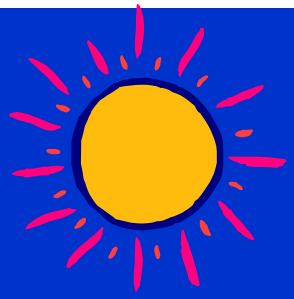
"Energy Balance" part

$$R_{NET} = H + LE + G$$

Start out here, with energy from the SUN radiated to Earth and so forth . . .

"Radiation Balance" part





The R_{NET} is then able to be used in thermal energy "heat transfer" processes which manifest themselves as weather & climate!

"Energy Balance" part

$$R_{NET} = H + LE + G$$

Thermal Energy Review

Heat **(def) = the thermal energy that is *transferred* from one body to another because of a temperature difference.**

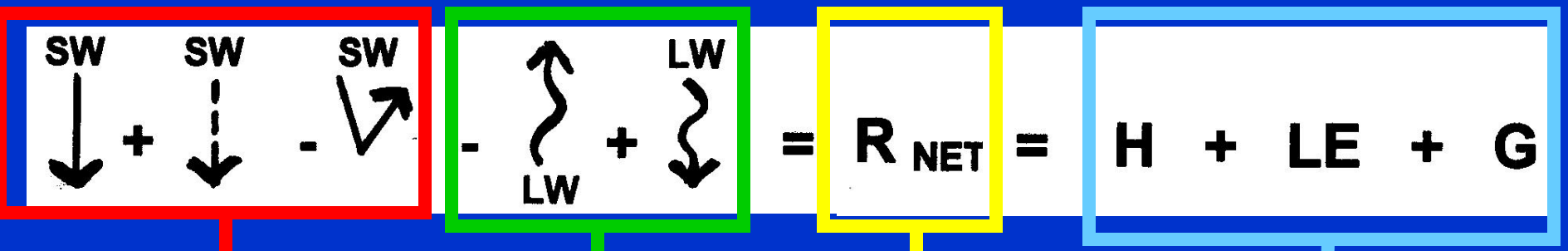
- **Sensible Heat transfer (H)**
- **Latent Heat transfer (LE)**

plus (after transfer) thermal energy can be STORED (G)

H + LE + G

Review

ENERGY IN THE EARTH-ATMOSPHERE SYSTEM



Ultimate source of energy is the SUN (SW)

After absorption of SW, LW energy is radiated in & out by EARTH & Atmosphere

Any NET (leftover) energy

Goes into the HEAT TRANSFER processes that drive **WEATHER & CLIMATE !**

The Earth
[as viewed from space]
. . . has the organized, self-contained look of a live creature, full of information, marvelously skilled in handling the sun.

~ Lewis Thomas

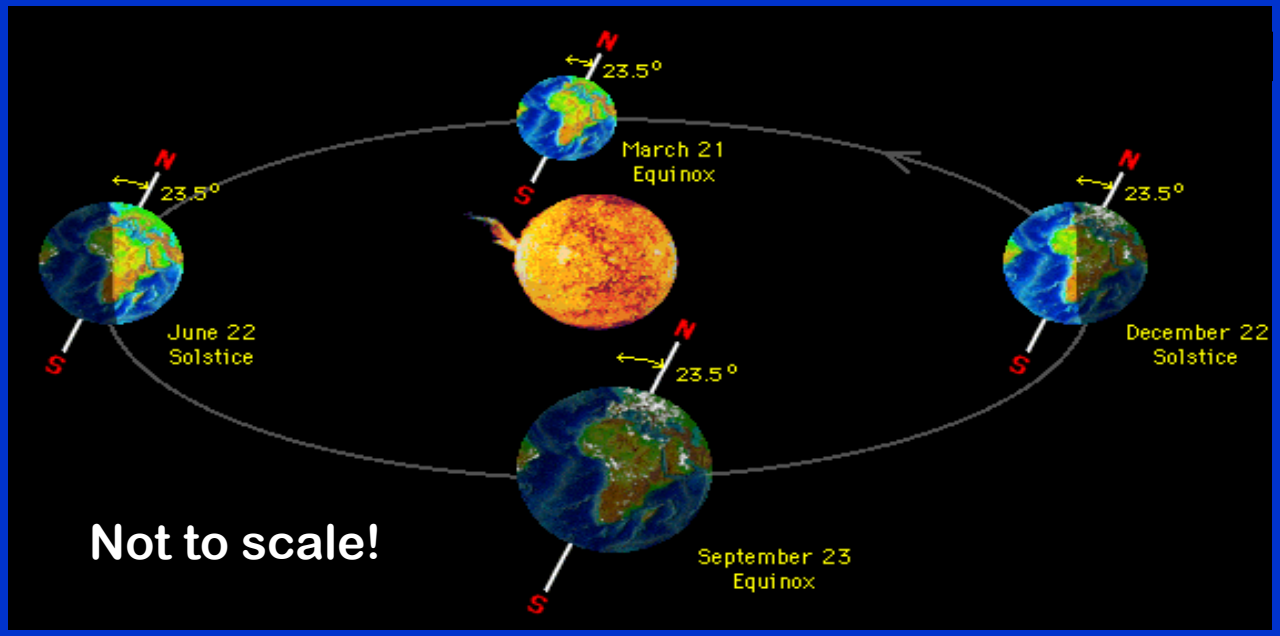
LINKING THE ENERGY BALANCE TO ATMOSPHERIC CIRCULATION . . .

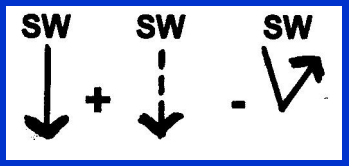
We'll start with the SUN (SOLAR INSOLATION)

IN – SOL- ATION =

Amount of incoming solar energy received by a point on Earth's surface

To drive the circulation, the initial source of energy is from the Sun:





EARTH-SUN Relationships

4 Things to Know about Earth-Sun Relationships:

1) Earth orbits Sun in one year
2) Orbit is not a perfect circle (= an ellipse)
3) Earth's orbit around Sun can be "traced" on a plane (called the "Plane of the Ecliptic" – plane passes thru the center of Sun & Earth)
4) Earth's axis tilts 23.5 ° from a ⊥ to the "Plane of The Ecliptic"

http://mesoscale.agron.iastate.edu/agron206/animations/01_EarthSun.html

These 4 Earth-Sun Properties lead to: Intensity + Duration

2 factors that determine the AMOUNT OF SOLAR INSOLATION

as seasons progress:

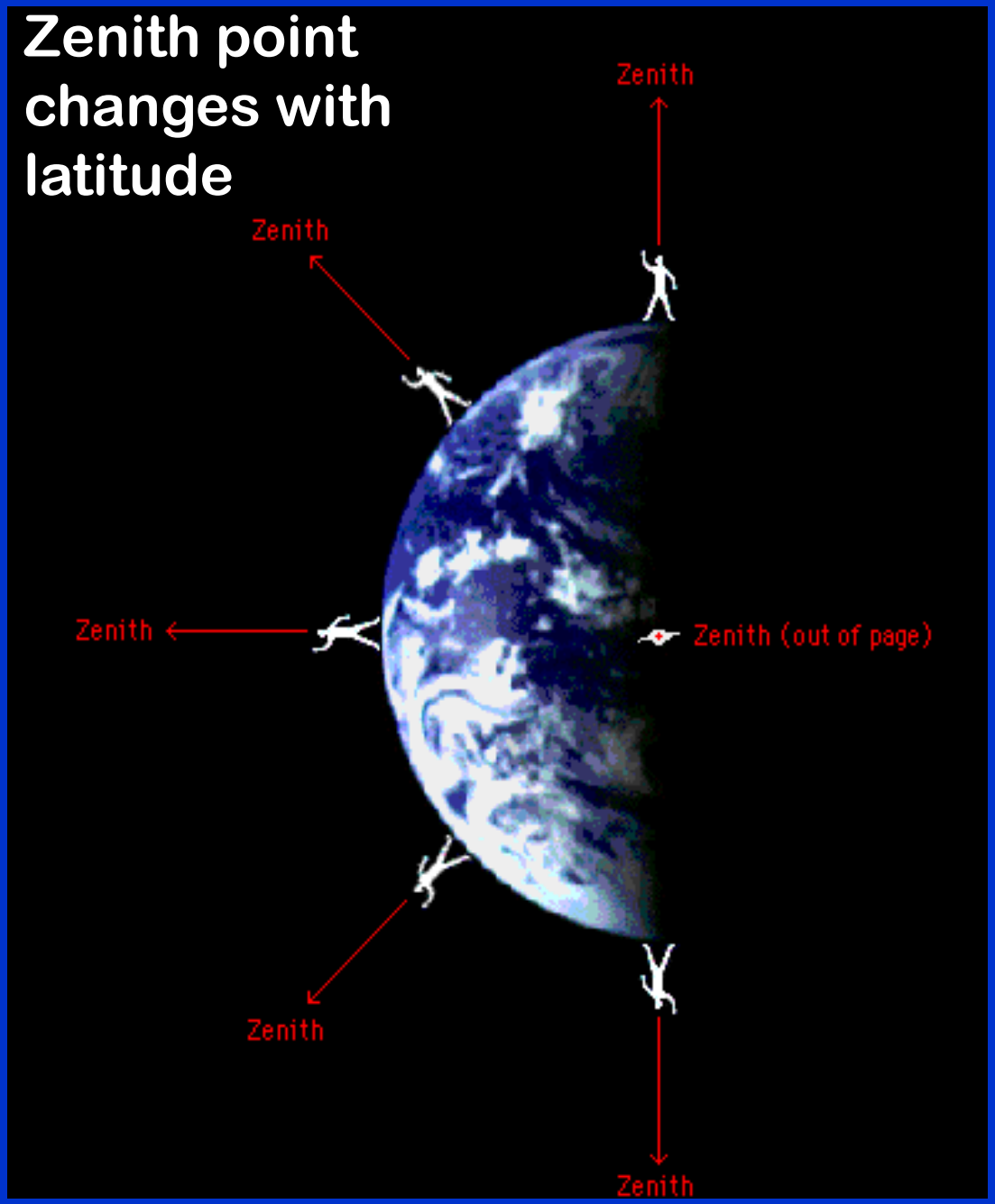
(1) **INTENSITY** of sun's rays

(perpendicular to surface = more intense)

(2) **DURATION** of daily insolation

(longer day length = more insolation)

Zenith point changes with latitude

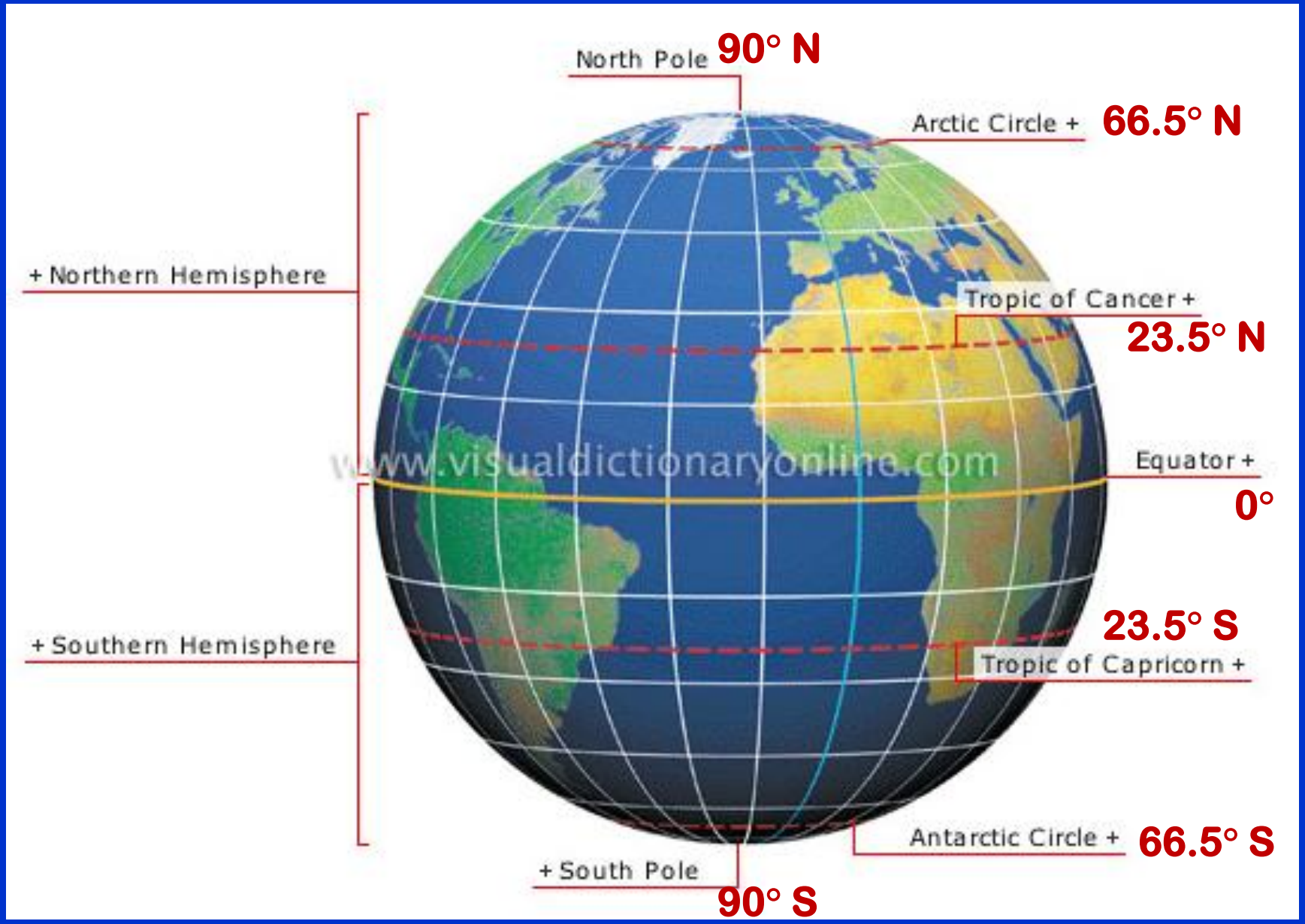


A useful term:

ZENITH = The point directly overhead

INTENSITY is greatest at any spot on Earth when sun is closest to the ZENITH!

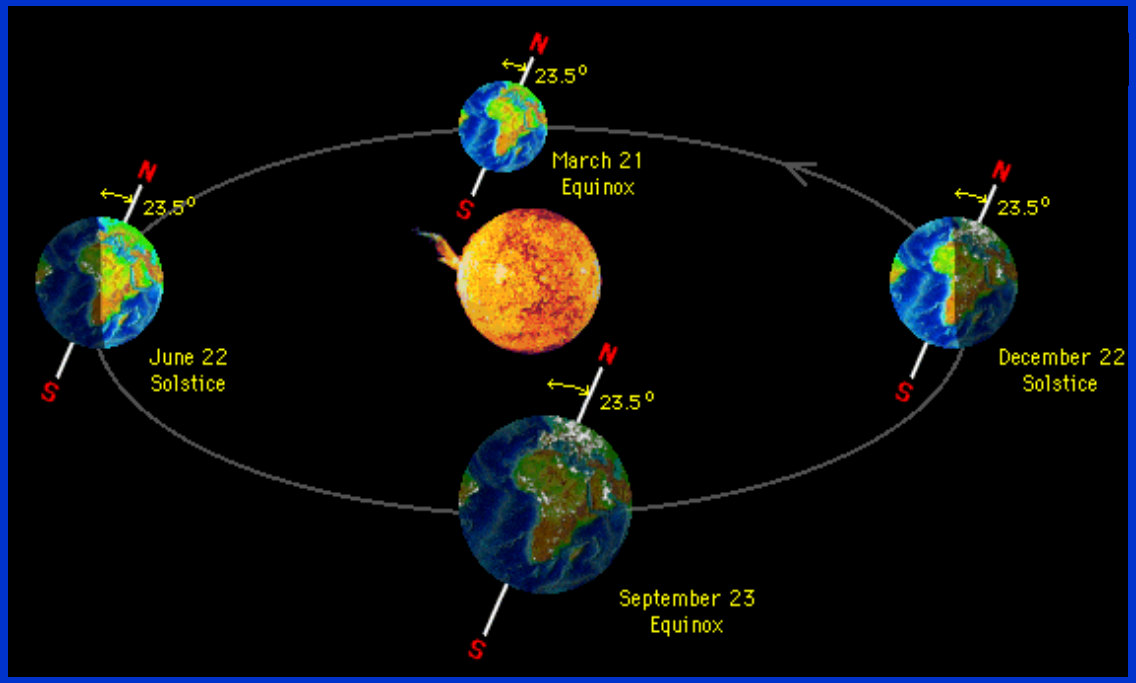
QUICKIE LATITUDE REVIEW:



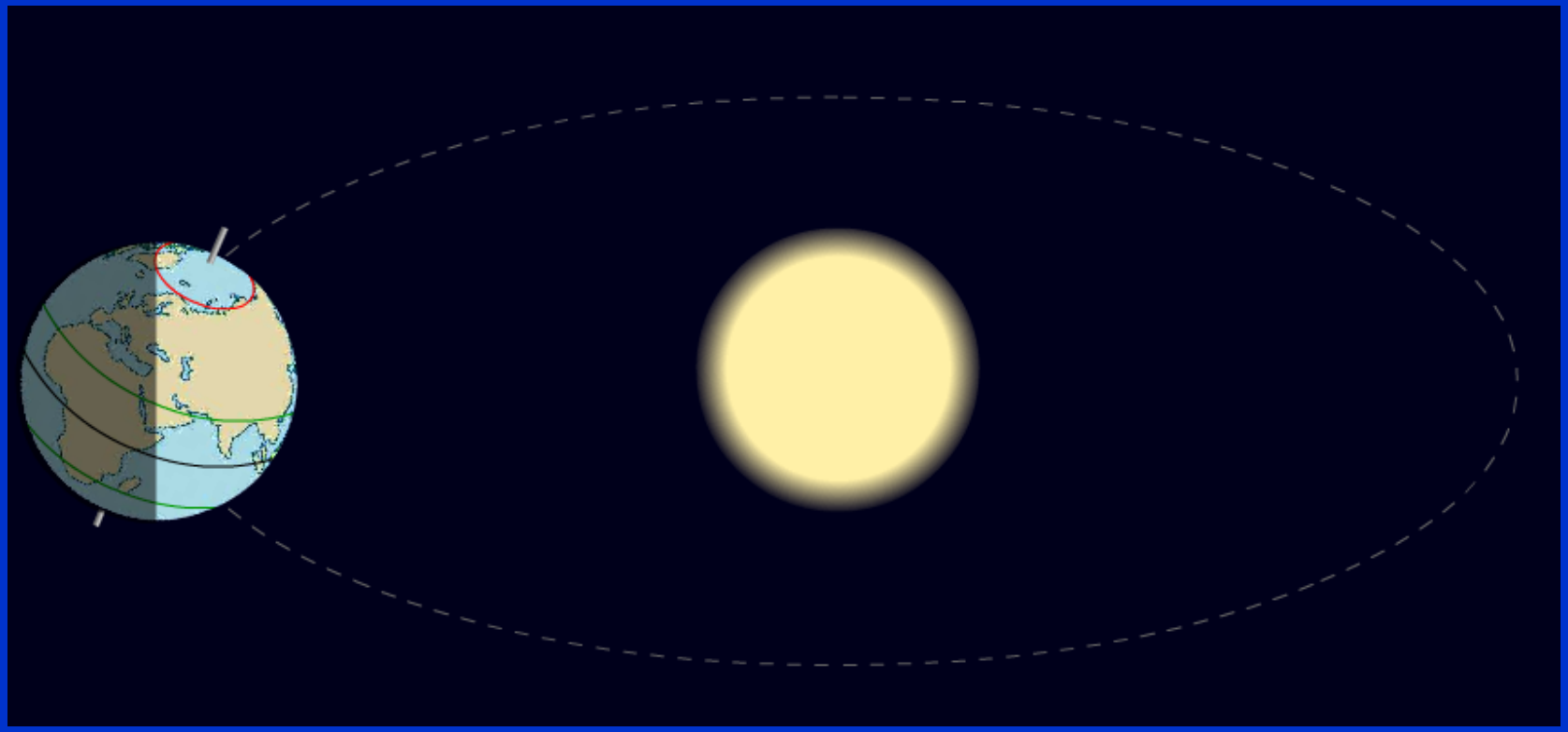
EARTH-SUN RELATIONSHIPS & The SEASONS:

VIEW THE ANIMATION:

http://mesoscale.agron.iastate.edu/agron206/animations/01_EarthSun.html

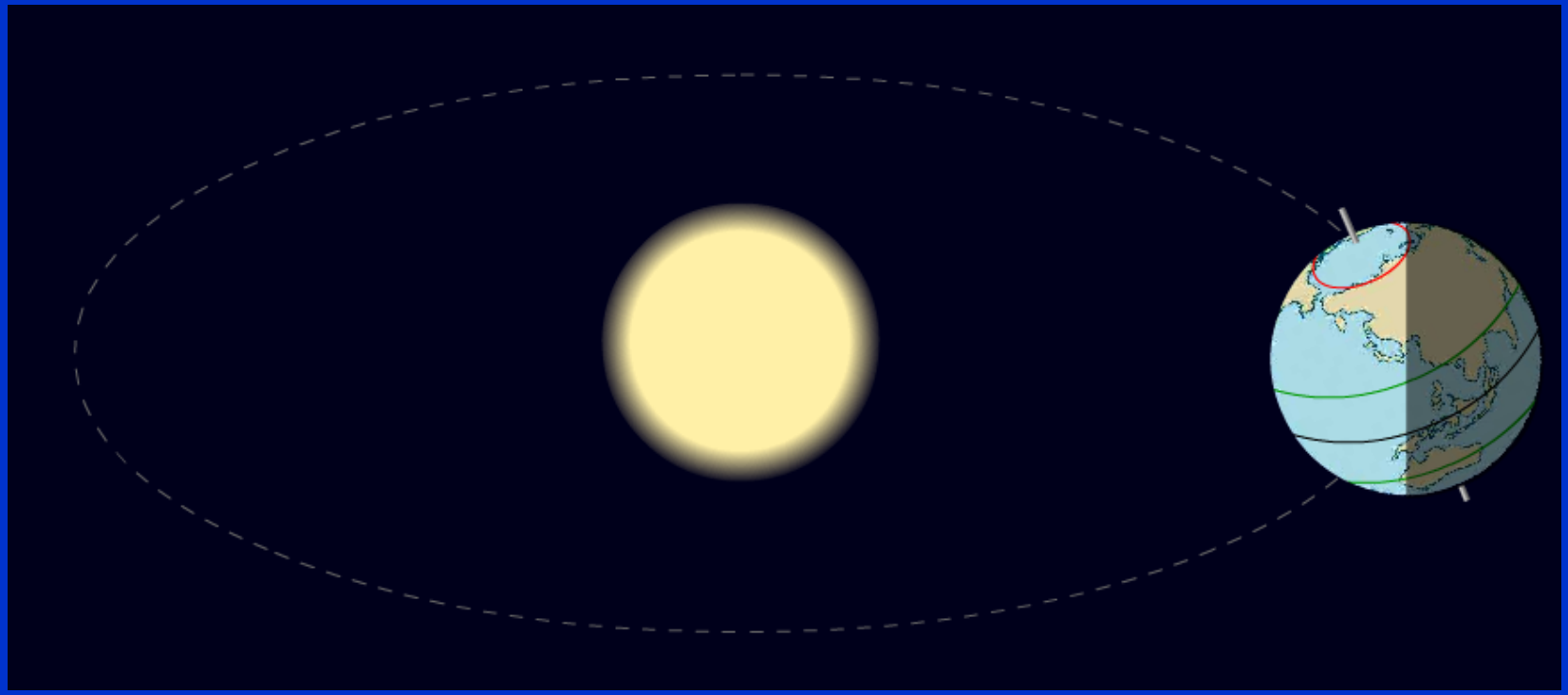


JUNE SOLSTICE



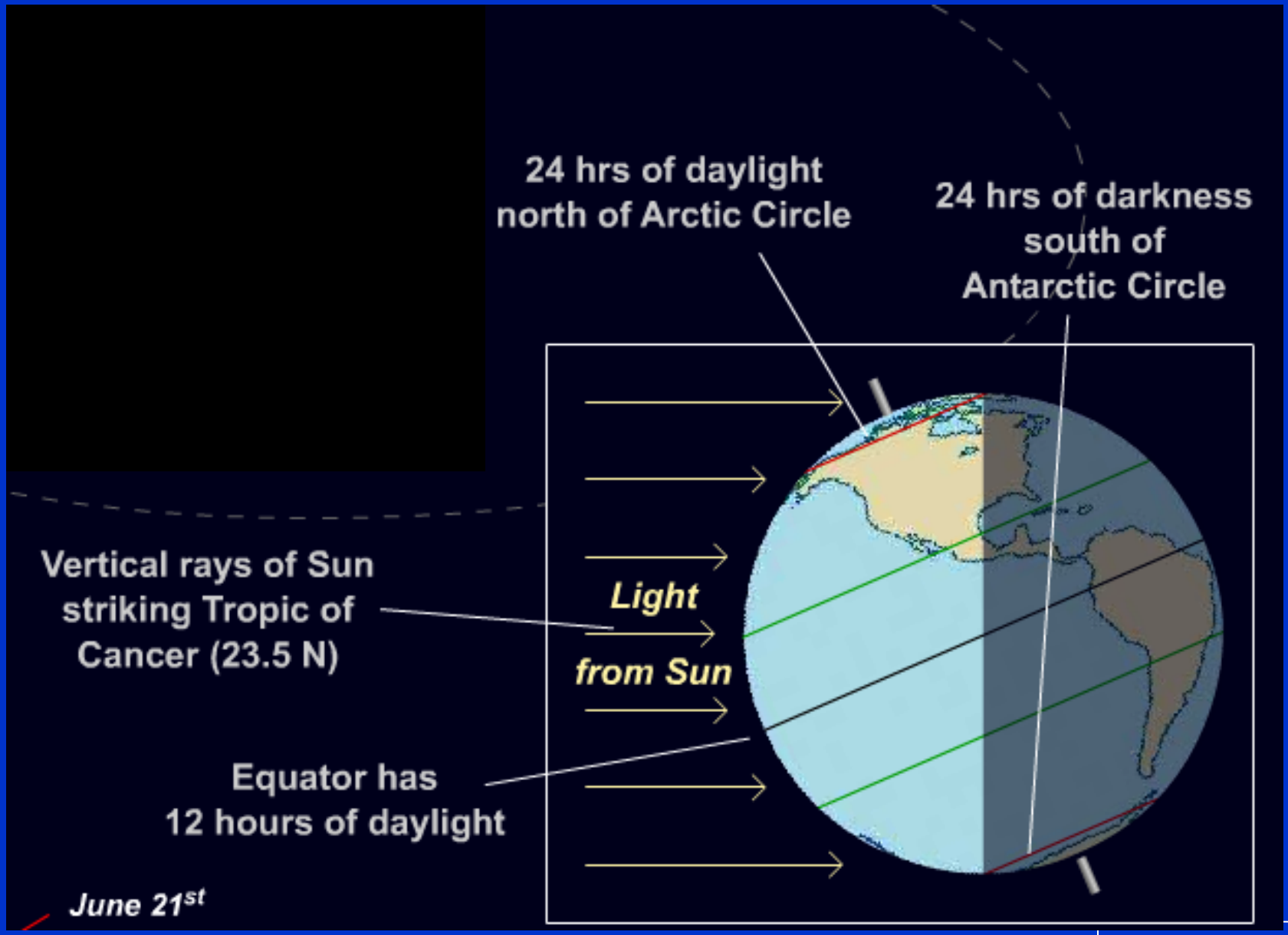
As viewed from one side of Sun

JUNE SOLSTICE

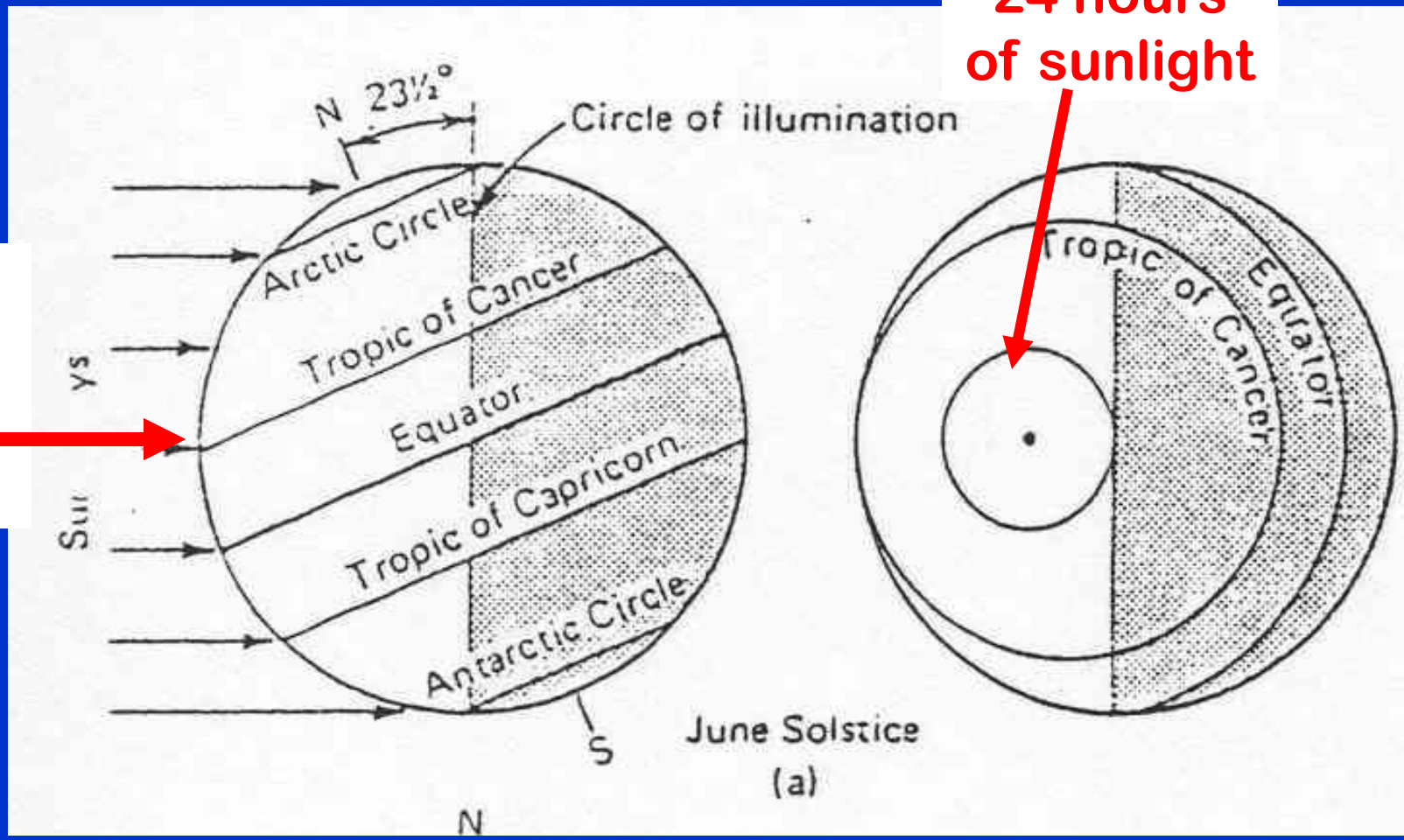


As viewed from the other side of the Sun

JUNE SOLSTICE

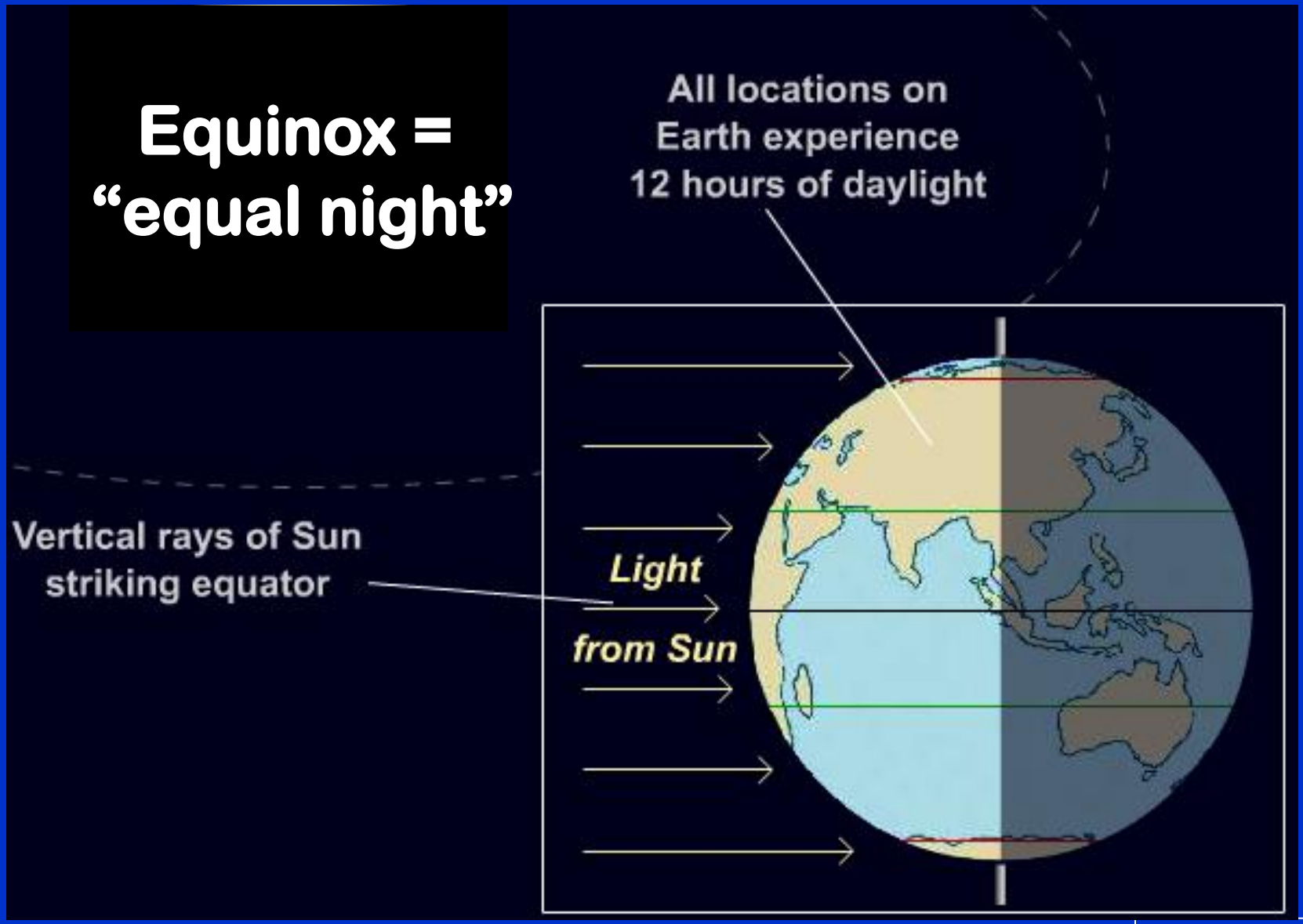


JUNE SOLSTICE



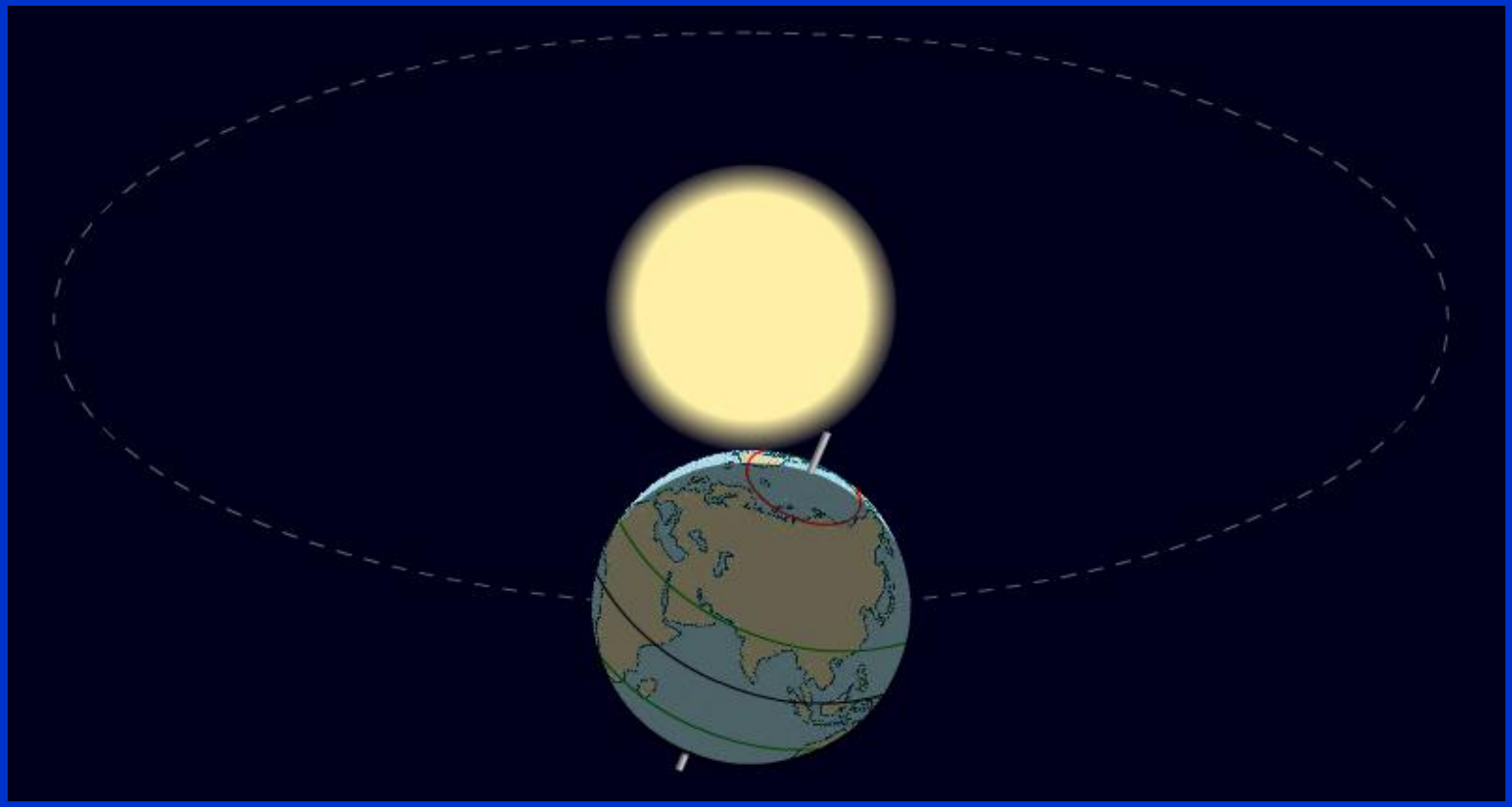
MARCH EQUINOX

Equinox = "equal night"



SEPTEMBER EQUINOX

different seasonal position in orbit . . .

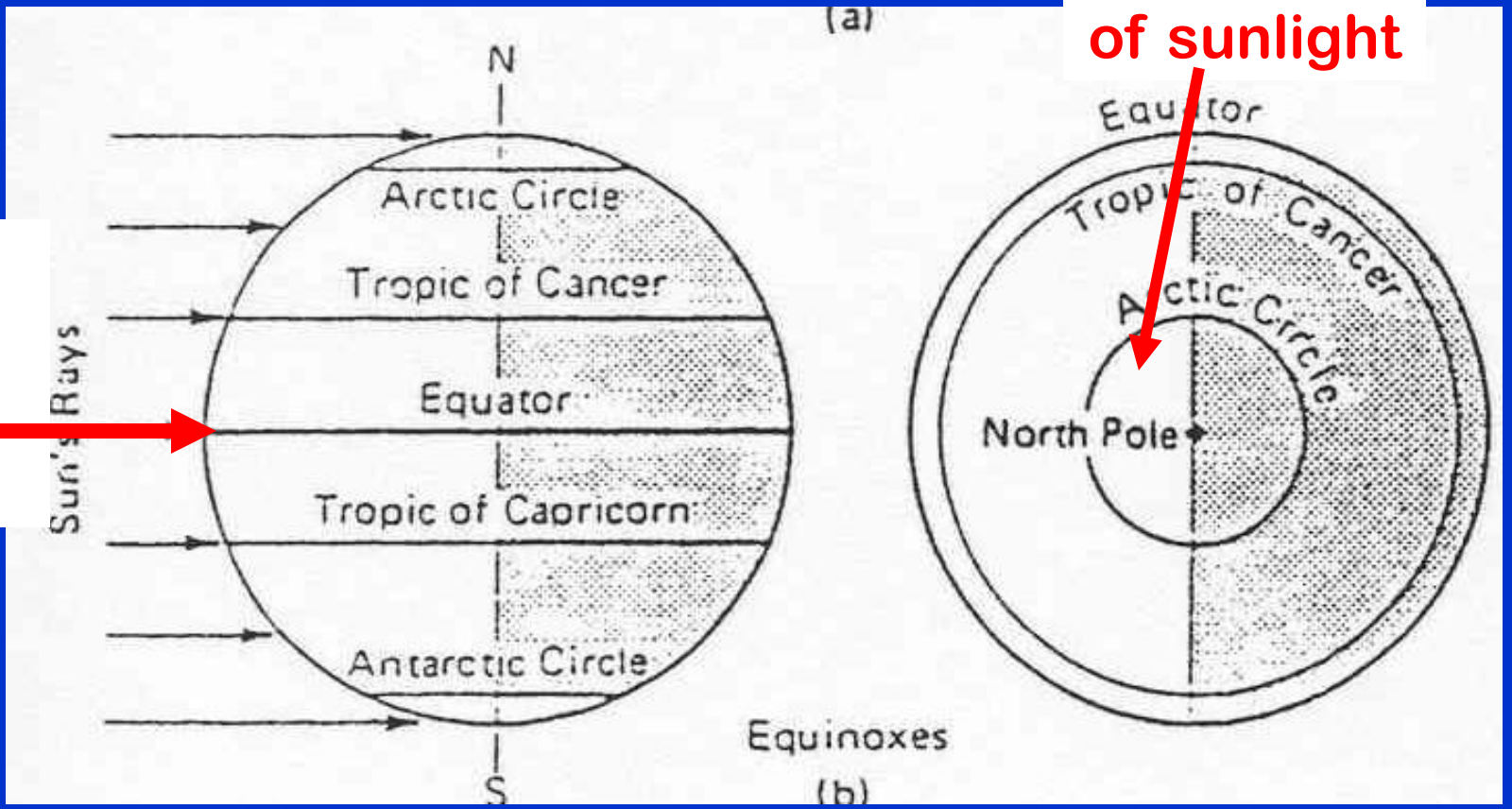


. . . but same latitudinal insolation as March Equinox

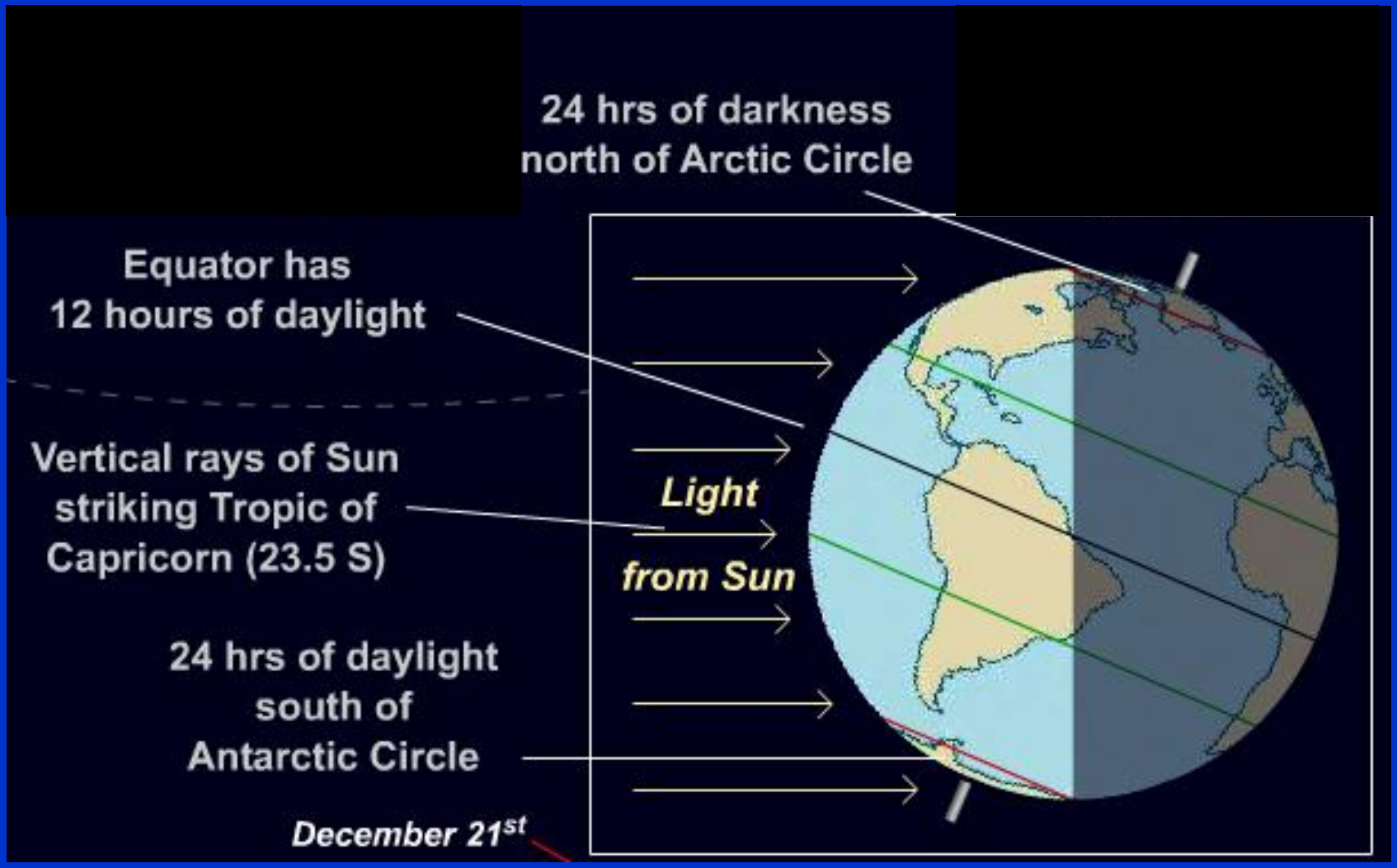
MARCH & SEPTEMBER EQUINOXES

12 hours of sunlight

Most intense solar radiation



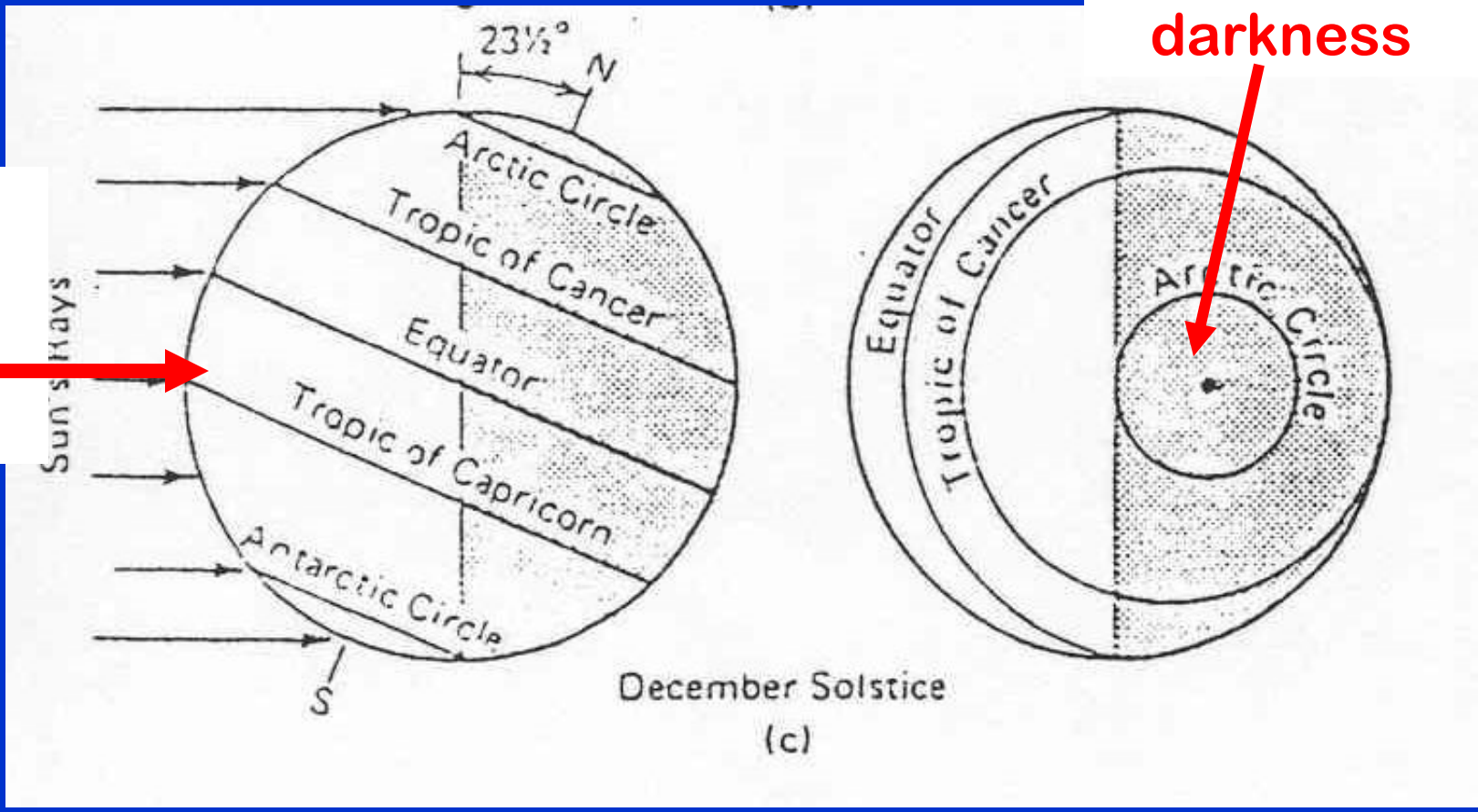
DECEMBER SOLSTICE



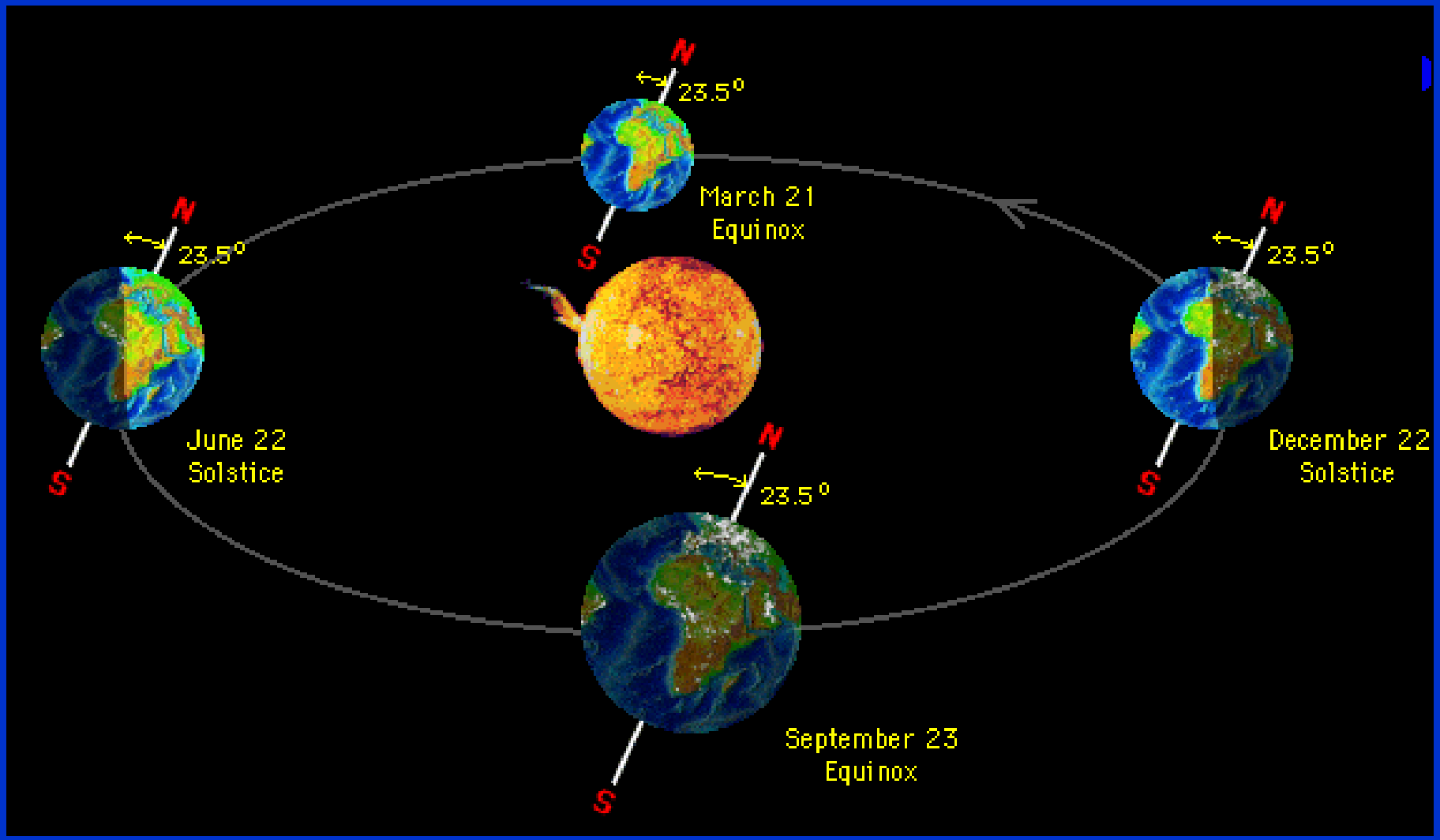
DECEMBER SOLSTICE

24 hours of darkness

Most intense solar radiation

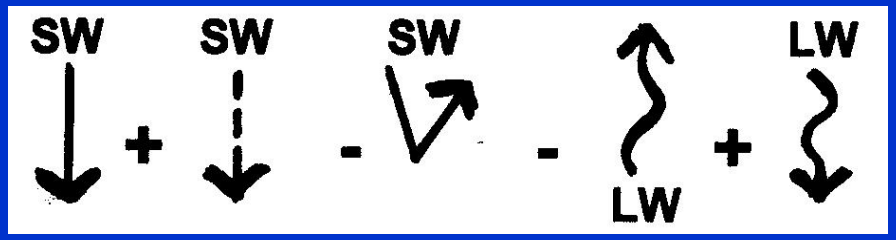


http://mesoscale.agron.iastate.edu/agron206/animations/01_EarthSun.html



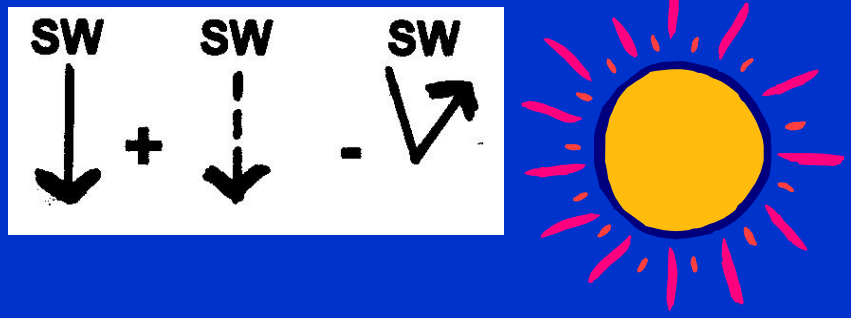
Recap

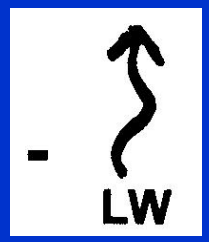
THE RADIATION BALANCE



& THE GENERAL CIRCULATION OF THE ATMOSPHERE

HOW IT ALL FITS TOGETHER:





Over the course of a year . . .

The amount of **INCOMING SW** (Insolation) absorbed by EARTH **varies by LATITUDE**

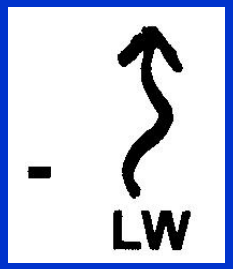
(MORE comes in near the Equator, less near the Poles)

➔ **LOW LATITUDES absorb more energy than HIGH LATITUDES**

The amount of **TERRESTRIAL LW / IR** varies by latitude too -- **MORE LW / IR** is emitted at warmer **TROPICAL LATITUDES**, LESS in cooler HIGH LATITUDES

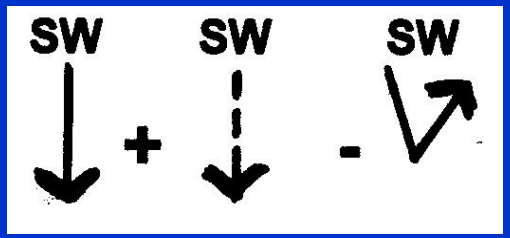
HOWEVER . . .

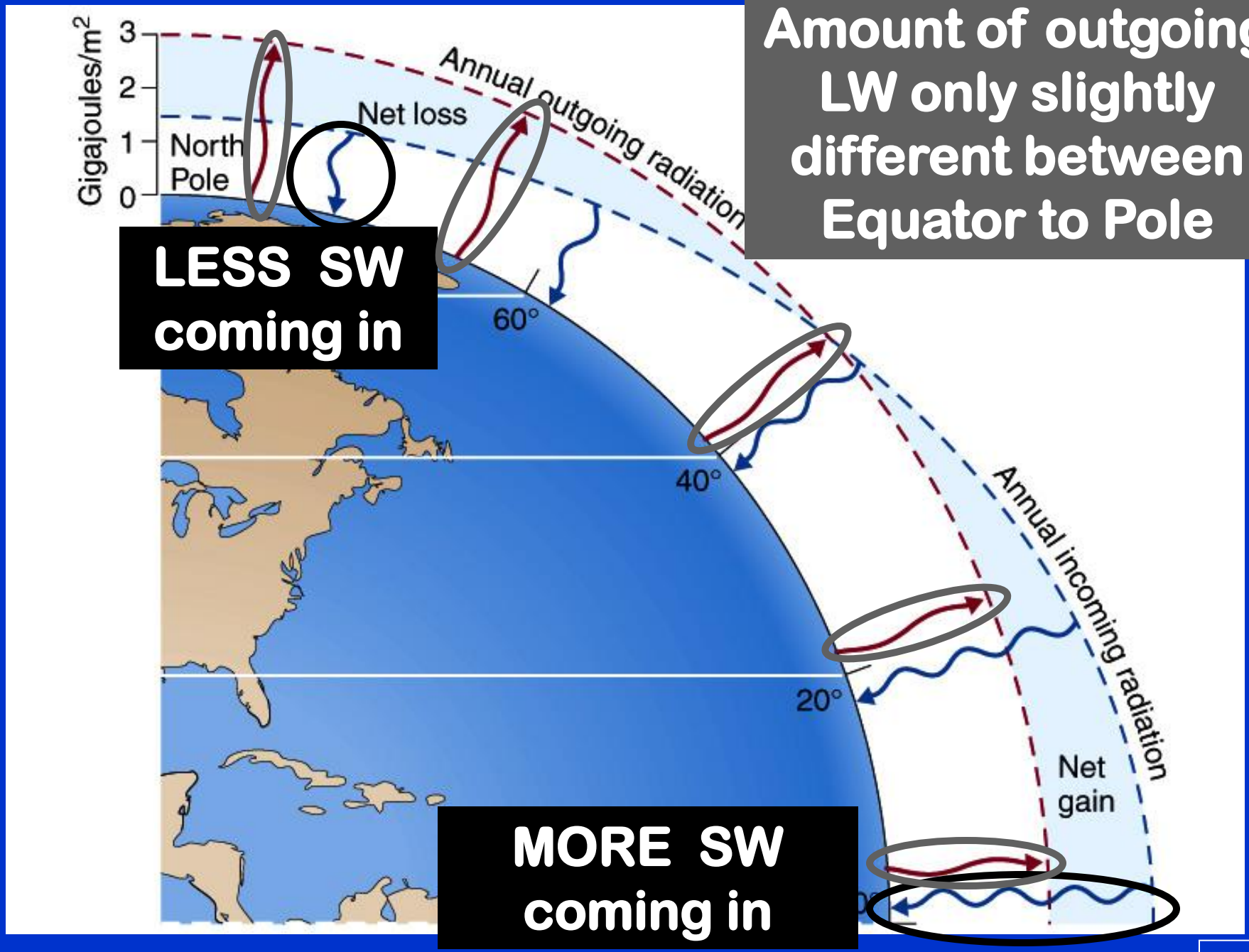
EQUATOR-POLE DIFFERENCES in what goes OUT

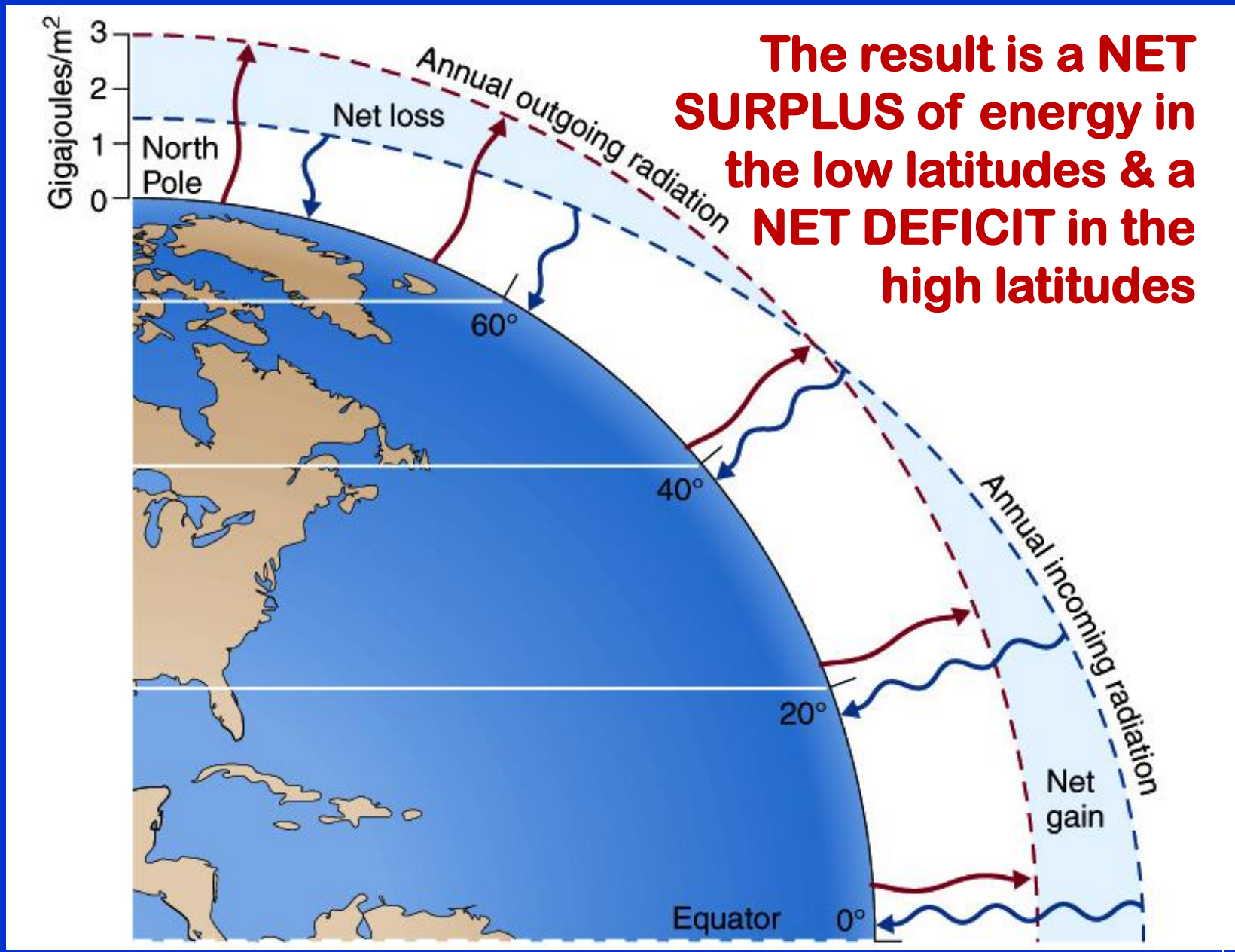


are less than the

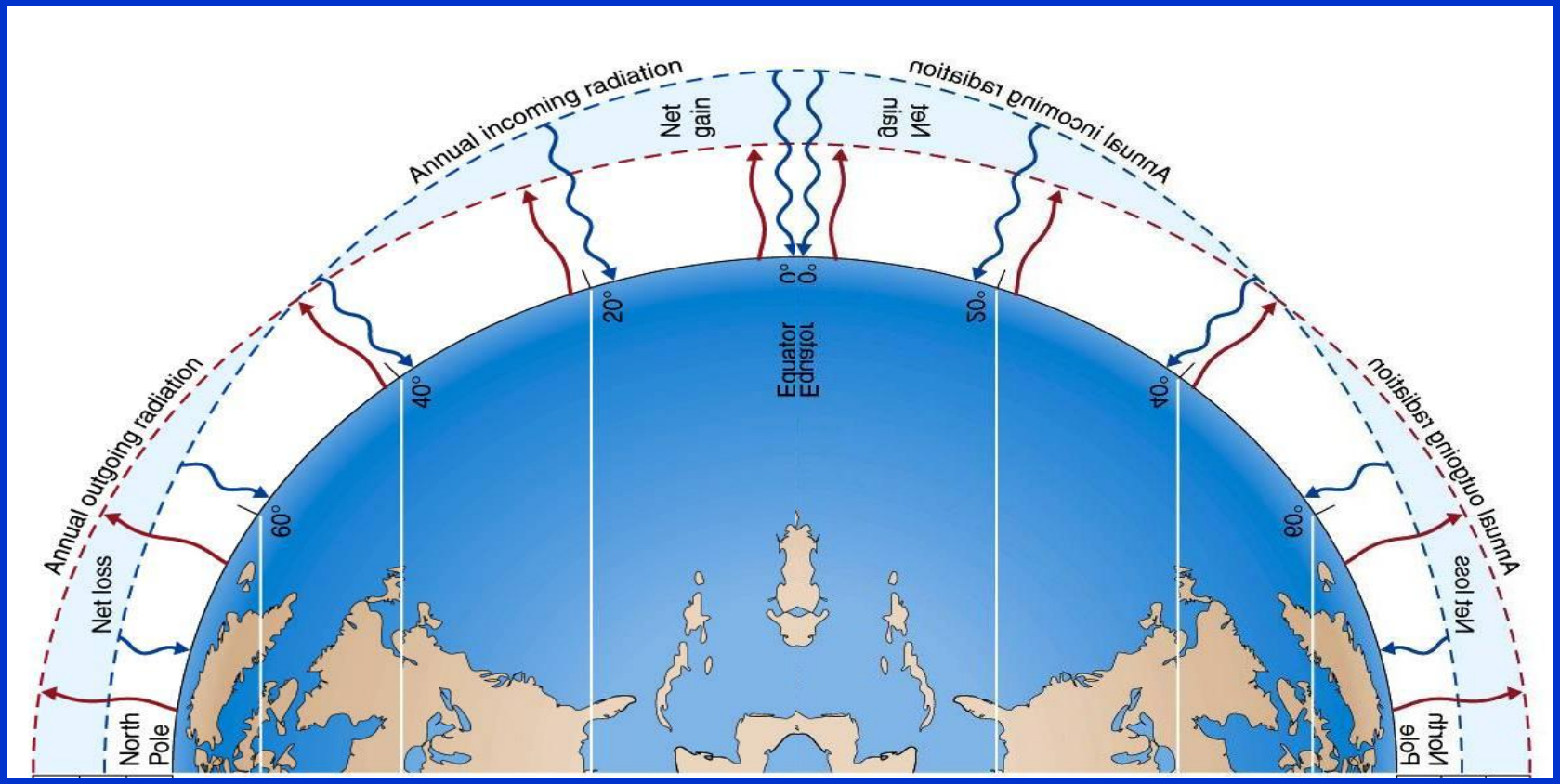
EQUATOR-POLE DIFFERENCES in what comes in




Amount of outgoing LW only slightly different between Equator to Pole
LESS SW coming in
MORE SW coming in
Gigajoules/m²
3
2
1
0
North Pole
Net loss
Annual outgoing radiation
60°
40°
20°
Annual incoming radiation
Net gain

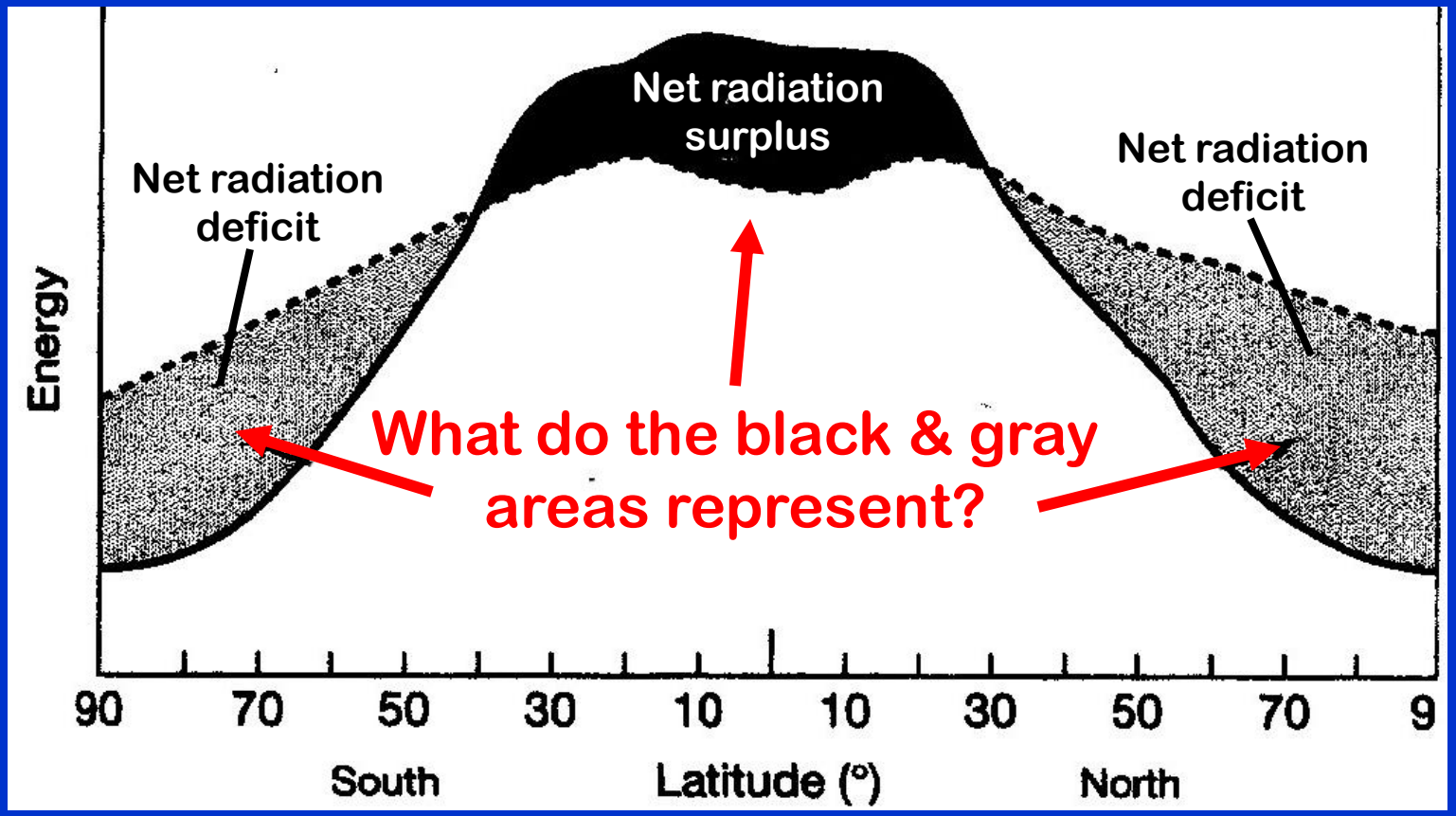


The result is a NET SURPLUS of energy in the low latitudes & a NET DEFICIT in the high latitudes



POLE **EQUATOR** **POLE**

Now lets look at a Pole to Pole Transect



Absorbed solar energy

SW + SW - SW

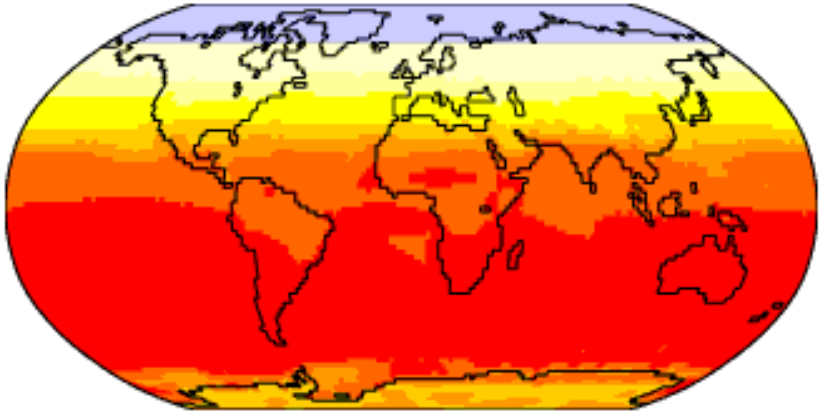
Emitted infrared energy

(at top of atmosphere)

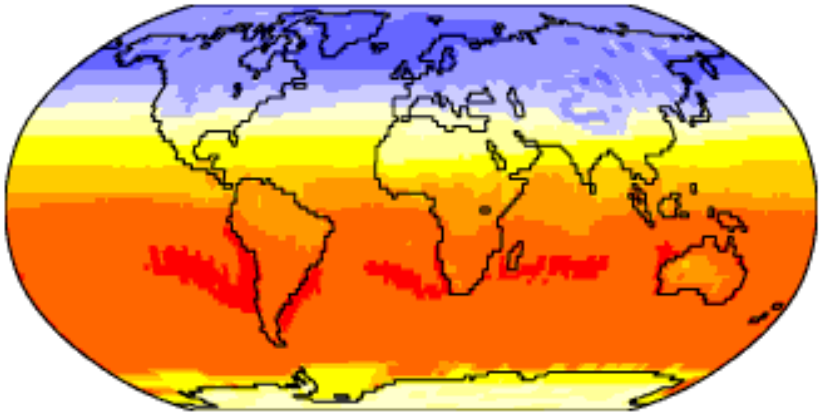
- LW

Short-Wave Radiation

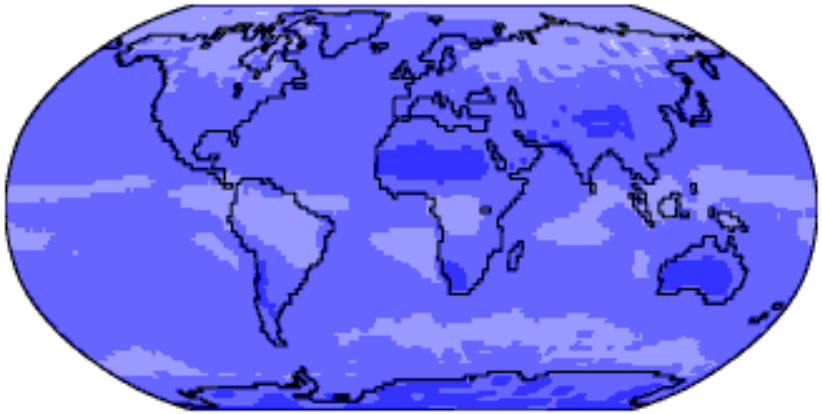
Dec

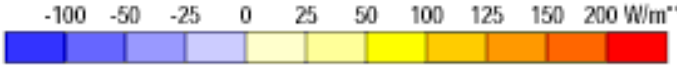


Net Radiation



Long-Wave Radiation



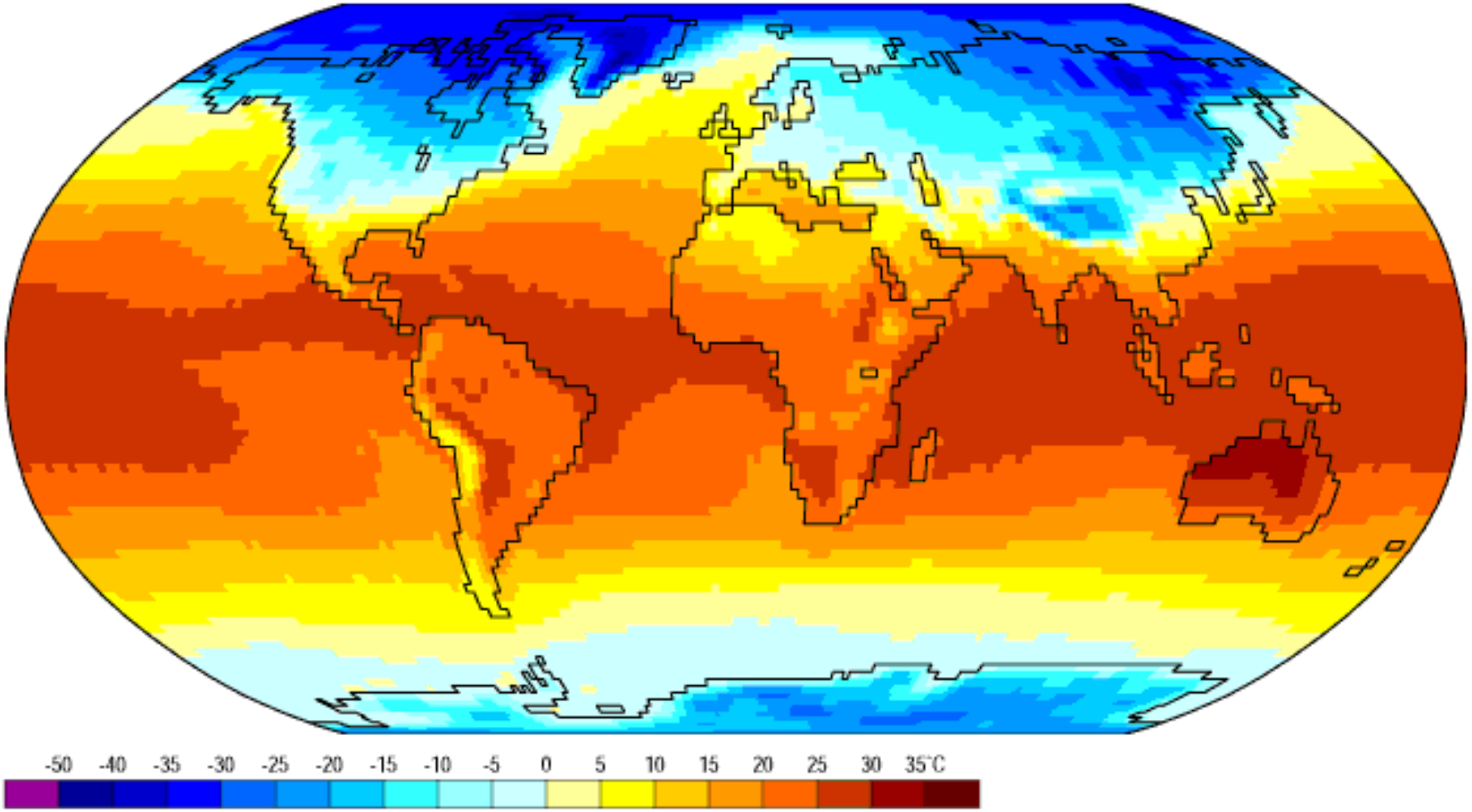


Data: NCEP/NCAR Reanalysis Project, 1959-1997 Climatologies
Animation: Department of Geography, University of Oregon, March 2000

http://geography.uoregon.edu/envchange/clim_animations/

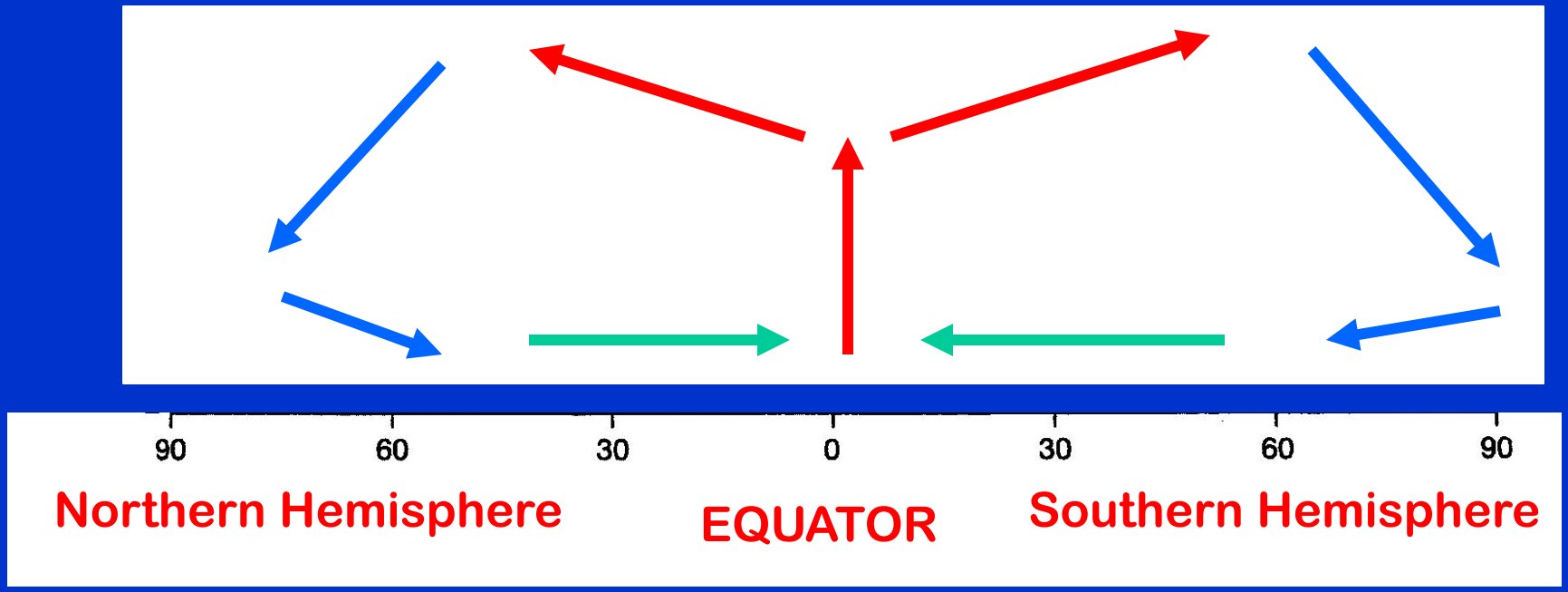
Air Temperature

Dec



Data: NCEP/NCAR Reanalysis Project, 1959-1997 Climatologies
Animation: Department of Geography, University of Oregon, March 2000

Global-scale motions driven by thermal differences:

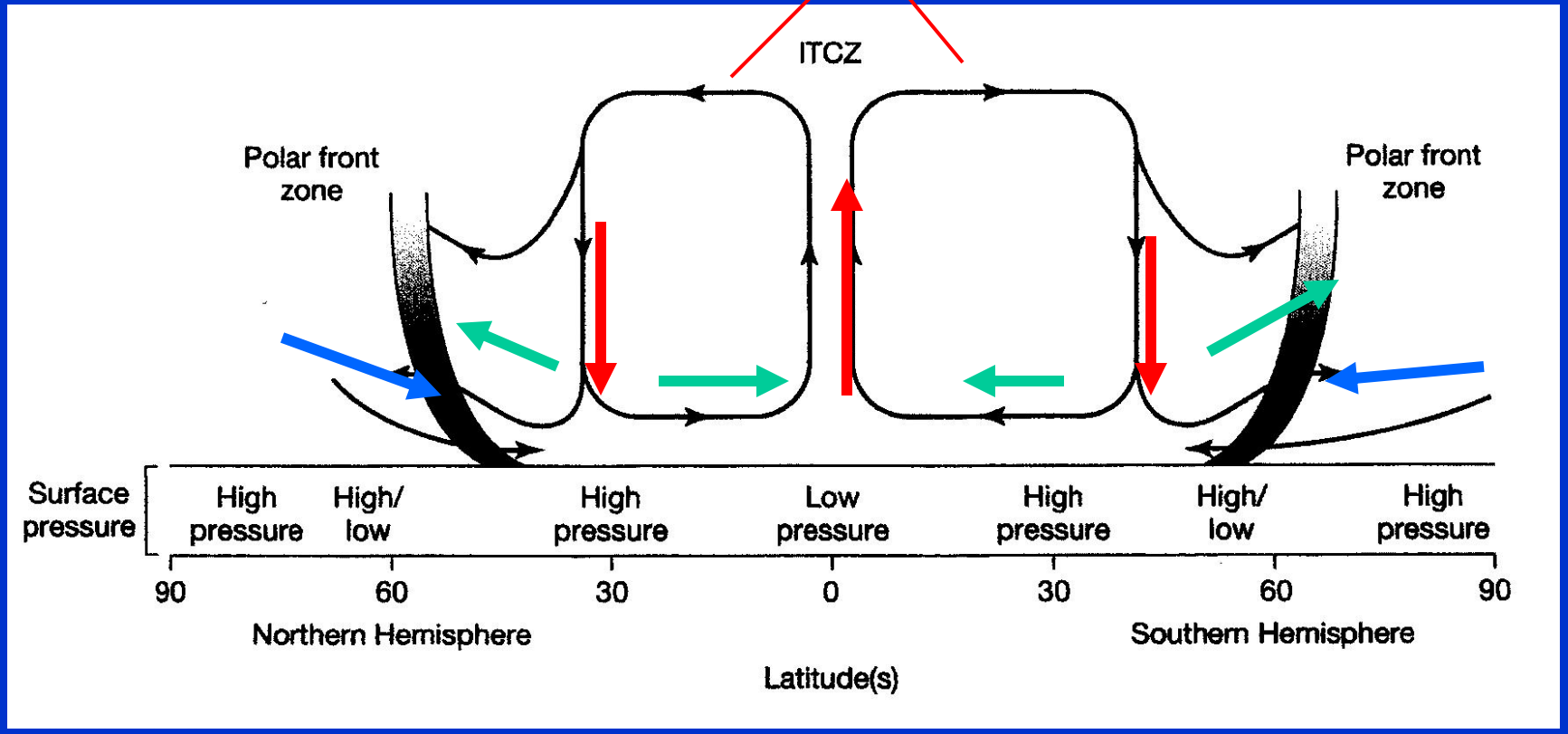


COLD POLAR REGIONS

HOT TROPICS

COLD POLAR REGIONS

HADLEY CELLS



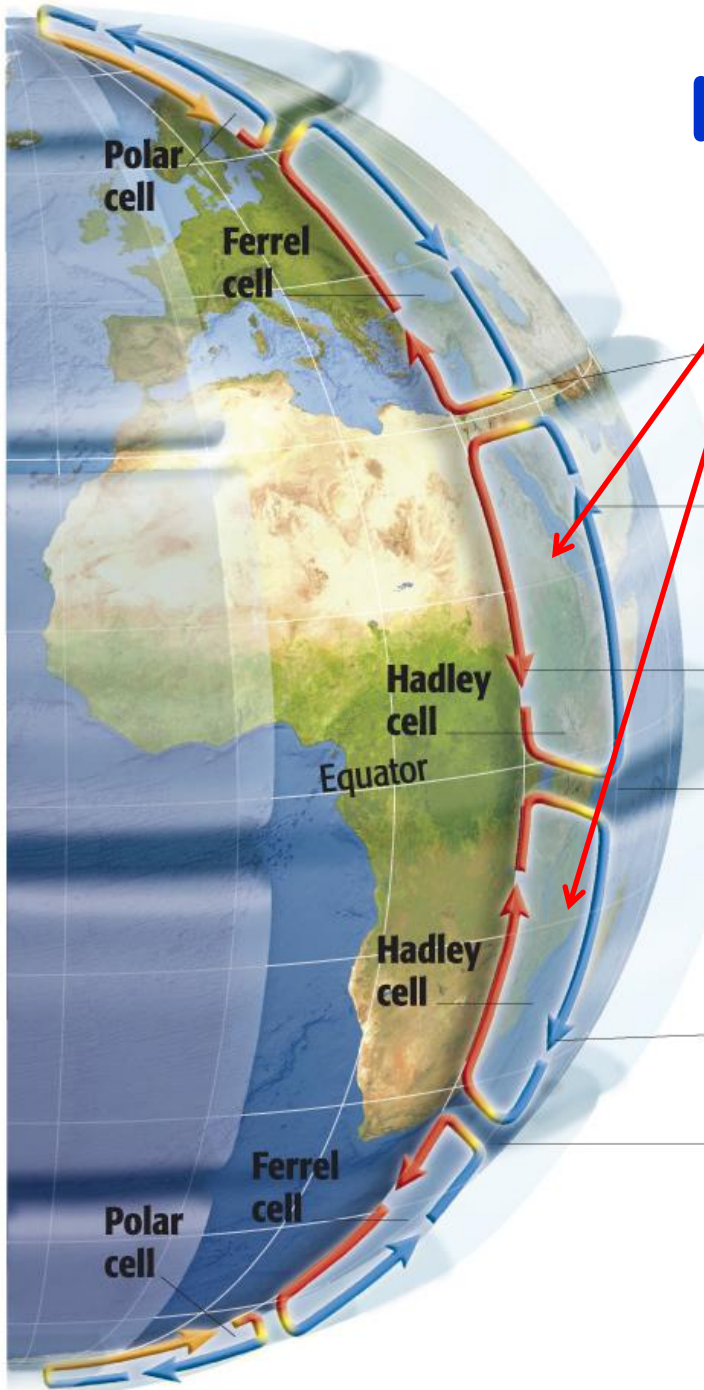
COLD POLAR REGIONS

HOT TROPICS

COLD POLAR REGIONS

From SGC-I Chapter 4

Hadley Cells



Air sinks over the subtropical desert zone

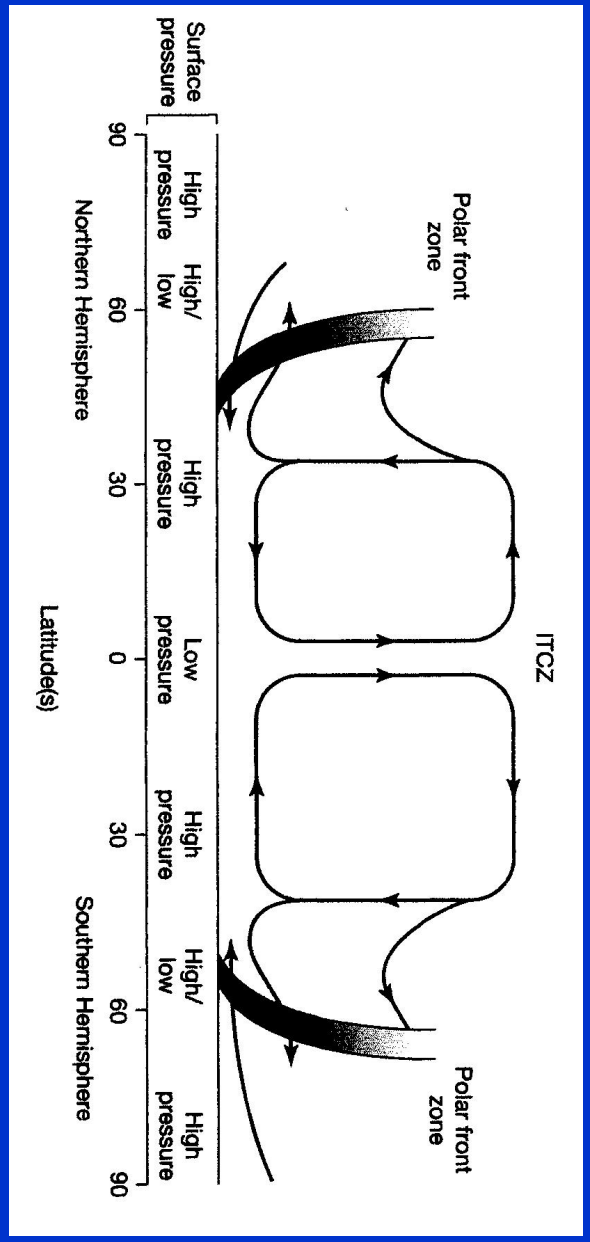
Tropical air flows north in this Hadley cell

Dry desert air flows south

Warm, moist air rises at the intertropical convergence zone, near the Equator

Tropical air carries heat south

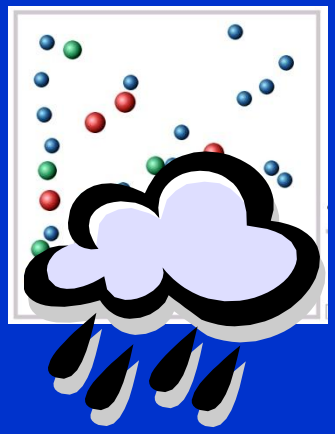
Air sinks over the subtropical desert zone

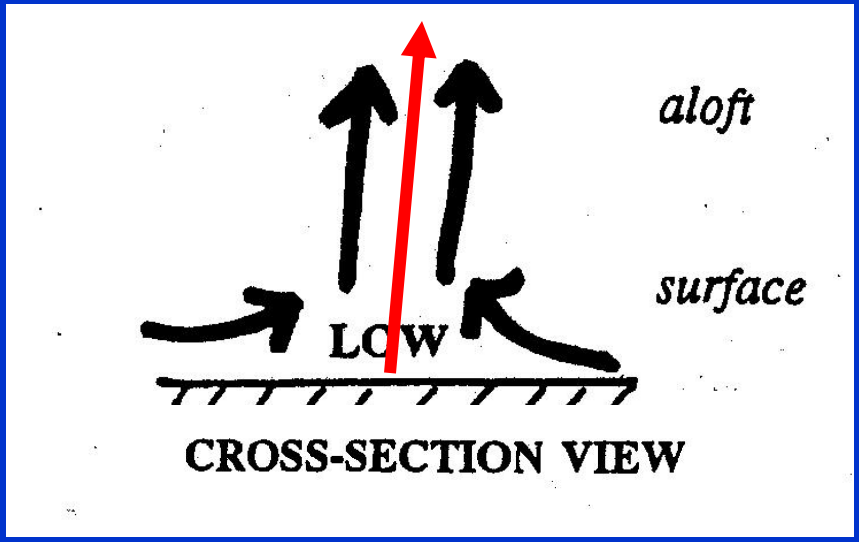


LOW PRESSURE AREAS:

Hot surface ➔ Rising air ➔ expansion and cooling of air, and condensation of water vapor ➔ clouds and possibly precipitation . . .

HUMID REGIONS





DANCE YOUR PH.D!

"Precipitation Initiation in Warm Clouds"

This dances shows how a rain drop can form when one slightly larger rain drop is present among a large population of smaller drops. The large drop only forms after mixing occurs.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4O7G7F_e7I0

Condensation nucleus

H2O droplet

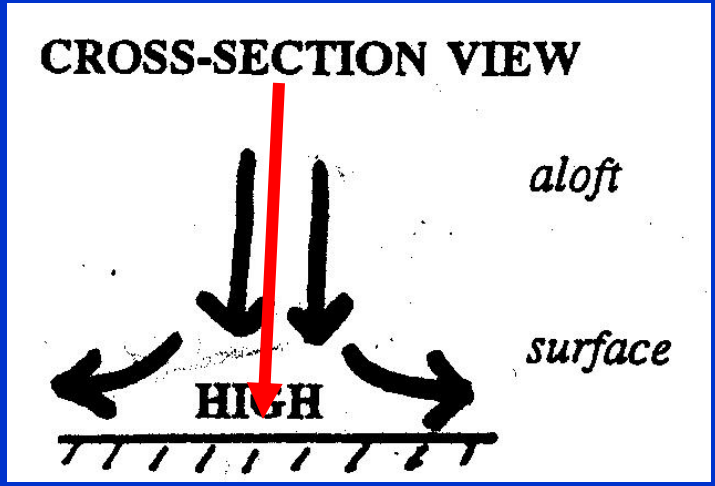
Here the **women** represent **water molecules** while the **men** represent **cloud condensation nuclei**.

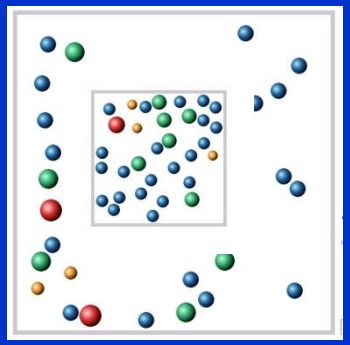
Additional women dance in a manner suggestive of mixing processes in order to **create the slightly larger drop**, called a collision coalescence initiator.

Through "coalescence" a single nucleus attracts all the other water droplets -- when large enough RAIN FALLS!

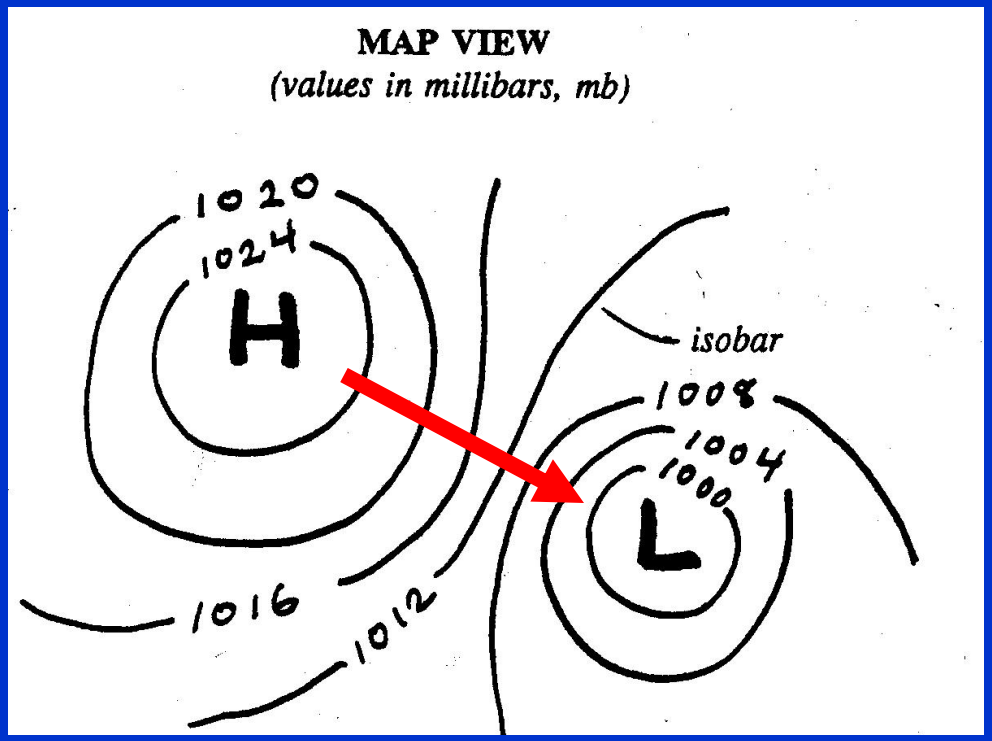
HIGH PRESSURE AREAS:

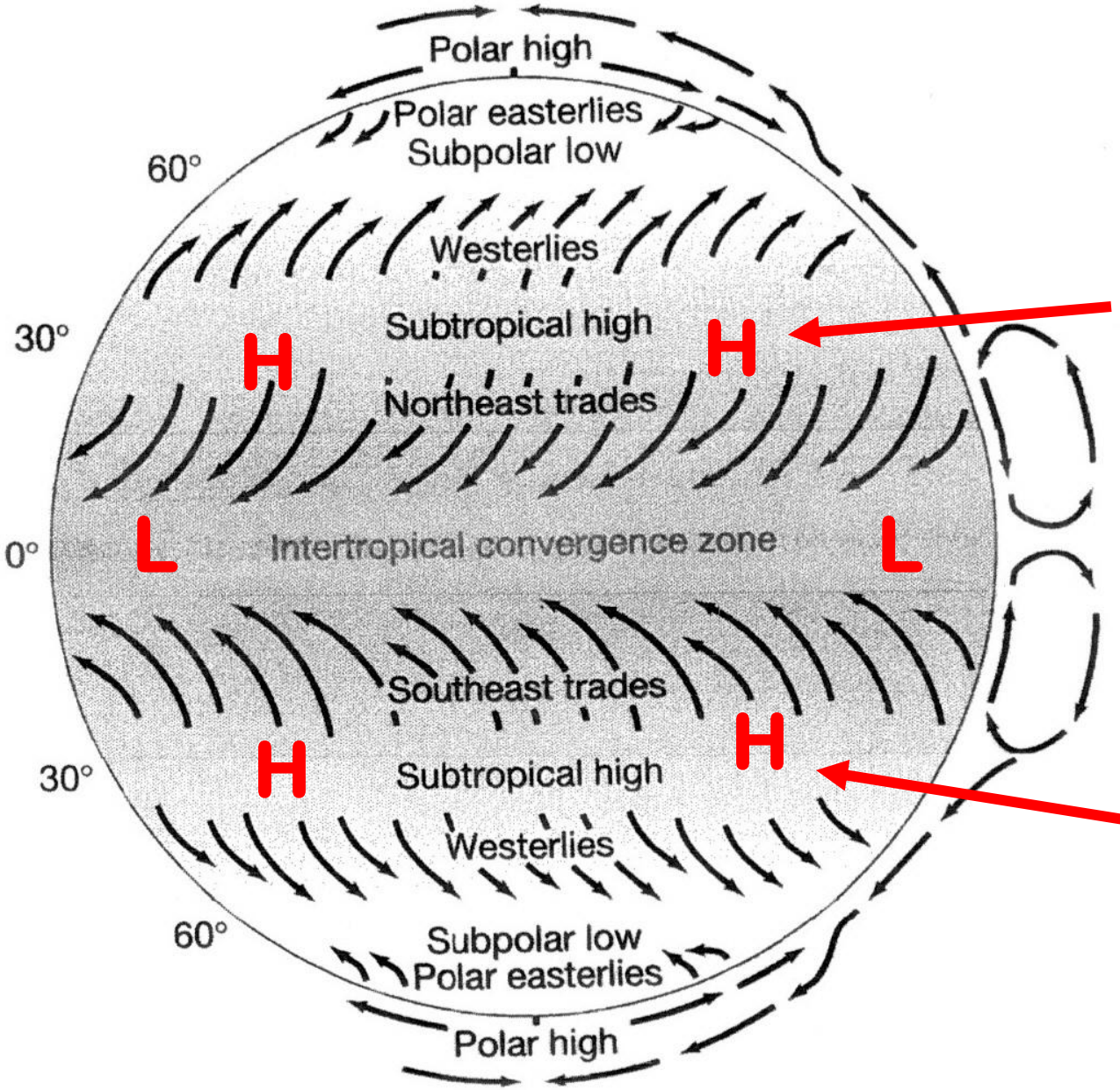
Forced sinking (e.g. in HADLEY CELL) leads to **contraction and warming of air**, and increased water vapor holding capacity → clear skies, dry air and **ARID REGIONS**.





In general: Winds tend to flow from HIGH ➔ LOW Pressure areas

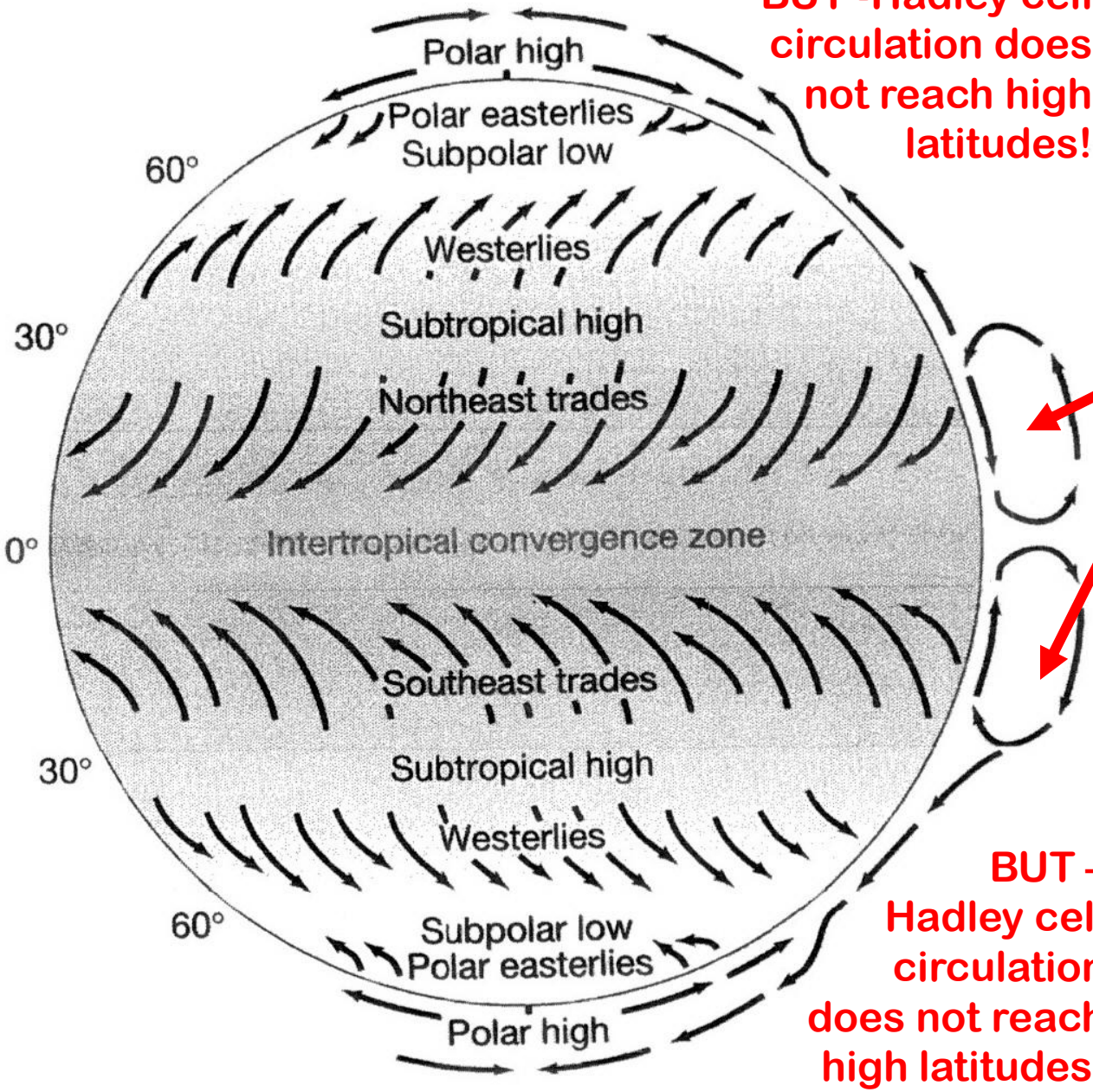




Sub-tropical HIGH PRESSURE

Intertropical Convergence ITCZ

Sub-tropical HIGH PRESSURE



BUT -Hadley cell circulation does not reach high latitudes!

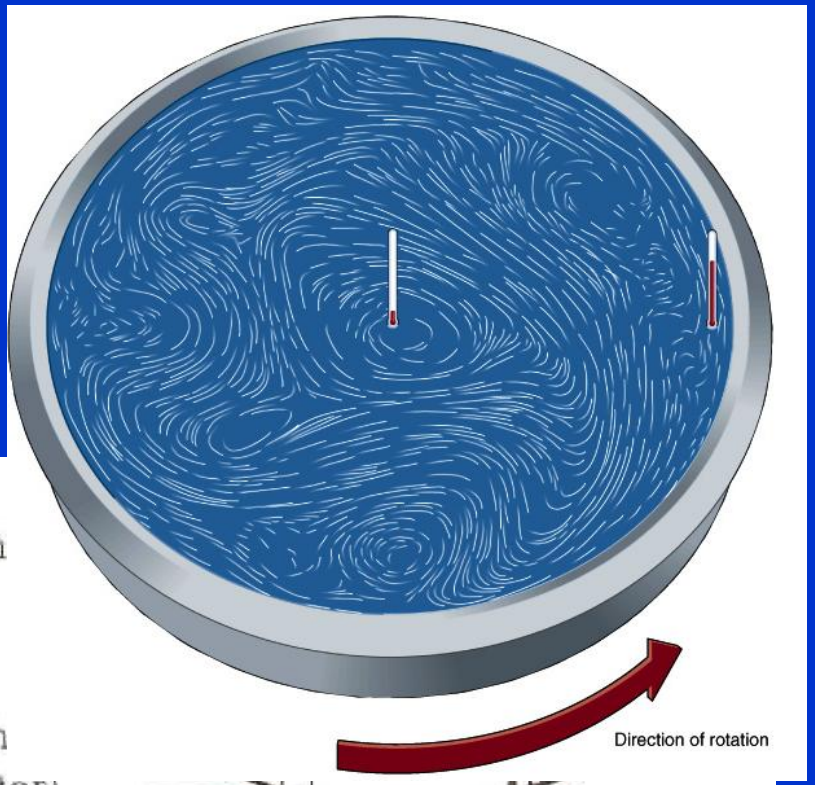
BUT – Hadley cell circulation does not reach high latitudes!

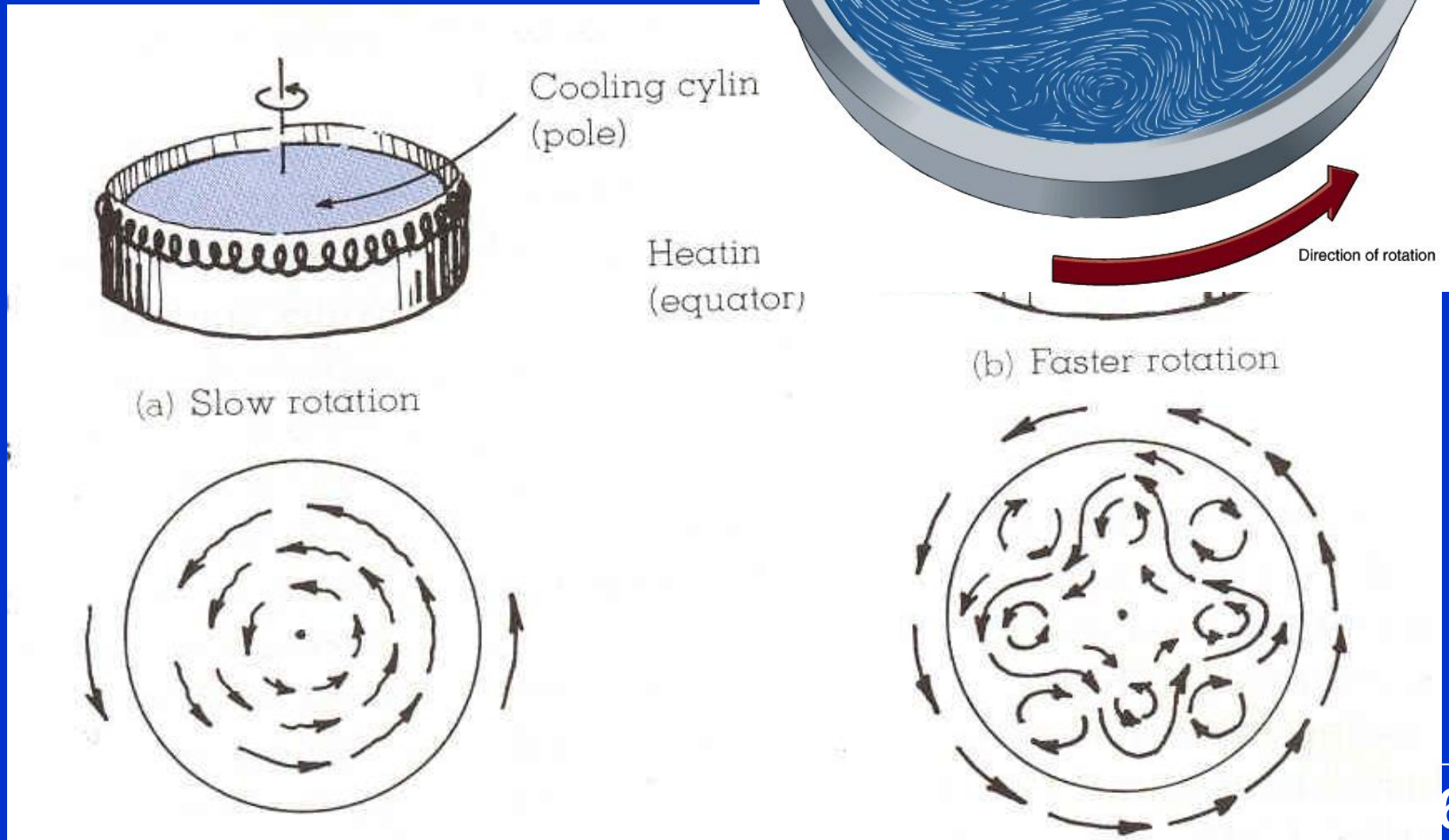
H

HADLEY CELLS = key drivers!

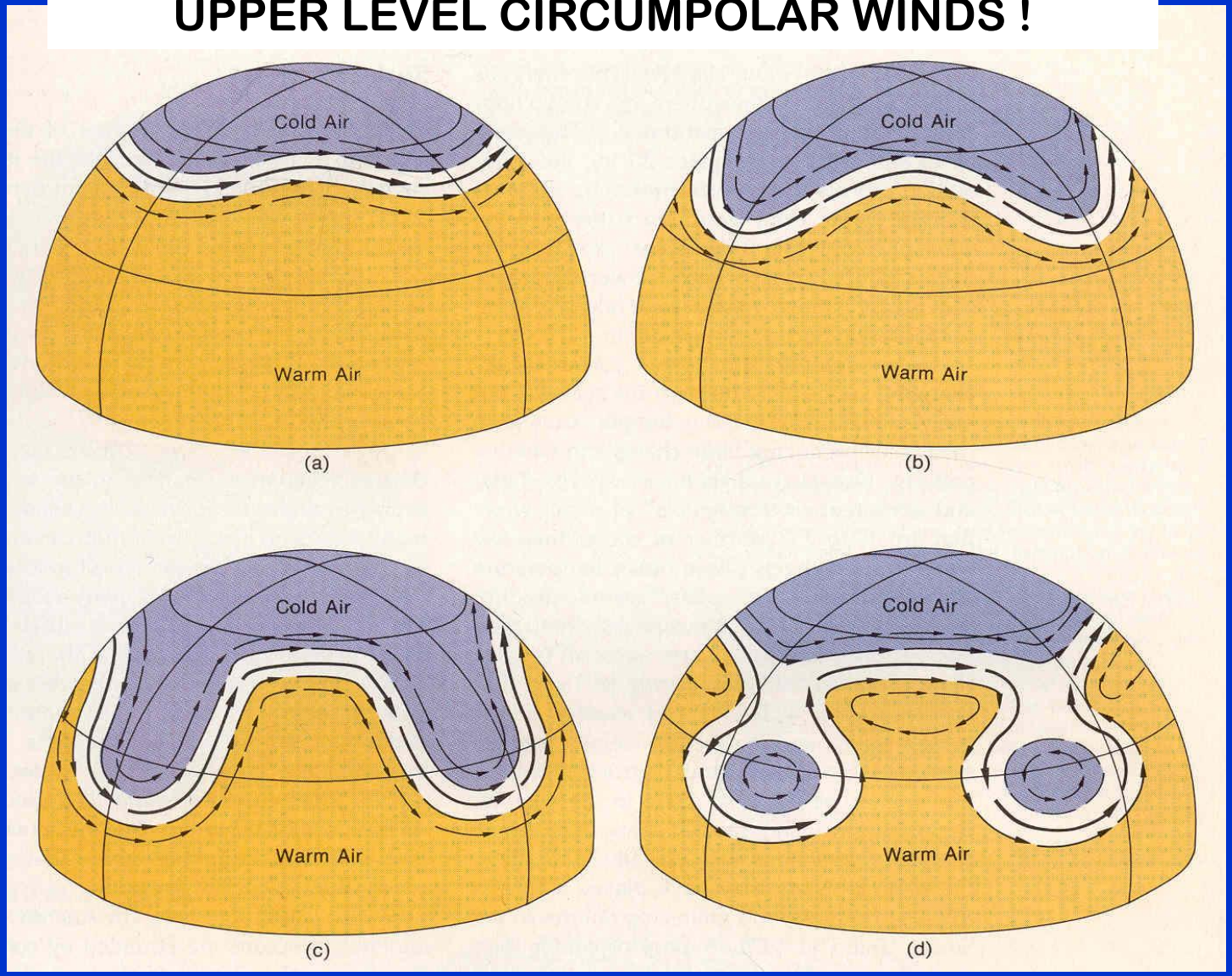
Convection cell transfer of thermal energy from low latitude area of energy SURPLUS to higher latitude area of energy DEFICIT

Why Hadley convective cell transport breaks down at higher latitudes:





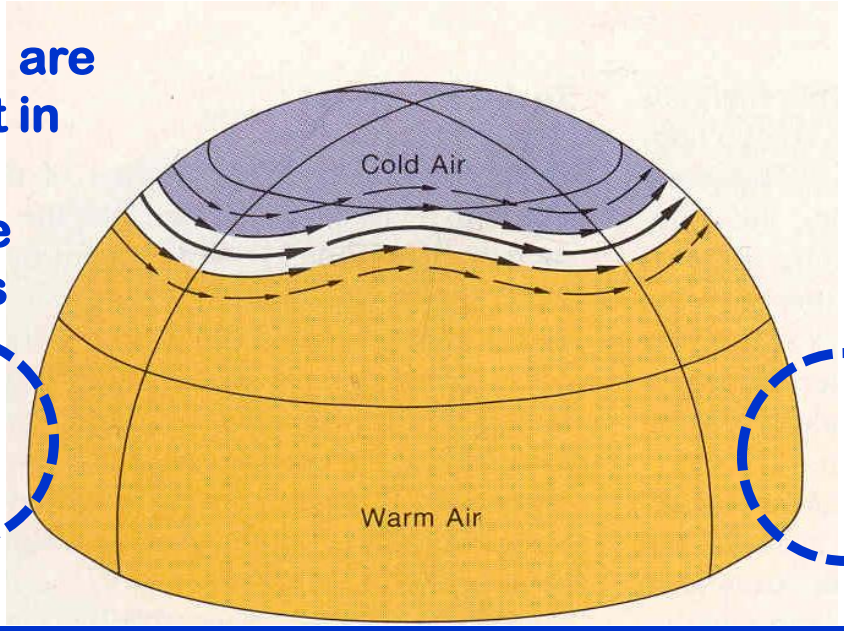
UPPER LEVEL CIRCUMPOLAR WINDS !



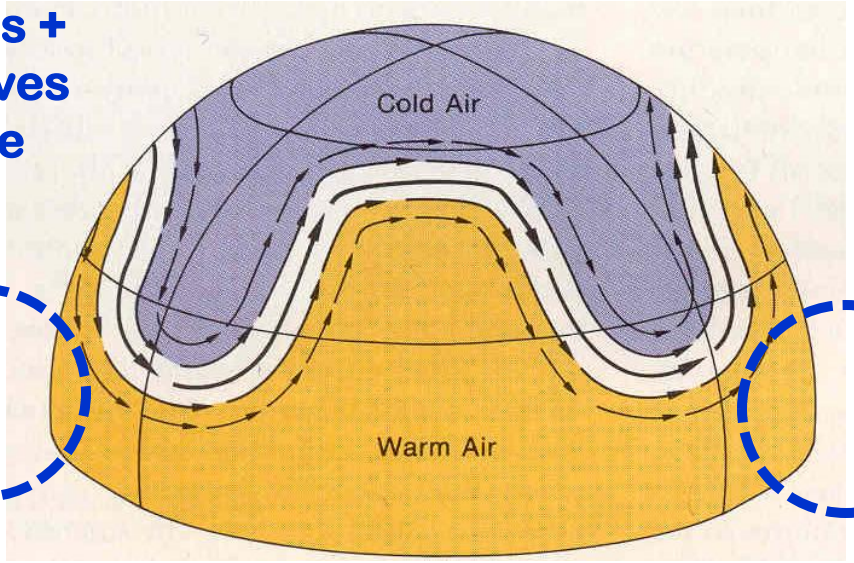
H

Wave transport of thermal energy instead of Hadley cell transport!

Hadley Cells are only efficient in transporting energy to the mid-latitudes

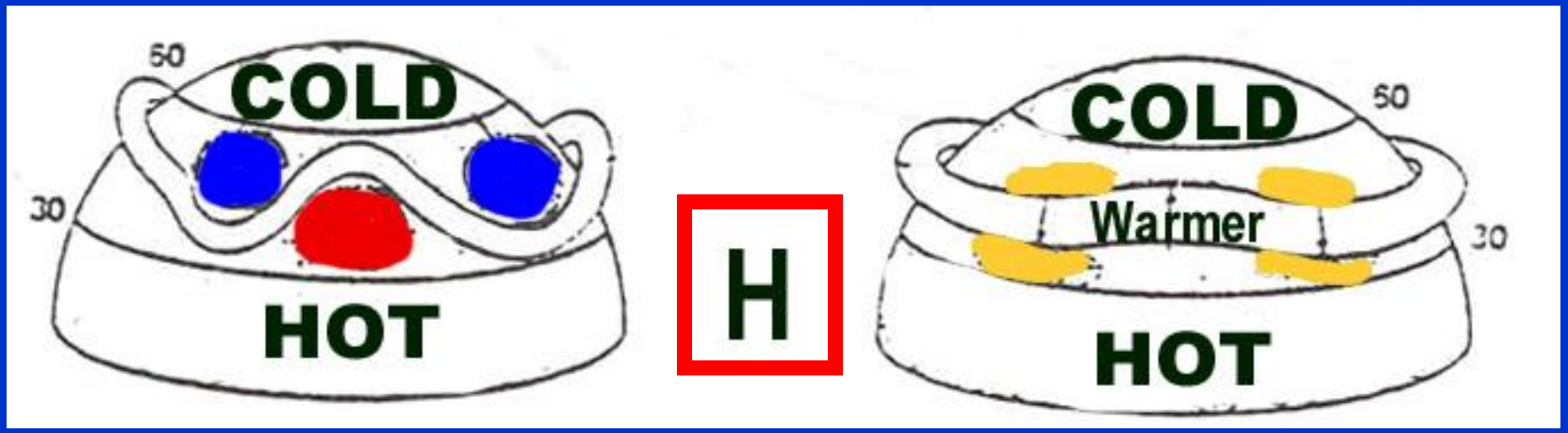


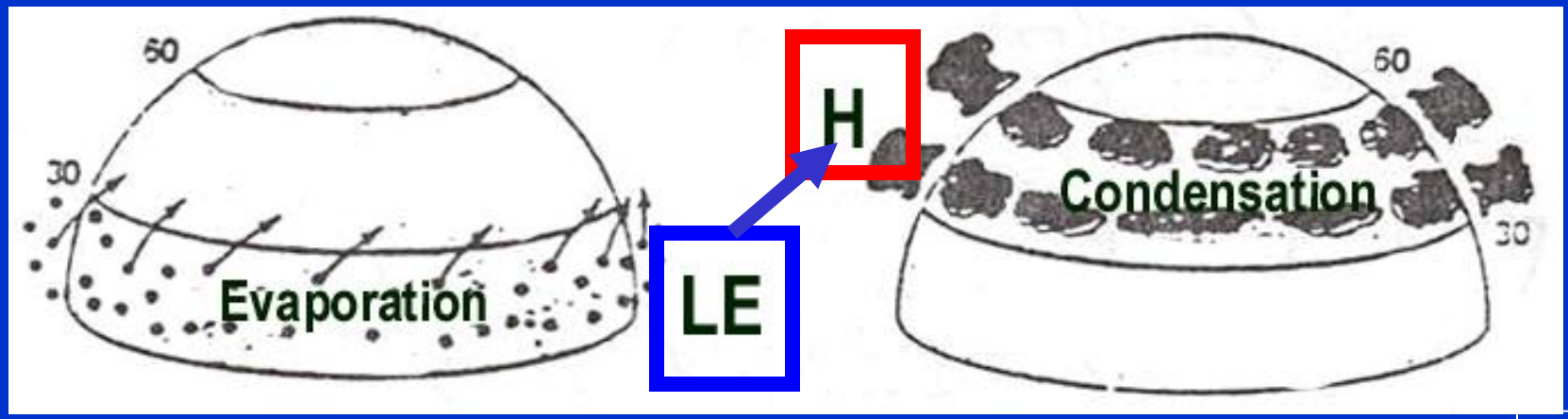
Hadley Cells + Rossby Waves together are needed!

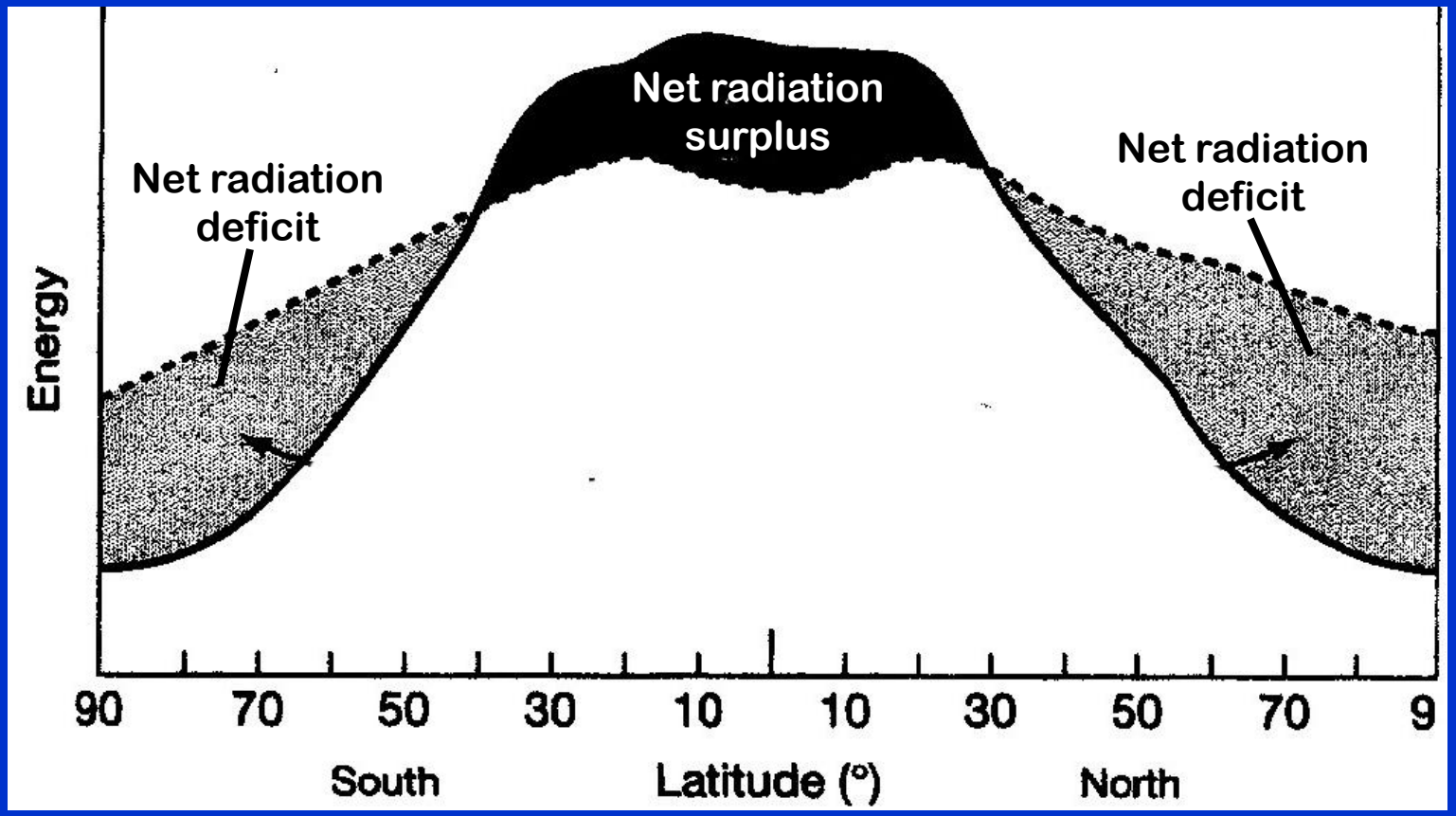


Energy is transported from areas of surplus to deficit in form of: H (sensible heat) & LE (Latent Energy)

H + LE



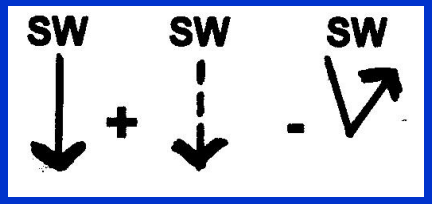


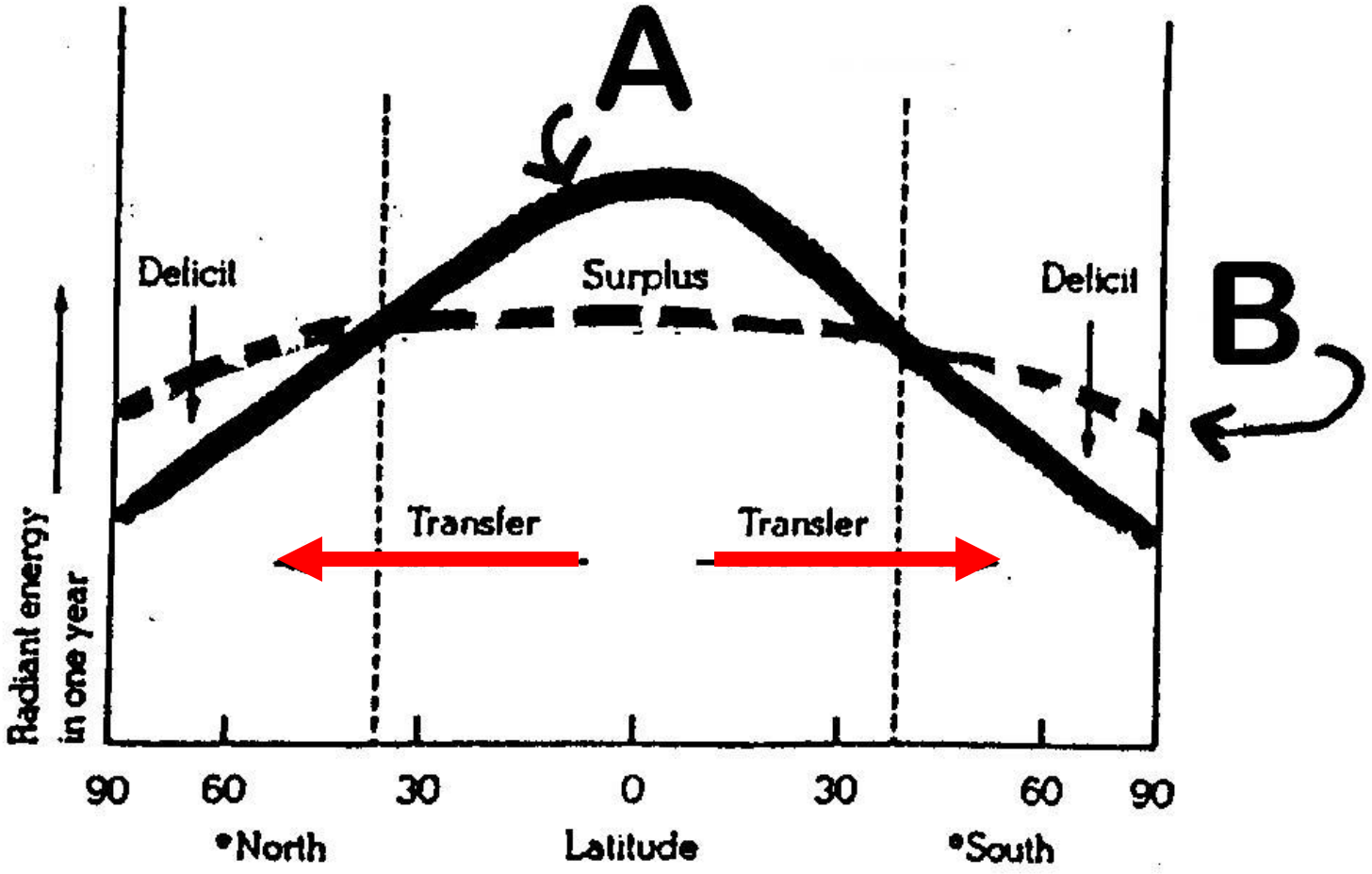


Absorbed solar energy

Emitted infrared energy

(at top of atmosphere)



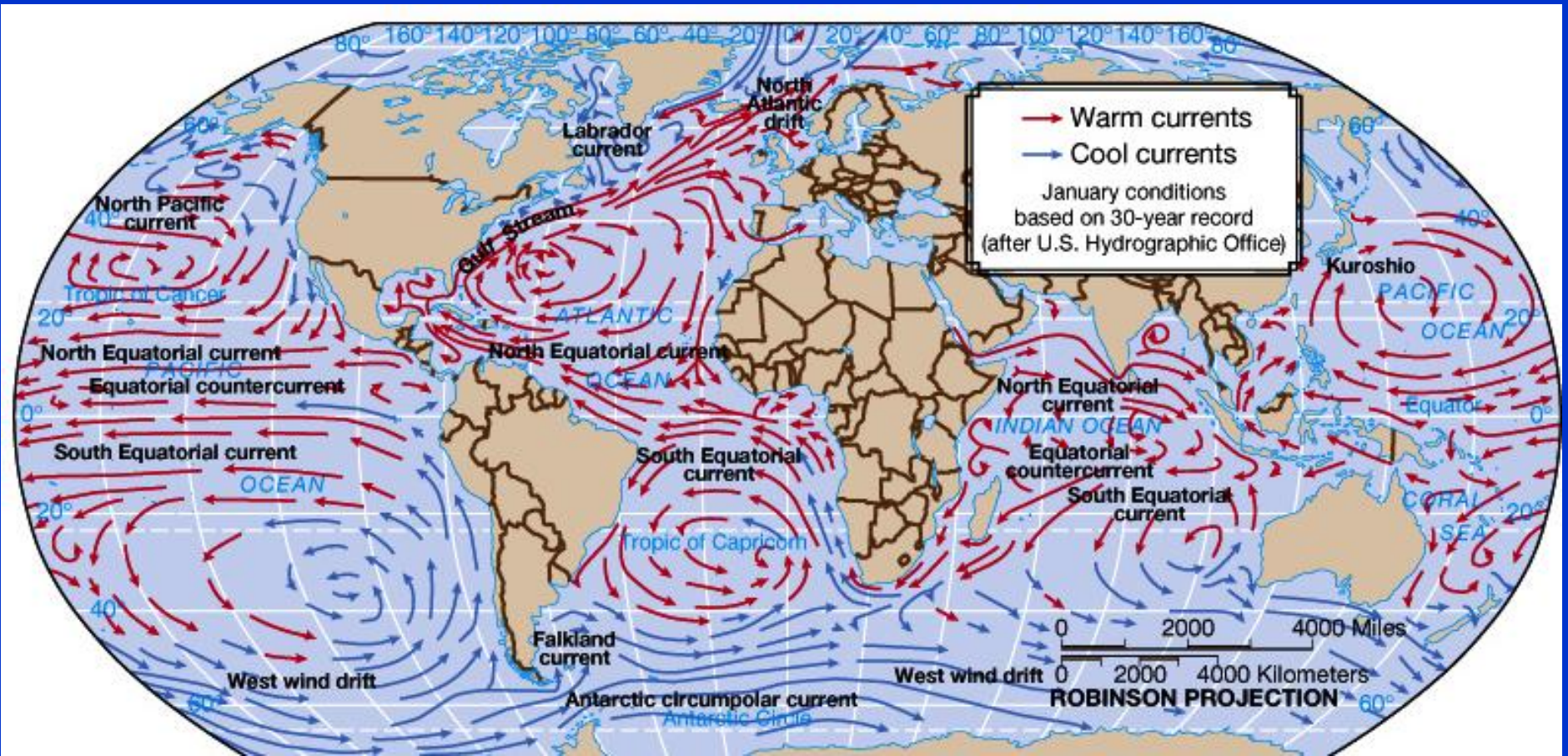


THERMAL ENERGY TRANSPORTED FROM LOW TO HIGH LATITUDES TO BALANCE OUT DEFICIT!

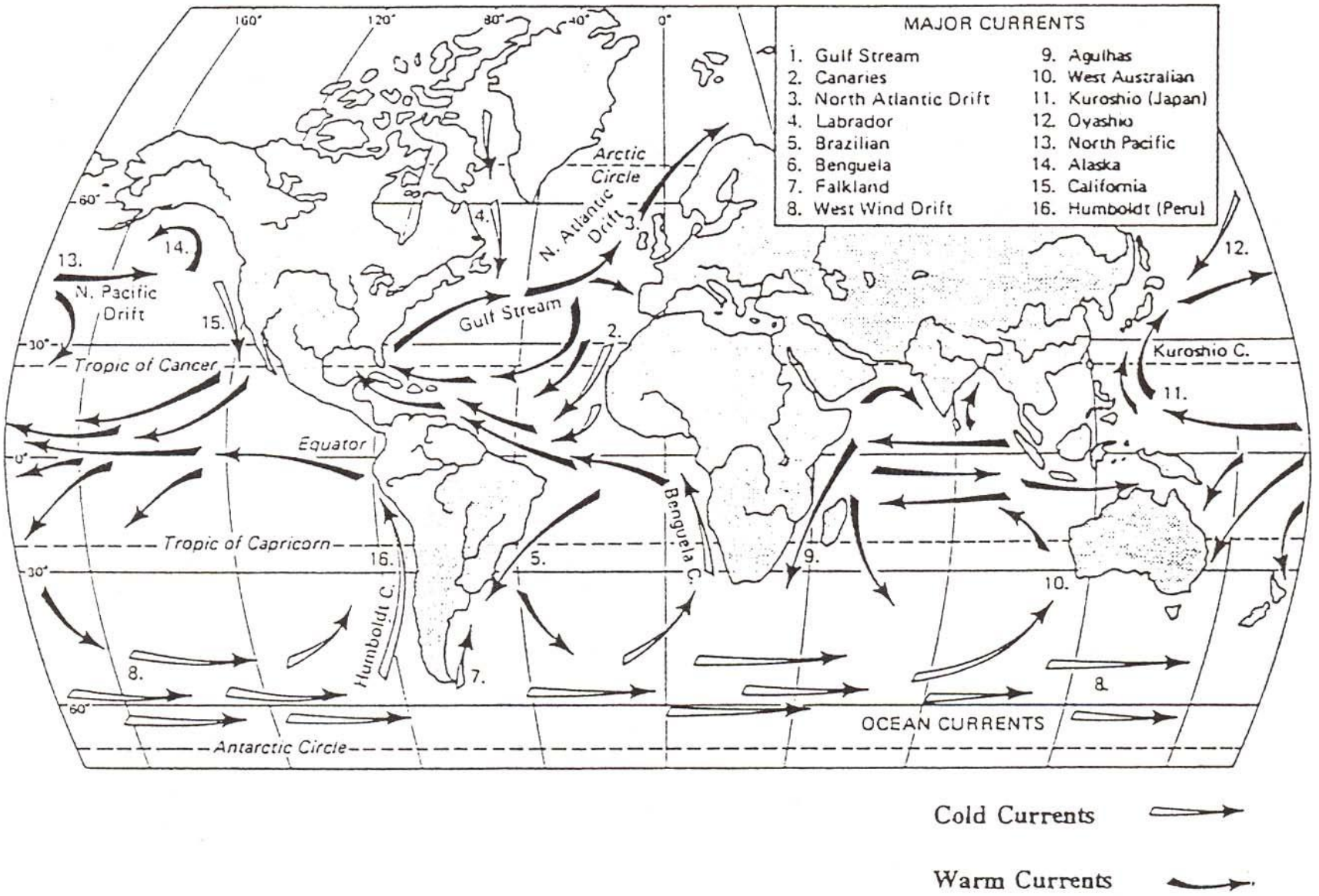
H + LE + G

BUT WHAT ABOUT G ?

G is a STORAGE component, not a transfer component BUT energy stored in the OCEAN, can later be transported via ocean currents as **H** !

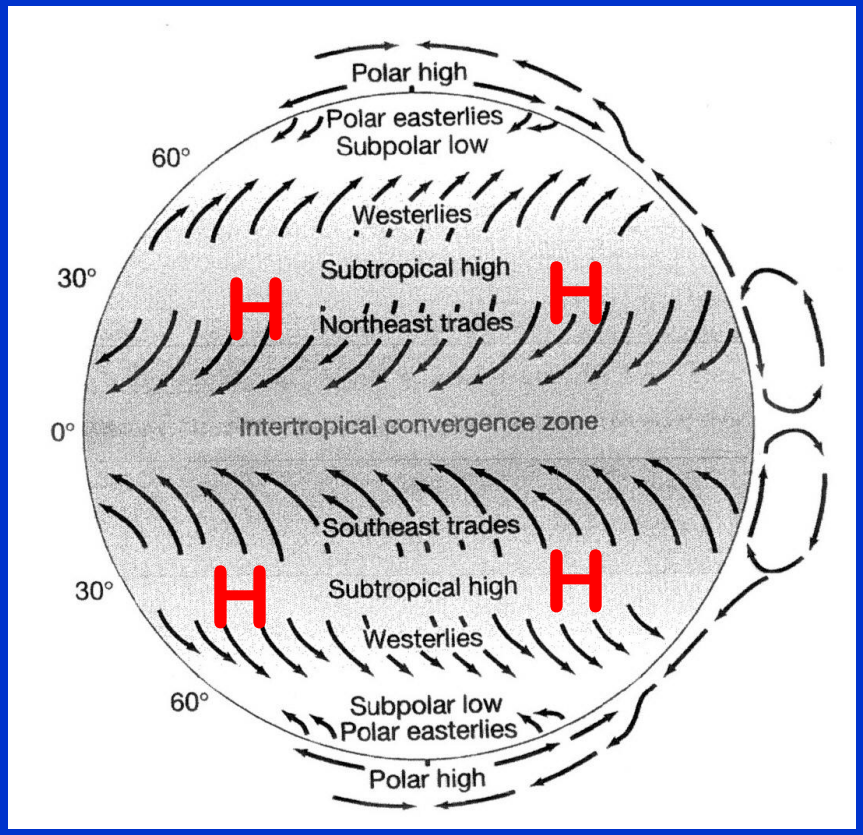


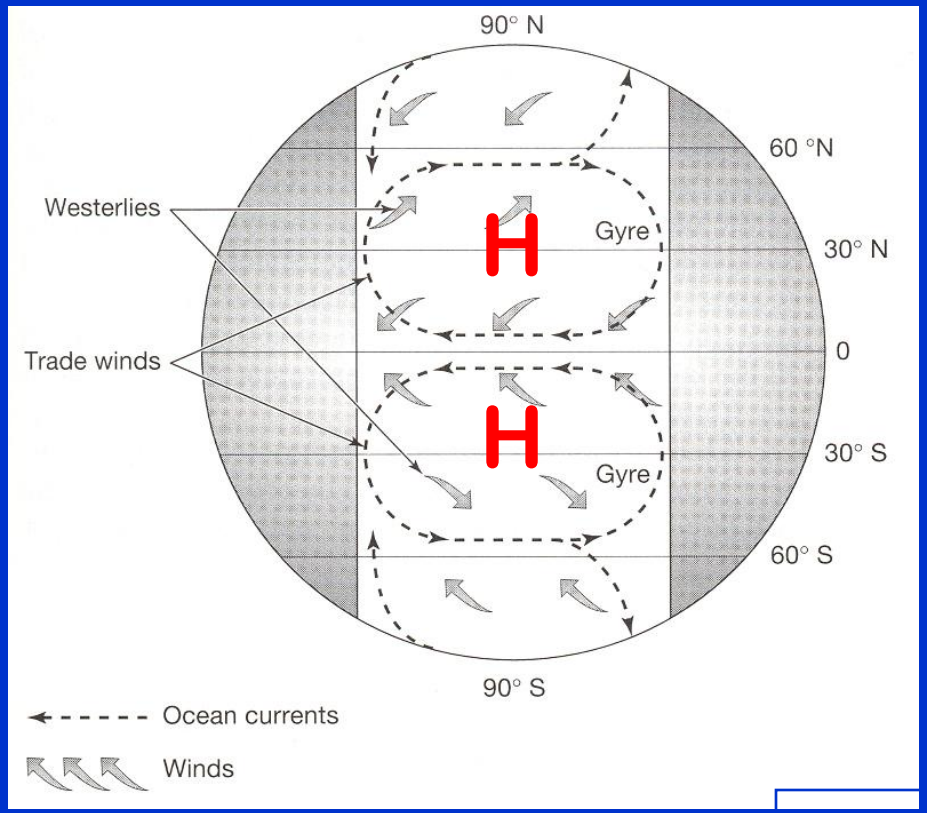
WARM & COLD SURFACE OCEAN CURRENTS:



➔ Large OCEAN GYRES -- driven by Trade Winds & Westerlies in Oceanic Subtropical HIGH PRESSURE CELLS (STH)

Leads to SURFACE ocean currents

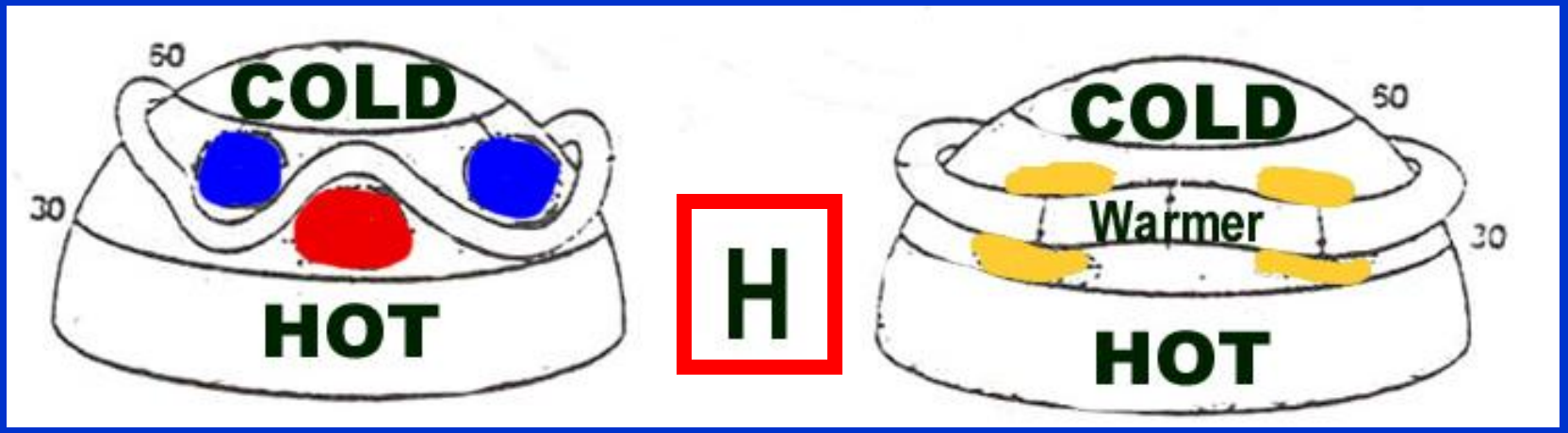




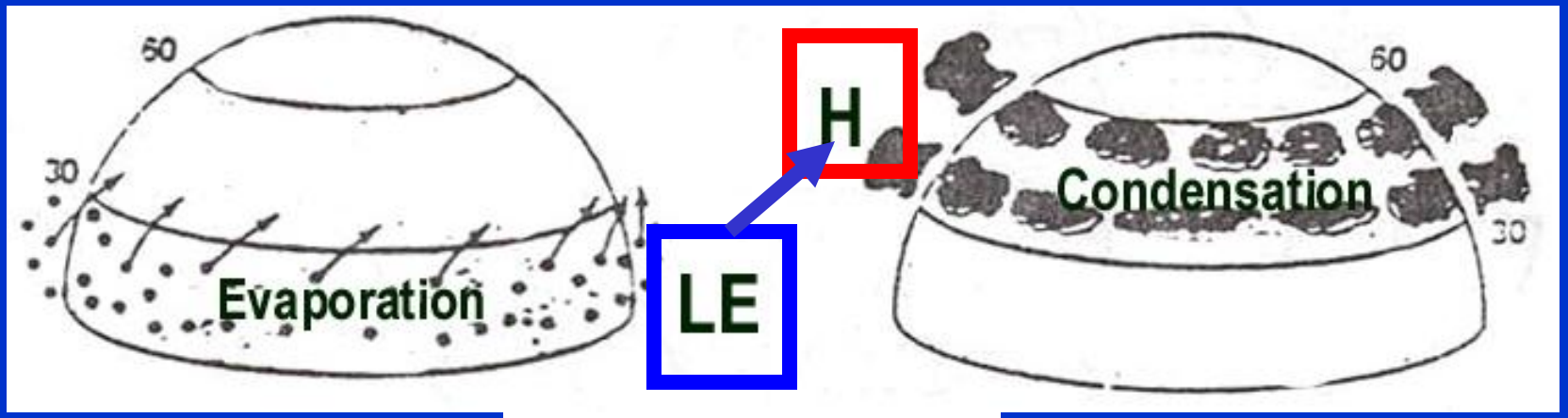
p 66

Energy is transported from areas of surplus to deficit via:

H (sensible heat)

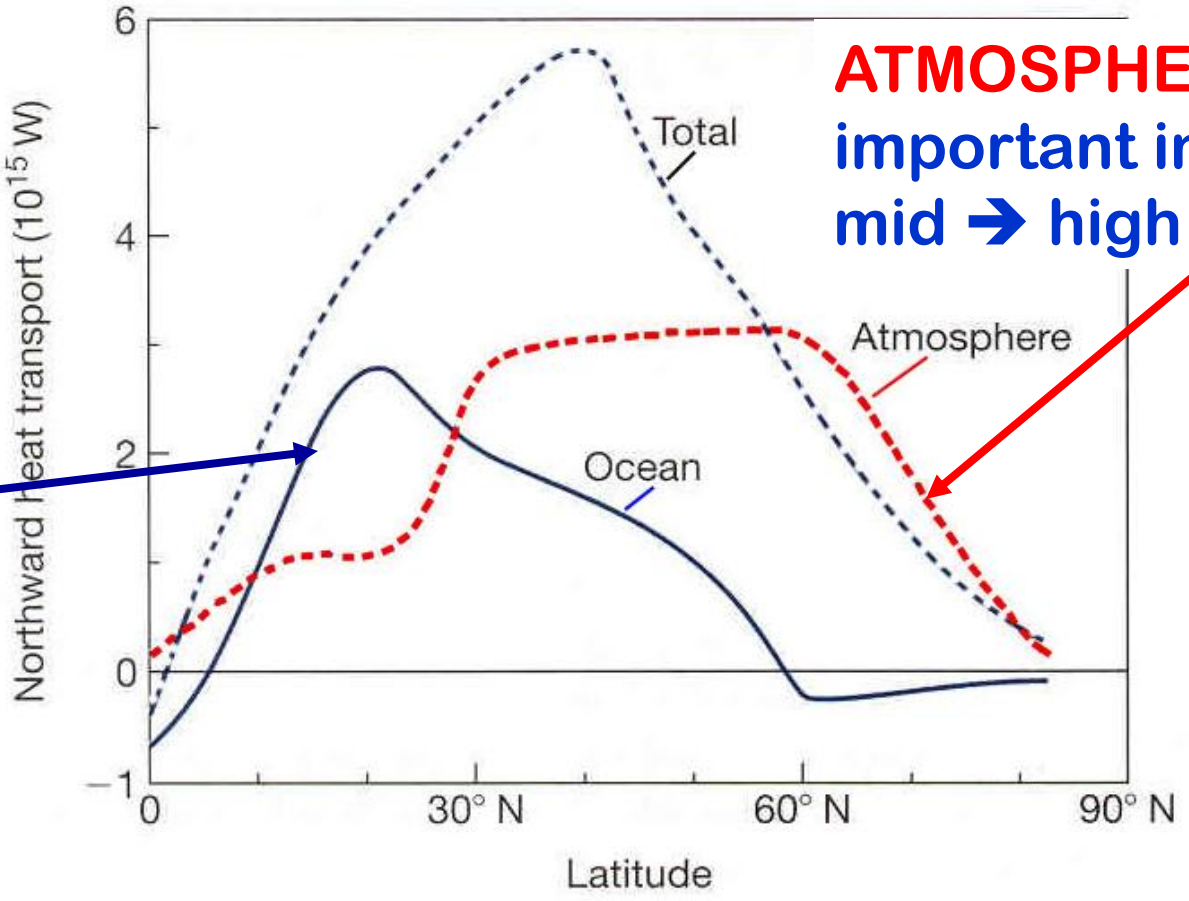


& LE (Latent Energy)



H + LE

Both ATMOSPHERE & OCEAN play important roles in BALANCING OUT ENERGY SURPLUS & DEFICIT AREAS:



ATMOSPHERE more important in mid ➔ high latitudes

OCEAN transports MOST of the energy in LOW ➔ subtropical latitudes

Poleward transport of energy in N.H.

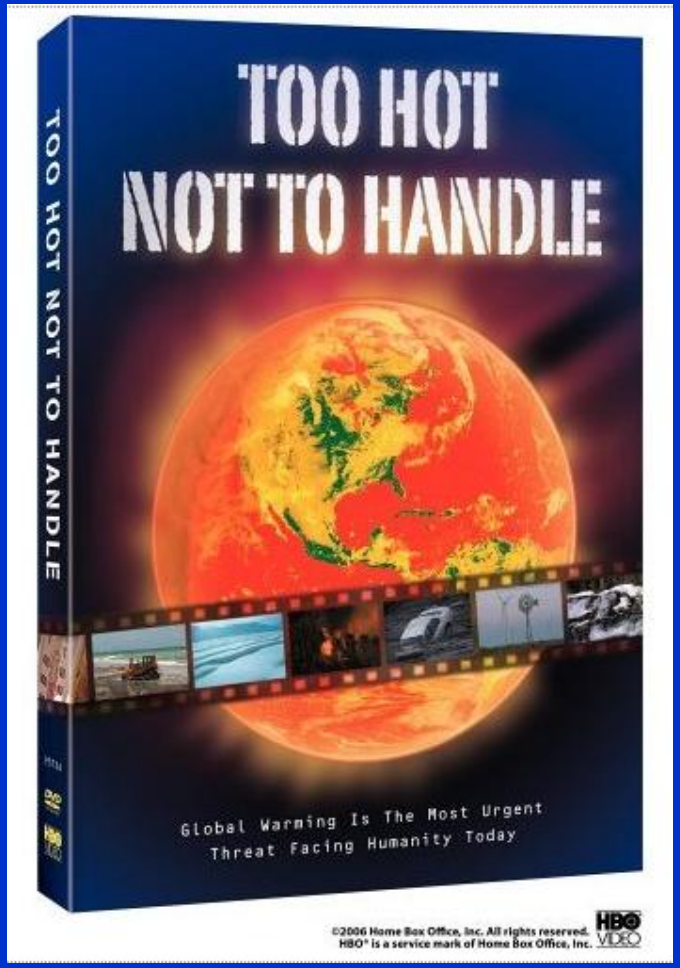
MOVIE TIME!!

GROUP BONUS POINT CHALLENGE :

Watch the video carefully – at some point a feedback loop process is described:

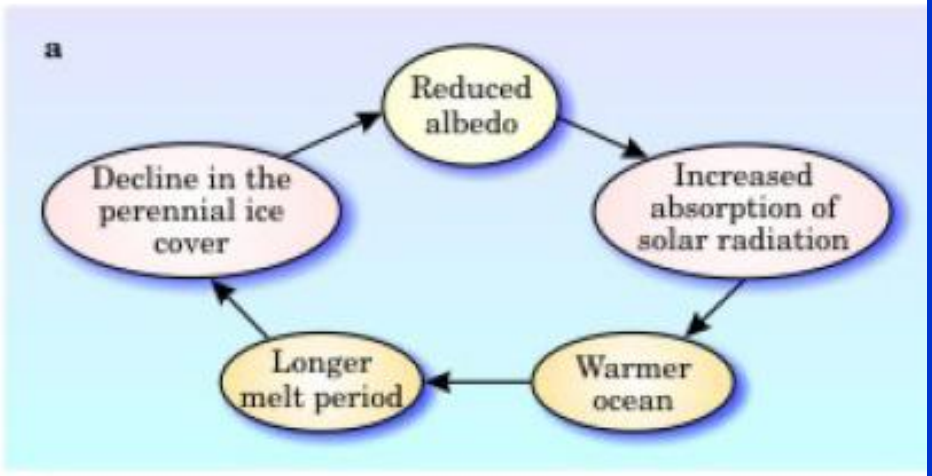
On an index card, state which feedback loop is described and sketch the diagram for it.

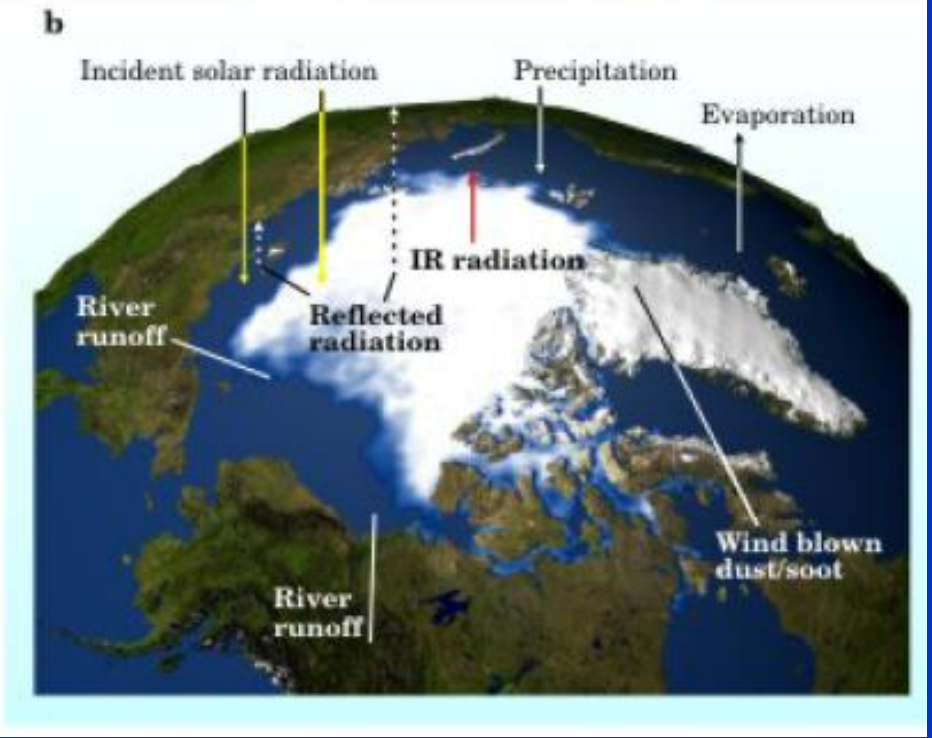
(HINT: it is one of the loops shown on p 56 in Class Notes)



NOTE: This video is posted in D2L. The part we watched was "Melting Alaska" – which starts at 19:57 min

REMEMBER FEEDBACK LOOPS:
Is this one positive or negative?





THEN – on the back of the index card, as a group complete the feedback loop on the bottom of p 58 page by linking the components with the proper coupling arrow symbols as used in the SGC text

p 58

Here are the components from p 58:

albedo

Extent of ice cover

SW radiation absorbed

Amount of melting

Ocean temperature

The first coupling has been done to get you started!

albedo

Extent of ice cover

SW radiation absorbed

+

Amount of melting

Ocean temperature

We'll finish this and the G-3 Assignment in class on Thursday.