Why do we have leap years?

July 31, 2020
The year 2020 is a leap year

Reasons for a leap year

- Earth's orbit around the sun takes approximately 365.25 days. It's that .25 that creates the need for a leap year every four years.
- During leap years, a *leap day* is added to the calendar to slow down and synchronize the calendar year with the seasons.
- Because astronomical events and seasons do not repeat in a whole number of days, calendars that have the same number of days in each year drift over time with respect to the event that the year is supposed to track.
- By inserting (called intercalating in technical terminology) an additional day or month into the year, the drift can be corrected
- It helps to synchronize our human-created calendars with Earth's orbit around the sun and the actual passing of the seasons

What is a leap year?

- A leap year (also known as an intercalary year or bissextile year) is a calendar year that contains an additional day added to keep the calendar year synchronized with the astronomical year or seasonal year.
- There are 366 days in a leap year, as opposed to 365 in a non-leap year.
- A leap year normally take place every four years
- In 45 B.C. a decree by Julius Caesar began the practice of adding an extra day every four years, with the creation of the Julian calendar — making up for those quarter days.