

Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Main Idea & Supporting Details

Read the short story and answer each question.



Why Leaves Change Color

In the fall, many trees put on a colorful show. Leaves turn red, yellow, and orange before they fall to the ground. But why does this happen?

Leaves are green in spring and summer because of a chemical called chlorophyll. This chemical helps the tree turn sunlight into food. During the warmer months, trees make a lot of chlorophyll, so the leaves stay green.

As the days get shorter and the air gets cooler, the tree stops making chlorophyll. When that happens, the green fades away. That's when other colors like red and yellow start to show. These colors were in the leaf all along, but the green covered them up.

After the colors appear, the leaf dries out and falls from the tree. The tree is getting ready for winter. By dropping its leaves, it saves water and energy.



Name: _____

Why Leaves Change Color

1. What is the main idea of the passage?

- A. Leaves change color in the fall because trees stop making chlorophyll.
- B. Trees grow faster in the summer than in the winter.
- C. Leaves are more colorful in spring.
- D. Red leaves are healthier than green ones.

2. What happens after the chlorophyll fades?

- A. The other colors in the leaves start to show.
- B. The leaves become greener.
- C. The tree grows more leaves.
- D. The leaves start to grow again.

3. Fill in the blank:

Leaves turn color in the fall because trees stop making _____.

4. What are two key details from the text that explain how leaves change color?

5. How do those details help support the main idea?



Parent and Teacher Guide

Guide Reading Level: M

Lexile Level: 425L-575L

Grade Level: 3rd Grade, Beginning of the Year

Genre: Informational / Life Science

Introducing the Text

"Today we'll read a nonfiction passage that explains why leaves change color in the fall. As we read, we'll figure out the main idea and look for details that explain how and why this change happens."

Vocabulary: chlorophyll, chemical, sunlight, energy, fades

Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. What do you notice about trees in the fall?
 2. Why do you think leaves change color in different seasons?
 3. What do you already know about how plants grow?
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During Reading Discussion Questions

1. What is the job of chlorophyll in a leaf?
 2. What changes in the air cause the color change?
 3. How do we know the color was already in the leaf?
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After Reading Discussion Questions

1. What is the main idea of this text?
 2. What key details helped you figure it out?
 3. How does this information help you understand trees better?
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Activity Idea

Have students create a foldable with four flaps labeled Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter. Under each flap, they will draw the leaf's appearance in that season and write one sentence explaining what is happening with the tree during that time.

