

Why Leaves Change Colour

Name: _____

Read the passage. Answer the questions in complete sentences.

A green leaf is a small factory. All summer it uses sunlight, water and air to make sugar for the tree. The green comes from chlorophyll, the chemical that does this work.

Leaves are not only green. Yellow and orange colours are inside them the whole time, hidden under the stronger green.

As autumn comes, the days get shorter and the light gets weaker. The tree stops making chlorophyll because the leaf can no longer earn its keep. The green fades, and the yellows and oranges that were always there finally show.

Red is different. Some trees make new red colouring in autumn, which may help protect the leaf while the tree pulls the last of the sugar back into its branches. Then the leaf falls, and the tree waits out the winter.

Non-fiction · 133 words

1. What does chlorophyll do for a tree?

2. Why do yellow and orange appear in autumn?

3. How is red different from yellow and orange?

4. What makes the tree stop producing chlorophyll?

Why Leaves Change Colour — Answer Key

1. It makes sugar for the tree out of sunlight, water and air, and it makes leaves green. (*Recall*)
2. They were in the leaf all along, hidden by the green. When the green fades they show. (*Main idea*)
3. Red is made new in autumn, while yellow and orange were already there. (*Compare*)
4. The days get shorter and the light gets weaker, so the leaf can no longer do its work. (*Cause and effect*)