



Colorful Leaves: Part 1

Lesson Summary

Expected time: 15 minutes

Leaves and trees can provide homes and food for many creatures in nature. In this activity, students will go on a nature walk and explore their surroundings, while learning about leaves.

Objective

Children will explore nature and learn about leaves.

Vocabulary

fall

a season of the year between summer and winter; fall is also called autumn

tree

a plant with a main trunk and many branches; some trees grow very tall

leaf

a flat growth from the stem or branch of a tree or plant; a leaf is usually green

leaves

plural of leaf; more than one leaf

chlorophyll

the green matter in the leaves and stems of plants that absorbs sunlight to produce food; chlorophyll is necessary for food production

Sun

The Sun is the star that is nearest to the Earth; the Earth travels around the Sun. The Earth receives heat and light from the Sun.

This lesson will help students to:

1. Identify what a leaf is.
2. Identify where leaves come from.
3. Identify that leaves fall off trees during autumn.

Teacher Prep

1. Gather 3-4 different leaves to show students.
2. Gather notepad/paper and pen for notes.

Media Resource

Dinosaur Train: A New Leaf, Part 1

Materials

- At least 5 different leaves (an assortment)
- Large notepad or paper
- Pens, pencils, and markers



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Lesson Activity

Lesson Tips

- Green leaves from maple trees work best for this lesson, but encourage your students to collect leaves from different trees.

Background Information

- The leaves of certain types of trees change color and fall off during the fall.
- There are many different colors in plant leaves.
- When you look at a leaf, you see the result of all the colors mixing together.
- In the spring and summer, trees use chlorophyll to make food from sunlight.
- Chlorophyll gives leaves their green color.
- As summer progresses into fall, there is less sunlight, so the growing process slows down and the trees stop making chlorophyll.
- Without chlorophyll, leaves lose their green color, and the other colors that are present in the leaves (red, orange, and yellow) become visible.

Introduction

1. Tell your students that today they are going to learn about leaves.
2. Review the definition of **"leaves/leaf"** (a flat growth from the stem or branch of a tree or plant; a leaf is usually green).
3. Introduce the PBS KIDS program, DINOSAUR TRAIN. (DINOSAUR TRAIN is seen through the eyes of Buddy, a preschool-aged T-Rex. Buddy and his family go on adventures on the Dinosaur Train to explore different eras and learn fascinating new facts.)
4. Show the clip, *"A New Leaf, Part 1."* Ask:
 - Why do the leaves fall off the trees?
 - Were all the leaves the same?

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Delaware Museum
of Natural History



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Instructions

1. In a group, show your students the different leaves that you collected beforehand.
2. Explain to your students that they will be going outside to explore and find leaves, just like the ones you showed them.
3. Take a walk outside with your students and encourage them to safely explore their surroundings.
4. Ask your students to gather a variety of leaves.
5. Use guiding questions as you explore the different leaves with your students.
6. Write down notes of their wonderings for later exploration.

Guiding Student Inquiry

- Explain how the green leaves are similar to and different from the brown, orange, yellow, and red leaves.
- What do you think happens to the leaves on the trees in the fall?
- Why do you think the leaves fall off the trees?
- How do the leaves change?

Check For Understanding

- Was each child able to collect leaves outside?
- Could each child name the colors of the leaves?
- Could each child talk about possible reasons why leaves fall off trees?

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Extend the Learning

1. Research the different questions/wonderings of each student. Then, explore these topics together.
2. Different trees have different types of leaves (or needles). Place a variety of leaves and needles in the Science Center. Include magnifying glasses, blunt-tip scissors, and other tools that allow the students to examine the leaves.
3. Use the leaves the students collected during their nature walk for the second portion of this lesson, or send them home with the children.

Suggested Books

- *A Tree is a Plant* by Clyde Robert Bulla
- *Be a Friend to Trees* by Patricia Lauber
- *Leaves* by David Ezra Stein
- *The Leaves on the Trees* by Thom Wiley

Home-to-School Connection

- Send the *family letter* home.
- Activity: [Join the Nature Trackers Club](#)
- Activity: [Fall Leaf Suncatcher](#)
(Leaves can also be sent home with each child and they can be used for their craft.)

PBS KIDS for Parents Resources

- Article: [Encouraging Nature Play](#)
- Craft: [Find the Match: Fall Leaf Puzzles](#)
- Printable: [Investigating Leaves](#)
- Activity: [Fall Leaf Suncatcher](#)



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