

What Are Leaves For?

by Yoshiko Futukawa



- 1 "Make sure you take your banana leaf with you! It's going to rain today!"
- 2 What a strange thing to say! Has anybody ever said that to you? Probably not.
- 3 Banana leaves and other big, thick leaves can be used in many ways. People who live where plants with big leaves grow can use them as roofs, raincoats, and shoes. They even serve as sails for small boats. The big leaves can be torn into strips. Then they can be woven into hats, mats, and baskets.
- 4 However, a leaf's real job is to make food for plants. It does this by using sunlight, air, and water. The plant gets these through its roots and leaves.
- 5 If a fruit tree loses its leaves because of cold or drought, we will get no fruit from that tree. But if the leaves stay strong and healthy, the tree will give lots of fruit.
- 6 In the autumn, leaves drop from many trees and plants. How can the plants go on living?
- 7 Maybe you've seen small bumps on the branches. Each one is a tiny bud. Inside the bud are the beginnings of leaves. They are safe from winter cold and winds. When the buds feel the warm spring sun, they wake up. They push off their covers. Tiny new leaves start growing. Soon the leaves will be making food for the plants again.

COMPREHENSION

A Choose the best ending for each sentence. Write *a* or *b*.

- 1 This story is *really* about
 - a how fruit trees grow.
 - b the many uses of leaves.
- 2 A leaf makes plant food by using
 - a Earth, branches, and rain.
 - b sunlight, water, and air.
- 3 Banana leaves would *not* be good to use as clothes for
 - a hot weather.
 - b wet weather.

- 4 If there is a drought, then
 - a fruit growers will have less fruit to sell.
 - b a fruit tree will grow a lot of fruit.
- 5 A tree's buds
 - a keep new leaves warm in winter.
 - b make food for the tree in winter.

LEARN ABOUT WORDS

B Often you can find out the meaning of a word by seeing how it is used in a story. The other words in the story give you clues.

Find the word in the story that best fits each meaning. (A paragraph number tells you where to look.) Write the word.

- 1 are used (3)
- 2 pulled apart; ripped (3)
- 3 long, thin pieces (3)
- 4 dryness; lack of rain (5)
- 5 swelling where a new leaf starts growing (7)

C Read the words you wrote. Which one best fits in each sentence below? Write the word.

- 6 In spring the _____ begins to grow.
- 7 Sometimes large leaves _____ as roofs.
- 8 A hat can be woven from _____ of leaves.
- 9 The _____ killed many trees.
- 10 Big leaves are _____ to make baskets.

THINK ABOUT IT

D Read the sentences. Look at the pronoun in **bold type**. Which answer tells *what* or *whom* the pronoun stands for? Write *a* or *b*.

- 1 Mother said Li could wear her best dress. **She** put it on and went to school.
a Li
b Mother
- 2 Li had worn the dress because it was her teacher's birthday. The class had planned a party for **her**.
a Li's teacher
b The class
- 3 One boy gave the teacher a hat woven of leaves. **She** liked it.
a The teacher
b The boy
- 4 The children sang "Happy Birthday." The teacher smiled as **they** sang.
a The children
b The teacher
- 5 Li showed her banana leaf to the class. They studied **it**.
a The class
b The leaf

E A fact is something that is true. An opinion is what someone thinks.

Fact: Mrs. Lopez is a teacher.

Opinion: I think she is nice.

Read each sentence. Is it a fact or an opinion? Write *Fact* if it is a fact. Write *Opinion* if it is an opinion.

- 6 Li believes that wet weather is the best kind of weather.
- 7 A large leaf can be used as a boat sail.
- 8 I think that plants look prettier in summer.
- 9 Leaves turn sunlight and water into a plant's food.
- 10 Buds make new leaves in spring.