Blue started referring to the color we know today when the word came into French. Today, you would probably choose blue to paint the sky or blueberries, not the Sun or snow.

The word for the color green was originally from German. The German word was gruen, meaning “to grow.” That’s how we got the name for the color of plants. Today, green also describes actions that help our planet.

Red, which came from Greek, also kept the same meaning when it moved into English. You can see the word red in color words that are shades of red, including ruby and rust. You might use the color red to paint apples or cherries.

Words often change their spelling and meaning when they come into another language. You can be a word detective and find clues to a word’s history. Many dictionaries have notes about how a word came into English. These notes can amaze you—and your friends.

There’s a fruit that you eat in sections or squeeze to drink its juice. What is it? It’s an orange. The name of the fruit is also the name of the color you use to paint carrots or flowers.

Many words have come into English from other languages. The word orange came into English from Arabic. Arabic farmers cultivated the orange, known there as the naranjl. Later, the word came into Spanish as la naranja. Finally, it came into English as the orange. At that time, orange only referred to the fruit. Later, orange was also used for the color.

Some words keep their meaning when they come into another language. Others change their meaning. Many languages have words that came from Indo-European, which was an early language. The word blue is from an Indo-European word that meant “yellow.” Later, the word came into Greek, where it meant “white.” Then it came into Old English, where it meant “pale.”

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The Colors of English

Most people have a favorite color. What is your favorite color? Write about that color. Which shade of that color do you like best? Is the color related to a sports team you like? What clothes do you wear that are your favorite color? Do you eat any foods that are that color? Share your favorite color with a friend or family member and ask them what their favorite colors are and why they like that color.
Review

The Colors of English

Write keywords or phrases that will help you remember what you learned.

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