

Transcript: Podcast: What a wonderful word, episode 8: orange

NL:Welcome to *What a wonderful word*, a podcast where we look at the surprising history of words and phrases. My name is Nathan Li and joining me is our word nerd Kelly Garcia.

KG:Hi.

NL:In each episode we take a look at an everyday word or phrase that has an interesting past. So, what are we looking at today?

KG:Today we're looking at a word that describes a colour. And what's interesting about this word is that, for hundreds of years, the English language had no word to describe this particular colour.

NL:You mean infrared or ultraviolet?

KG:No, a much more basic colour than that?

NL:White?

KG:Technically, white's not a colour. It's the absence of colour.

NL:Alright, if you're going to be picky, I give up. What is this colour that we had no word for?

KG:Orange.

NL:Orange? Of course, we had a word for it. Why do you think oranges are called oranges? Because they're orange, obviously.

KG:It's the other way round, actually. The colour orange is called orange because oranges are orange.

NL:Now, you're confusing me. Are you saying there was no word for orange until that particular fruit showed up in Britain?

KG:Yes. Oranges arrived in Britain in the sixteenth century. Before that there was no word to describe the colour. In fact, when oranges first arrived here, people called them golden apples.

NL:Golden? You're kidding?

KG:I'm serious.

**** **Answer E.8 Q1 ja Q2**

NL:What about fire then? Or sunsets? How did they describe them?

KG:They just used the word yellow-red.

NL:That's two words.

KG:Who's being picky now? Anyway, that's what they did. Every time they needed to say orange, they said yellow-red. Foxes, for example, were yellow-red.

NL:That's sad.

KG:Well, a lot of the time they didn't even say that. They just said red. Even today, we call people who have orange hair redheads.

NL:That's true. We should them orange heads.

KG:We should.

**** **Answer E.8 Q3**

NL: So, where does the word for the fruit come from?

KG: It comes from the Persian word "narang". Apparently, Persian emperors had orange trees in their gardens. Then the fruit became "nāranj" in Arabic. Then the French took the word and "nāranj" became orange.

NL:Wait a minute! What happened to the "n" sound at the beginning of the word?

KG:The French lost it.

NL:Hm!

KG:It's not so bad. I quite like it without the "n". Orange. It sounds better, somehow. I think that when you hear "o" you're hearing the roundness of the fruit.

**** **Answer E.8 Q4**

NL: I don't know about that. I just think it's crazy that there was no word for the colour until the fruit came along. What if there had been no word for yellow until someone brought lemons to this country?

KG:Would that be a problem?

NL: Of course, it would. Imagine using the word lemon instead of yellow: "I was on the beach walking over the lemon sand. Up in the sky the lemon sun shone down. It was autumn and the leaves on the trees were turning lemon."

KG:Alright. Enough. I get the idea.

NL:See what I mean? It's ridiculous.

KG:Not that ridiculous! We do get colour words from fruit. Lipstick can be cherry red. Or you can get your nails done an eye-catching lime green.

NL:True. Thank you, Kelly, for giving us all that juicy information.

KG:Orange you glad I came on the show?

NL:Yes, we had a very fruitful discussion. See you next time.

**** **Answer E.8 Q5**

E8.3 Choose the correct colour to the idiom

Here are some idioms with the correct colour missing. Choose the correct colour. How would you say these idioms in Finnish?

1. Fred is **the black sheep** in our family. He has been to prison and is always having problems with the authorities.
2. I hadn't heard from Olivia for a long time. Then, **out of the blue**, she rang my doorbell and asked if she could stay for a few days.
3. Our plan **was given the green light**, and now we have started to make preparations to organise our own arts festival.
4. Sometimes it's better **to tell a white lie** than hurt somebody's feelings.
5. Sean wouldn't confess that it was him who had broken the window. I didn't expect him to **be so yellow**.
6. After her stay in hospital, Julia is **happy to be in the pink** again.
7. When we had finished our exams, we decided to dress up and **paint the town red**.
8. Mark **is such a brown-noser**. He's always complimenting our boss, and he agrees with everything she says or does.
9. I'm **getting grey hair from** my computer breaking down all the time!
10. Timmy tried to use his phone again in the exam, but the **teacher caught him red-handed**.