



Fast fact-finding

Read the passage below.



Sky Colors



HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED why clear skies are sometimes deep blue and at other times almost white? Or why some sunsets are fiery red and others watery yellow? The reason is that the mixture of particles in the atmosphere is constantly changing. Every color in the sky comes from the Sun. Sunlight is white, which means it is a mix of every color in the rainbow. But as it passes through the atmosphere, gases, dust, ice crystals, and water droplets split it into the various colors, bouncing some toward our eyes and absorbing others. The colors we see depend on which colors are reflected and which are absorbed. Clear skies are blue because gases in the air reflect mostly blue light from the Sun. The sky gets paler when extra dust or moisture reflects other colors, diluting the blue. Sunsets are yellow (or red, if the air is dusty) because the Sun's rays have to travel so far through the lower atmosphere that all the yellow light is absorbed.

From How the Earth Works by John Funder

Underline all the main points in the paragraph above. Then answer these questions in complete sentences.

What color is sunlight?

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Why is the sky blue?

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What do you notice about the first four words? Why do you think they are set out this way?

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What kind of sentences introduce the passage?

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Words such as *the reason is*, *because*, and *which means* tell us that this piece of writing does more than simply list facts. What else does it do?

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