

# 1. Seasons

Seasons change throughout the year in most countries, and there is a definite pattern to them. After spring, comes summer, followed by the rains. Then, there is a brief spell of autumn before the winter sets in. That is, however, only a broad division of the seasons of the year. Seasons vary from region to region. The character of each season primarily depends on which part of the world one lives in. But, whatever the seasons are, there is a song or poetry on each of them.

Spring, in most countries, is a pleasant time. After the cold winter, the **mellow** warmth of spring is a welcome thing. Trees grow new leaves and flowers are in full bloom.

Here are lines from a poem that describe spring beautifully—

*Here's Spring,  
With green on his wing  
And blue in his eye.*



In warm, tropical countries, summer is a time of too much sun. One longs for a cool shade to escape the **scorching** heat and the **blazing** sun. The heat of summer has been described thus—



*Noon swoons beneath the heat it made,  
And flower e'en within the shade,  
Until the sun slopes in the west.*

But in cold countries and in hilly regions, summer is most welcome.

*The little bird sits at his door in the sun,  
Atilt like a blossom among the leaves...  
He sings to the wide world.*

After the heat of summer, the rains bring relief to warm countries like India. Nature looks fresh and green.

*How beautiful is the rain!  
After the dust and heat...*

However, the rains in cold countries can be quite unpleasant; although the rainy season is necessary for the growth of crops and plants anywhere in the world.

Autumn, like spring, is pleasant everywhere. This season is also called 'fall' and the leaves of many trees

change from green to yellow or red. The trees shed their leaves, and there is a **nip in the air**, as the first signs of winter begin to show. It is a time of harvesting and fruit gathering in most parts of the world.



*The golden-rod is yellow,  
The corn is turning brown,  
The trees in apple orchards  
With fruit are bending down.*

While people in tropical countries look forward to the cool winters, in the hills and the northern countries, people start preparing for the freezing, and sometimes, snowy winters, when—



*Every fence, and every tree,  
Is as white as white can be.*

And then spring returns once more with the coming of March and April—

*I have heard a mother bird  
Singing in the rain—  
Telling all her little ones  
Spring has come again.*

And so, the cycle of seasons goes on and on.

Scientists explain the change of seasons in their own way. They say that seasons change because different parts of the Earth receive different amounts of sunlight during the year, and that is due to the tilt in the Earth's axis. So, when the North Pole is tilted towards the sun, the Northern Hemisphere has summer, and the Southern Hemisphere has winter.

But the Greeks of olden days had a different story about the change of seasons. They were such brilliant storytellers that they wove stories around many of the natural **phenomena** that they saw every day, and beautiful stories they were too. Here is a story the Greeks made about the change of seasons.

Persephone was the daughter of Zeus, the king of the gods, and Demeter. Demeter had the power to make the Earth yield plentiful crops of grain. She also had the power to leave the Earth barren.

Persephone was a beautiful girl, with pink cheeks like apple blossoms, and blue eyes like the blue of the sky on a sunny April morning. She was Spring itself. She spent her days dancing and singing with her companions in the valleys and **glens**, making the Earth joyous.

Hades was the **grim** ruler of the Underworld, the Land of the Dead. He was a lonely king, with only shadows and ghosts for his companions.

One day, when Hades came up to Earth, he saw Persephone and her companions **bedecked** with

flowers, dancing in the woods. He was so impressed by her beauty that he carried her off to his kingdom in his chariot. But while he was doing so, the **nymph** of the stream recognised Persephone. Just as Hades plunged underground to reach his kingdom, Persephone took off her **girdle** and threw it far into the river. She hoped that her mother, Demeter, would find it and look for her.

When Demeter discovered her loss, she was so grief-stricken that she wandered sadly over the Earth, looking for her daughter. She neglected all of her duties. As she was the corn-goddess and looked after the harvest, the crops failed, and the ground became **parched** and barren. It seemed that the Earth felt sorry for Demeter and mourned with her.

Demeter continued her search for Persephone, till she came back to the island of Sicily, where she lived. One day, while passing by the stream, she happened to see the girdle of Persephone near the shore. She heard a voice saying, 'I am the nymph of the stream. I came up from the Underworld. There I have seen your daughter sitting beside King Hades. But though she is the queen, she seems unhappy.'

Demeter went to Zeus and asked him to get her daughter back. If Persephone came back to her, the Earth would once again be fertile and prosperous. Zeus felt sorry for the mother and the grieving Earth. He told Demeter that Persephone could return to her home for a part of the year, but she would have to spend the rest with her husband in the Underworld.



So, during those months of the year when Persephone stays with her mother, Demeter is happy. In these months, the trees are covered with blossoms, the birds sing, and the green Earth seems to be full of joy. The presence of Persephone on Earth brings spring and fine weather. But what happens when Persephone goes down to Hades?

During those months, Demeter is sad. Therefore, the Earth, too, is **sombre** and full of sorrow. The trees shed their leaves and no flowers bloom. The seeds go to sleep in the bowels of the Earth.

Nature seems to be full of grief at the absence of the beautiful young queen, and looks forward to her arrival on Earth, when Demeter will be happy and the Earth **verdant** once more.

## New Words

<b>mellow</b>	mild and pleasant
<b>scorching</b>	extremely hot
<b>blazing</b>	very hot
<b>swoons</b>	faints
<b>e'en</b>	even
<b>atilt</b>	swaying or moving with the wind
<b>nip in the air</b>	a slight chill in the air
<b>golden-rod</b>	(also spelt 'goldenrod') a plant with bright, golden-yellow flowers
<b>phenomena</b>	observable facts or occurrences

<b>glen(s)</b>	a small, narrow valley
<b>grim</b>	stern and unpleasant
<b>bedecked</b>	decorated or adorned
<b>nymph</b>	a spirit of Nature, who lives in trees, water and other natural objects
<b>girdle</b>	a belt or sash worn around the waist
<b>parched</b>	dry
<b>sombre</b>	dull and depressing
<b>verdant</b>	fresh and green

## Comprehension

### A. Answer these questions.

- Describe in your own words—
  - summer in the hills
  - summer in the plains
- What are the characteristics of spring?
- Why are the rains welcome in tropical countries?
- Who was Persephone? Who carried her away?
- What happened to the Earth when Persephone was away? Why was it so?
- How did Demeter discover what happened to her daughter?
- How did the Greeks explain the coming of spring?

### B. Name the following.

- the king of the gods
- the corn goddess

3. the queen of the Underworld
4. the king of the Underworld

**C. Explain these lines in the context of the lesson.**

1. *The golden-rod is yellow,  
The corn is turning brown,  
The trees in apple orchards  
With fruit are bending down.*
2. *Every fence, and every tree,  
Is as white as white can be.*

**Activity**

- A. Many harvest festivals are celebrated in our country and some of them revolve around myths. Research and find out about any three harvest festivals and why they are celebrated.
- B. You know about words that are associated with other words.

Read the five seasons in India and write as many words that can be associated with them. Write the words in your notebook.

Spring	Summer
Monsoon	Autumn
Winter	

**Skill Drill Reading**

This project aims at understanding what one likes to read.

1. Make a list of various reading genres in your notebook.

Some of them are given below:

suspense	thriller	tragedy
mythology	comedy	drama
satire	horror	realism
romance	tragicomedy	fantasy

2. Research to find out more about this and understand these genres.
3. Now, choose any three genres and pick books from those selected genres.

Which genre is your favourite?

