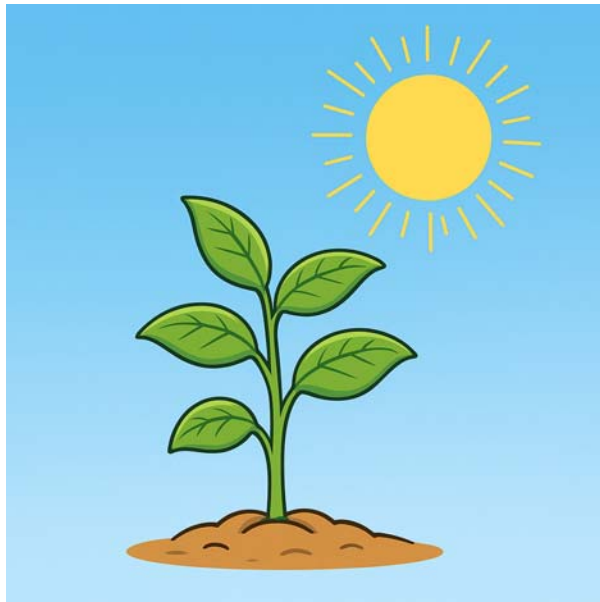


Name _____



Chemical Changes in Living Things

Did you know your body is like a tiny chemistry lab? That's because living things, like people, plants, and animals, perform chemical changes every day. A chemical change is when one or more substances turn into something new—and in living things, this happens all the time.

Take digestion, for example. When you eat food, your body breaks it down in your stomach. Your stomach

uses special chemicals, like acids and enzymes, to turn the food into nutrients your body can use. You can't turn the food back into a sandwich once it's digested—that means a chemical change has happened.

Plants also use chemical changes. One of the most important is called photosynthesis. During photosynthesis, plants take in sunlight, water, and carbon dioxide. They use these ingredients to make sugar and oxygen. That's a big chemical change! Without photosynthesis, people and animals wouldn't have the oxygen they need to breathe.

Another chemical change in living things happens when your muscles burn energy. When you run or jump, your muscles use sugar and oxygen to make energy. This also makes carbon dioxide and water as new substances. That's why you breathe faster when you exercise—your body is trying to get more oxygen in and push more carbon dioxide out.

Even when you get a cut and your body heals it, chemical changes are helping. Your body uses proteins to build new skin cells. Those proteins are made using chemical changes too.

So yes—living things do perform chemical changes, and we couldn't live without them. These changes help us move, grow, heal, and stay alive. The next time you take a deep breath or eat a snack, remember: you're a walking science experiment!