

How Caterpillars Turn into Butterflies

Butterflies are fascinating creatures. They are a common sight in the summer, signalling warmer weather and blue skies. But the life cycle of a butterfly is a complex process which involves four steps.

Step 1: Egg

An adult female butterfly lays eggs on plants. These plants become food for the caterpillars once they have hatched. This usually occurs between around May and September, depending on the species of butterfly. The eggs vary in size according to the species but can be from 1 - 3mm in diameter.

Step 2: Caterpillar

Once an egg hatches, a tiny caterpillar emerges. This is the larva. It will usually eat the actual egg, which provides it with important nutrients, then start on the host plant, consuming as much as possible. Nearly all caterpillars eat leaves but some also eat stems, roots, fruits, flowers or seed pods. They have huge appetites. As the caterpillar grows, it becomes too large for its skin, so the skin splits open and is discarded. A new larger skin has grown underneath. This happens four or five times during the larva stage. Caterpillars, when fully grown, can be as much as 100 times their original size.

Step 3: Chrysalis

Once the caterpillar has grown sufficiently, it sheds its skin for a final time and becomes a pupa. The word 'pupa' can be used for the transformation stage of any insect. The specific name used for the pupal stage of a caterpillar is 'chrysalis'. This is an important time for the chrysalis. The caterpillar releases digestive juices which break down the body. Some parts are moved around and other cells grow to become the legs, wings and antennae of the butterfly. This process is called metamorphosis.

Step 4 Butterfly

Finally, the metamorphosis is complete and the chrysalis splits open. The butterfly emerges with damp, crumpled wings and cannot fly yet. It spreads its wings out and pumps fluid into them to stretch them to full size. Once the wings are stretched and dry, the butterfly is able to fly. Its energies are focused on two tasks: eating and mating. The female will fly around and look for a place to lay her eggs. Most adults live only two weeks, although some species hibernate and so may live for several months.

Read the statements and decide whether they are true or false.

	True	False
A fully grown caterpillar can be 1000 times their original size.		
Some butterflies live for a few months.		
The caterpillar flies around, looking for a place to lay her eggs.		
The butterfly forms an encasement called a chrysalis.		

Tick the type of text this is.

non-chronological report	
instructions	
explanation	
fiction	

Explain your choice.

Why can't the butterfly fly as soon as it emerges from the chrysalis?

Rohit says, "I think this text would be better with a diagram."

Use the information from the text to draw a suitable diagram to show the process it describes.

Write a summary of less than ten words for each stage:

Egg

Caterpillar

Pupa

Butterfly

Match the word with its meaning.

consuming	the process of changing from a caterpillar to a butterfly
discarded	comes out into view
emerges	eating or drinking
metamorphosis	happens
occurs	got rid of as it is no longer needed

Read the statements and decide whether they are true or false.

	True	False
A fully grown caterpillar can be 1000 times their original size.		✓
Some butterflies live for a few months.	✓	
The caterpillar flies around, looking for a place to lay her eggs.		✓
The butterfly forms an encasement called a chrysalis.		✓

Tick the type of text this is.

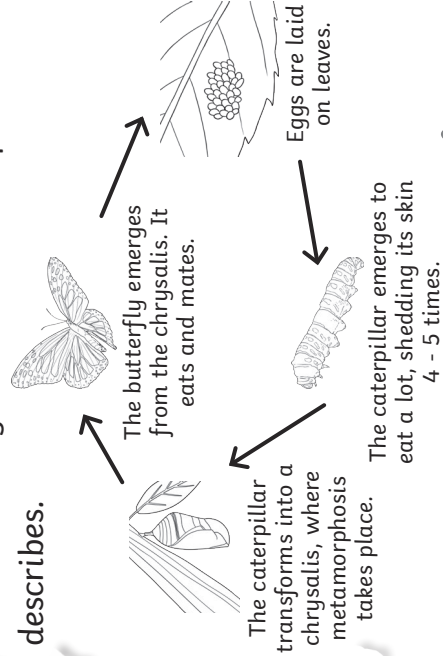
non-chronological report	
instructions	
explanation	✓
fiction	

Explain your choice.

The text title is 'How Caterpillars Turn into Butterflies', so we know it is going to tell us how something happens. The text explains the four different stages and is split into four sections to give details about each stage.

Rohit says, "I think this text would be better with a diagram."

Use the information from the text to draw a suitable diagram to show the process it describes.



Why can't the butterfly fly as soon as it emerges from the chrysalis?

because its wings are damp and crumpled

Match the word with its meaning.

consuming	the process of changing from a caterpillar to a butterfly
discarded	comes out into view
emerges	eating or drinking
metamorphosis	happens
occurs	got rid of as it is no longer needed

Write a summary of less than ten words for each stage:

Egg

The adult female butterfly lays eggs on a plant.

Caterpillar

The caterpillar eats and grows a lot, splitting its skin.

Pupa

A chrysalis forms and the pupa undergoes metamorphosis.

Butterfly

The butterfly emerges and focuses on eating and mating.

We hope you find the information on our website and resources useful. As far as possible, the contents of this resource are reflective of current professional research. However, please be aware that every child is different and information can quickly become out of date. The information given here is intended for general guidance purposes only and may not apply to your specific situation.



visit [twinkl.com](https://www.twinkl.com)

