

RESOURCE LIBRARY

ACTIVITY : 1 HR

The Very Hungry Caterpillar and Its Life Cycle

Students listen to a read-aloud of the Eric Carle picture book *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. Then they watch a time-lapse video of the monarch butterfly life cycle and create their own picture books.

GRADES

K, 1, 2

SUBJECTS*Biology, Experiential Learning***CONTENTS**

1 PDF, 1 Video, 5 Images

OVERVIEW

Students listen to a read-aloud of the Eric Carle picture book *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. Then they watch a time-lapse video of the monarch butterfly life cycle and create their own picture books.

For the complete activity with media resources, visit:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.org/activity/the-very-hungry-caterpillar-and-the-butterfly-life-cycle/>

Program

 NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL
GREAT
MIGRATIONS

DIRECTIONS

1. Read aloud the picture book *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle.

Ask students if they remember the picture book *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle. Invite students to describe what the book is about. Then read the book aloud to the class.

2. Have students complete a diagram of the life cycle of a butterfly.

Distribute a copy of the worksheet Cycle Diagram to each student. Have students complete the worksheet independently by labeling the four stages in a butterfly's life cycle. Then have a whole-class discussion about butterflies and how they change during their lives. Ask: *Does the Eric Carle book tell all about what really happens, or is it just a story?*

3. Watch a video from *Great Migrations*.

Tell students that they will watch a time-lapse video of a butterfly actually going through its life stages. Make sure they understand they will be able to watch the whole process happening; it will appear to be happening much faster than it actually does. Encourage students to, as they watch, think about the picture book and what is the same and different about the video and the book. Show students the video “Monarch Life Cycle.” Allow students time to adjust the labels in their Cycle Diagram, as needed.

4. Compare and contrast the video and the picture book.

After students watch the video, discuss the similarities and differences between the video and the book. If needed, show the video a second time or click through the photo gallery Butterfly Life Cycle.

5. Have students create their own picture book about the life cycle of a butterfly.

Provide each student with several sheets of blank paper folded into fourths to create a picture book. Explain to students that they will create their own version of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. Their version will include factual information from the video. Display the picture book in the classroom where students can easily see it. Encourage students to include new science terms, more accurate pictures, descriptions of behavior, and other details from the video in their own versions.

Extending the Learning

Have a class discussion about the difference between storybooks and science books. Ask: *How do storybooks change the ideas? Why would a writer do this? When would you want a book that was completely true?*

OBJECTIVES

Subjects & Disciplines

Biology

- Experiential Learning

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- describe the story of
- explain the life cycle of a butterfly
- illustrate the life cycle of a butterfly

Teaching Approach

- Learning-for-use

Teaching Methods

- Discussions
- Hands-on learning
- Multimedia instruction
- Reading

Skills Summary

This activity targets the following skills:

- Critical Thinking Skills
 - Analyzing
 - Creating
 - Understanding

National Standards, Principles, and Practices

NATIONAL SCIENCE EDUCATION STANDARDS

- (K-4) Standard C-2:

Life cycles of organisms

Preparation

What You'll Need

MATERIALS YOU PROVIDE

- Crayons
- Markers
- Pencils
- Several sheets of blank paper per student
- The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY

- Internet Access: Required
- Tech Setup: 1 computer per classroom, Projector, Speakers
- Plug-Ins: Flash

PHYSICAL SPACE

- Classroom

GROUPING

- Large-group instruction

BACKGROUND & VOCABULARY

Background Information

Monarch butterflies begin life as eggs laid on the leaves of milkweed plants. They hatch as larvae and eat the milkweed leaves. The larvae grow into colorful caterpillars. When they are ready, the caterpillars create a chrysalis, or hard protective case, around themselves for the

pupa stage. Later, the caterpillars emerge from this chrysalis as black, orange, and white adult butterflies.

Prior Knowledge

Recommended Prior Activities

- None

Vocabulary

Term	Part of Speech	Definition
animal migration	<i>noun</i>	process where a community of animals leaves a habitat for part of the year or part of their lives, and moves to habitats that are more hospitable.
butterfly	<i>noun</i>	type of flying insect with large, colorful wings.
caterpillar	<i>noun</i>	larva of a butterfly or moth.
larva	<i>noun</i>	a new or immature insect or other type of invertebrate.
life cycle	<i>noun</i>	process of changes undertaken by an organism or group of organisms over the course of their existence. Birth, growth, and death usually characterize the life cycle of animals.

For Further Exploration

Articles & Profiles

- [National Geographic Magazine: Animal Migrations](#)

Audio & Video

- [National Geographic Channel: Monarchs and Milkweed](#)

Images

- [National Geographic Kids: Coloring Page—Monarch Butterfly](#)

Interactives

- [National Geographic Animals: Migrations Quiz](#)

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