

Monarch Butterflies



Photo by Paul B. Southerland

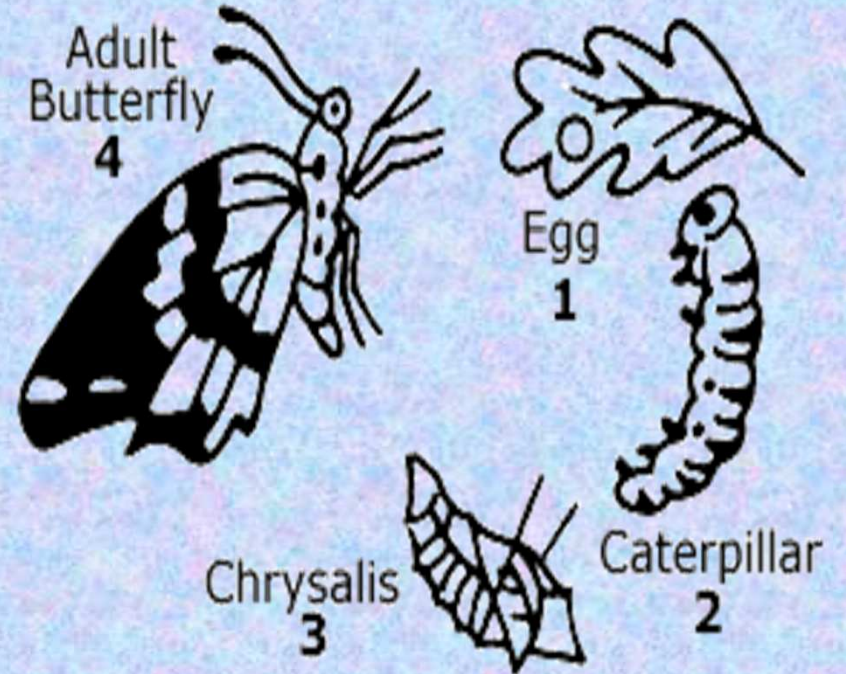
The Life Cycle

Egg

Larva

Chrysalis

Adult



Egg

- The egg is sticky.
- It is laid on the bottom of a milkweed plant leaf.
- It hatches in a few days.



Larva

- The larva or caterpillar eats the eggshell and then the milkweed leaves.
- The larva molts or sheds its skin about 5 times.
- It hangs upside down on the milkweed plant.



Chrysalis

- The larva forms a chrysalis or pupa around its body.
- The chrysalis is green with dots. Later it becomes clear.
- An orange and black butterfly can be seen inside the chrysalis. This change is called metamorphosis.



Adult

- The adult butterfly comes out of the chrysalis in about 2 weeks.
- It pumps liquid into its wings from the abdomen.
- The wings must dry before the adult can fly.



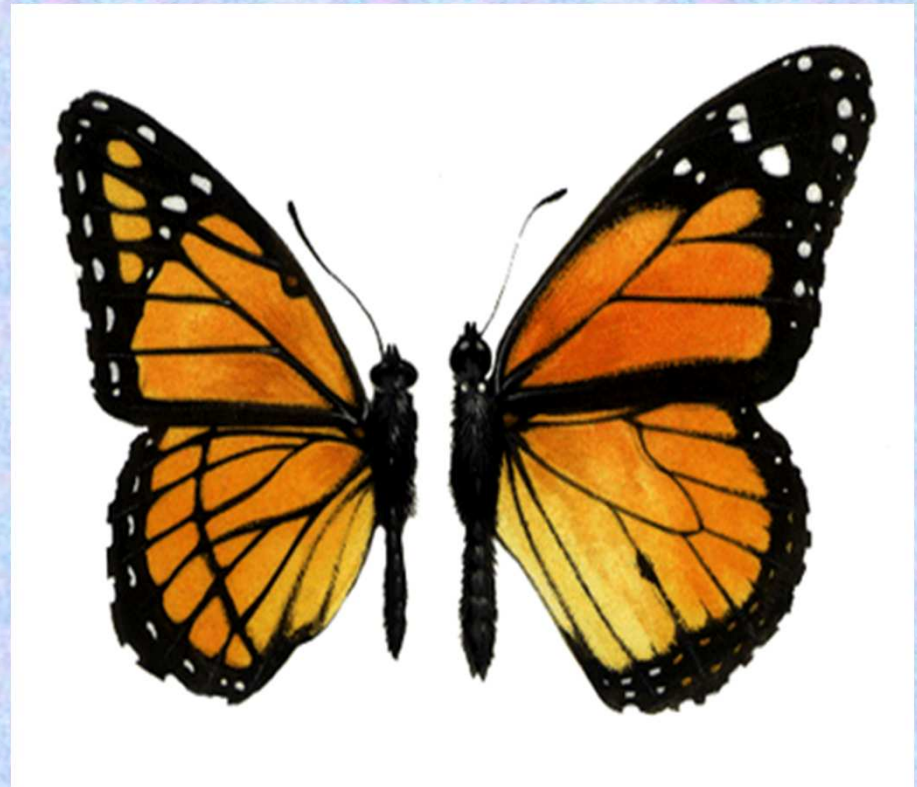
Body Parts



- A butterfly has three main parts: head, thorax and abdomen.
- Six legs are attached to the thorax.
- The butterfly sucks nectar through a proboscis.
- It tastes with its feet.
- It has four wings.
- It has two antennae for touch and smell.

Defense

The monarch is protected from predators because of its bad taste. Birds get sick from eating it. Another butterfly, the viceroy, looks similar to the monarch but does not have the bad taste. Birds stay away from both of these butterflies.



Migration



- Monarch butterflies migrate south each year in the fall.
- They only fly during the day.
- They can fly 12 miles per hour.
- They can migrate 4,000 miles to find a warm climate.
- They often rest in trees. Sometimes these look like butterfly trees.

Classroom Butterflies

- Butterfly larvae can be ordered through the mail. The larvae and food are placed in the butterfly house. The larvae will attach themselves to the top of the container and emerge as butterflies. This is a fun activity for second graders!



The End

