

The Life of a Butterfly

Name _____

Background: Every organism goes through several stages in its life, referred to as a **life cycle**. The term “cycle” is used because life cycles are a circular or repeating pattern. Plants start as small seeds and eventually grow into flowering plants with the ability to produce more seeds. Animals, including insects, mammals, and amphibians, go through **metamorphosis**, which is the process of an animal changing form. Some insects go through **complete metamorphosis** and some go through **incomplete metamorphosis**, which involves fewer stages. Butterflies are an example of an insect that goes through complete metamorphosis. An adult butterfly lays an **egg**, which hatches into a worm-like **larva**, referred to as a caterpillar. The caterpillar develops a **pupa**, referred to as a cocoon. The butterfly grows while inside the cocoon and eventually emerges as an **adult** with the ability to produce eggs.

Activity: In this activity, you are going to write a story about a butterfly as it goes through the process of metamorphosis. The only rules are to: 1) include the four primary stages of the butterfly’s life (as an egg, a larva, a pupa, and an adult) and 2) be creative. To help you begin writing, consider the following questions:

- Does the butterfly have a name?
- What does the butterfly look like at each stage? Draw a picture of the butterfly in each of the four stages on the following page.
- How does the butterfly feel at each stage? For example, is it nervous about creating a cocoon while it is in the larval stage? Is it excited to be able to explore the world as an adult?
- What is the butterfly’s favorite stage in the life cycle? For example, does it like to stay warm wrapped inside the cocoon, or does it prefer to fly around?
- What is the butterfly’s least favorite stage? Why?



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Directions: Draw a picture of your butterfly in each of its stages.

