

# Butterfly Life Cycle

Butterflies have a complete life cycle with four separate stages. During this cycle they change completely - this is called metamorphosis.



## What Happens During the First Stage?

During the first stage of the butterfly life cycle, the female butterfly lays her eggs on a leaf, stem or another object. The new butterfly starts life as a very small egg. The eggs can be round or oval and some are ribbed. If you look really closely, you can actually see the caterpillar growing inside the egg.



## What Happens During the Second Stage?

During the second stage, a caterpillar (or larva) hatches. It is the long, worm-like stage of the butterfly life cycle. Most caterpillars have interesting patterns, stripes or patches and sometimes spine-like hairs. In this stage, the caterpillar needs to eat lots to grow and will usually start by eating the leaf they were born onto. As it gets bigger, the caterpillar sheds its skin four or more times.



## What Happens During the Third Stage?

Once fully grown, the caterpillar forms a chrysalis (or pupa), which is usually brown or green so it is camouflaged. Many hibernate (spend long periods asleep) during the winter at this stage. This is the transformation stage, when the caterpillar tissues are broken down and the adult's insect structures are formed, including growing wings. From the outside, it can look like it is just resting but it is changing rapidly inside the pupa.



## What Happens During the Fourth Stage?

During the fourth stage, the pupa splits open to reveal a colourful adult butterfly, which the caterpillar has transformed into. When it first emerges, its wings are soft and folded against its body because it had to fit inside the pupa. The butterfly usually learns to fly in 3 or 4 hours. Adults also mate and the female butterflies lay eggs, beginning the life cycle again.

# Butterfly Life Cycle Questions

1. Fill in the missing words.

Butterflies have a complete life \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_ separate stages.

2. Find and copy one word that means 'apart'.

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3. What does the new butterfly start life as? Tick one

- a caterpillar
- a small butterfly
- a very small egg
- a chrysalis

4. Draw **four** lines and complete each sentence.

The new butterfly...	(or larva) hatches.
Once fully grown, the caterpillar forms...	a chrysalis (or pupa) which is usually brown or green so it is camouflaged.
During the second stage, a caterpillar...	starts life as a very small egg.
The adults also mate and the female butterflies...	lay eggs, beginning the life cycle again.

5. Number the events from **1-5** to show the order in which they occur in the four separate stages. The first one has been done for you.

	Most caterpillars have interesting patterns, stripes or patches and sometimes spine-like hairs.
	This is the transformation stage, when the caterpillar tissues are broken down and the adult's insect structures are formed, including growing wings.
<b>1</b>	The eggs can be round or oval and some are ribbed.
	The butterfly usually learns to fly in 3 or 4 hours.
	Once fully grown, the caterpillar forms a chrysalis (or pupa), which is usually brown or green so it is camouflaged.

# Butterfly Life Cycle Questions

6. What does the caterpillar need to do in the second stage to grow? Tick one.

- grow wings
- learn to fly
- lay eggs
- eat lots

7. Summarise what you have learnt about the butterfly life cycle using 25 words or fewer.

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# Butterfly Life Cycle Answers

1. Fill in the missing words.

Butterflies have a complete life **cycle** with **four** separate stages.

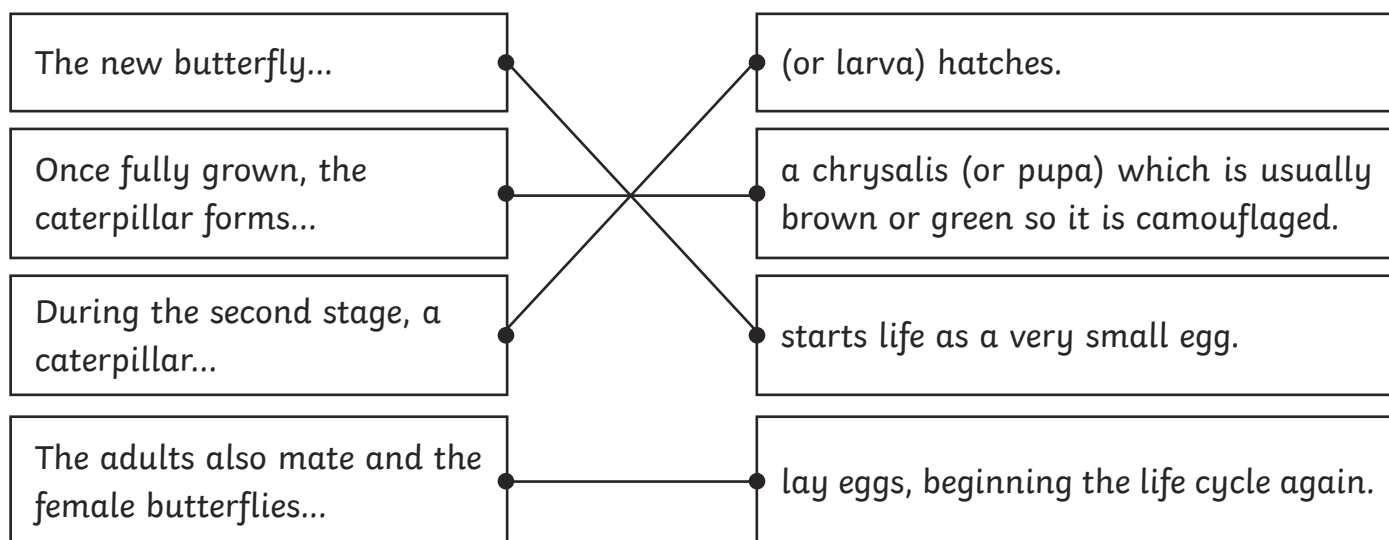
2. Find and copy one word that means 'apart'.

**separate**

3. What does the new butterfly start life as? Tick one

- a caterpillar
- a small butterfly
- a very small egg**
- a chrysalis

4. Draw **four** lines and complete each sentence.



5. Number the events from **1-5** to show the order in which they occur in the four separate stages. The first one has been done for you.

<b>2</b>	Most caterpillars have interesting patterns, stripes or patches and sometimes spine-like hairs.
<b>4</b>	This is the transformation stage, when the caterpillar tissues are broken down and the adult's insect structures are formed, including growing wings.
<b>1</b>	The eggs can be round or oval and some are ribbed.
<b>5</b>	The butterfly usually learns to fly in 3 or 4 hours.
<b>3</b>	Once fully grown, the caterpillar forms a chrysalis (or pupa), which is usually brown or green so it is camouflaged.

# Butterfly Life Cycle Answers

6. What does the caterpillar need to do in the second stage to grow? Tick one.

- grow wings
- learn to fly
- lay eggs
- eat lots**

7. Summarise what you have learnt about the butterfly life cycle using 25 words or fewer.

**Answers will vary but should include the main aspects of each stage of the life cycle.**

# Butterfly Life Cycle

Butterflies are advanced insects because they go through a complete metamorphosis. This means that they change completely. They have a life cycle with four separate stages.

## What Happens During the First Stage?



During the first stage of the butterfly life cycle, the female butterfly lays her eggs onto a leaf, stem or another object. The new butterfly starts life as a very small egg. The eggs can be round, oval or cylindrical and some are ribbed. The shape depends on the type of butterfly that has laid the egg. If you look really closely, you can actually see the caterpillar growing inside the egg. The time it takes the egg to hatch will vary between a few weeks and once the weather is warm enough.



## What Happens During the Second Stage?



During the second stage, a caterpillar (or larva) hatches. It is the long, worm-like stage of the butterfly life cycle. Most caterpillars have interesting patterns, stripes or patches and sometimes spine-like hairs. In this stage, the caterpillar needs to eat lots to grow and will usually start by eating the leaf they were born onto. As it gets bigger, the caterpillar sheds its skin four or more times. A fully grown caterpillar can be over a hundred times bigger than when it hatched from its egg.



## What Happens During the Third Stage?



Once fully grown, the caterpillar forms a chrysalis (or pupa), which is usually brown or green so it is camouflaged. They usually do this on twigs or a safe, hidden area around a plant. Many hibernate during the winter at this stage. This is the transformation stage, when the caterpillar tissues are broken down and the adult's insect structures are formed, including growing wings. It may last between a few weeks and several months depending on the species. From the outside, it can look like it is just resting but it is changing rapidly inside the pupa.



### What Happens During the Fourth Stage?

During the fourth stage, the pupa splits open to reveal a colourful adult butterfly, which the caterpillar has transformed into. When it first emerges, its wings are soft and folded against its body because it had to fit inside the pupa. The butterfly rests and then blood pumps into its wings and they start working and flapping. The butterfly usually learns to fly in 3 or 4 hours. Adults also mate and the female butterflies lay eggs, beginning the life cycle again.



# Butterfly Life Cycle Questions

1. How many stages are there in a butterfly's life cycle? Tick one.

- three
- two
- four
- five

2. Find and copy **two** words that tell the reader what hatches in the second stage.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

3. Fill in the missing words.

Once fully grown, the caterpillar forms a \_\_\_\_\_ (or \_\_\_\_\_) which is usually brown or green so it is camouflaged.

4. What does it grow during the pupa stage, before it becomes a butterfly? Tick one.

- antennae
- feet
- wings
- eyes

5. Draw **four** lines and complete each sentence.

The butterfly rests  
and then...

When it first emerges,  
its wings...

The butterfly usually...

During the fourth stage, the  
pupa splits open to reveal a  
colourful butterfly,

are soft and folded against its body  
because it had to fit inside the pupa.

learns to fly in 3 or 4 hours.

which the caterpillar has  
transformed into.

blood pumps into its wings and they  
start working and flapping.



# Butterfly Life Cycle Questions

6. Number the events from **1-5** to show the order in which they occur in the four separate stages. The first one has been done for you.

	Once fully grown, the caterpillar forms a chrysalis (or pupa), which is usually brown or green so it is camouflaged.
<b>1</b>	The female butterfly lays her eggs onto a leaf, stem or another object.
	The pupa splits open to reveal a colourful adult butterfly.
	Adults also mate and the female butterflies lay eggs, beginning the life cycle again.
	In this stage, the caterpillar needs to eat lots to grow and will usually start by eating the leaf they were born onto. As it gets bigger, the caterpillar sheds its skin four or more times.

7. A chrysalis is easy to see. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain your answer fully, using evidence from the text.

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8. Summarise what you have learnt about the butterfly life cycle using 25 words or fewer.

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# Butterfly Life Cycle Answers

1. How many stages are there in a butterfly's life cycle? Tick one.

- three
- two
- four**
- five

2. Find and copy **two** words that tell the reader what hatches in the second stage.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

3. Fill in the missing words.

Once fully grown, the caterpillar forms a **caterpillar** (or **larva**) which is usually brown or green so it is camouflaged.

4. What does it grow during the pupa stage, before it becomes a butterfly? Tick one.

- antennae
- feet
- wings**
- eyes

5. Draw **four** lines and complete each sentence.

The butterfly rests and then...	are soft and folded against its body because it had to fit inside the pupa.
When it first emerges, its wings...	learns to fly in 3 or 4 hours.
The butterfly usually...	which the caterpillar has transformed into.
During the fourth stage, the pupa splits open to reveal a colourful butterfly,	blood pumps into its wings and they start working and flapping.

# Butterfly Life Cycle Answers

6. Number the events from 1-5 to show the order in which they occur in the four separate stages. The first one has been done for you.

3	Once fully grown, the caterpillar forms a chrysalis (or pupa), which is usually brown or green so it is camouflaged.
1	The female butterfly lays her eggs onto a leaf, stem or another object.
4	The pupa splits open to reveal a colourful adult butterfly.
5	Adults also mate and the female butterflies lay eggs, beginning the life cycle again.
2	In this stage, the caterpillar needs to eat lots to grow and will usually start by eating the leaf they were born onto. As it gets bigger, the caterpillar sheds its skin four or more times.

7. A chrysalis is easy to see. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain your answer fully, using evidence from the text.

**Pupils' own response, such as: I disagree with this statement because the chrysalis is usually brown or green so that it is camouflaged. Camouflaged means it blends in with what is around, making it difficult to see.**

8. Summarise what you have learnt about the butterfly life cycle using 25 words or fewer.

**Answers will vary but should include the main aspects of each stage of the life cycle.**

# Butterfly Life Cycle

Butterflies are advanced insects because they go through a complete metamorphosis. This means that they change completely. They have a complete life cycle with four separate stages. Each stage is different and happens for a reason.

## What Happens During the First Stage?



During the first stage of the butterfly life cycle, the female butterfly lays her eggs onto a leaf, stem or another object. The new butterfly starts life as a very small egg. The eggs can be round, oval or cylindrical and some are ribbed. The shape depends on the type of butterfly that has laid the egg. If you look really closely, you can actually see the caterpillar growing inside the egg.



## What Happens During the Second Stage?



During the second stage, a caterpillar (or larva) hatches. It is the long, worm-like stage of the butterfly life cycle. Most caterpillars have interesting patterns, stripes or patches and sometimes spine-like hairs. In this stage, the caterpillar needs to eat lots to grow. The caterpillar usually starts by eating the leaf they were born onto. They do not stay in this stage for long. As it gets bigger, the caterpillar sheds its skin four or more times. A fully grown caterpillar can be over a hundred times bigger than when it hatched from its egg.



## What Happens During the Third Stage?



Once fully grown, the caterpillar forms a chrysalis (or pupa), which is usually brown or green so it is camouflaged. They usually do this on twigs or a safe, hidden area around a plant. Many hibernate during the winter at this stage. This is the transformation stage, when the caterpillar tissues are broken down and the adult's insect structures are formed, including growing wings. It may last between a few weeks and several months depending on the species. From the outside, it can look like it is just resting but it is changing rapidly inside the pupa as the metamorphosis happens (tissue, limbs and organs of the caterpillar transform).



### What Happens During the Fourth Stage?

During the fourth stage, the pupa splits open to reveal a colourful adult butterfly, which the caterpillar has transformed into. When it first emerges, its wings are soft and folded against its body because it had to fit inside the pupa. The butterfly rests and then blood pumps into its wings and they start working and flapping. The butterfly usually learns to fly in 3 or 4 hours and migrates to a new habitat as it begins exploring flowers to feed on. This is also known as the reproductive stage as the adults mate and the female butterflies lay eggs, beginning the life cycle again.

# Butterfly Life Cycle Questions

1. Use the text to explain why the caterpillar sheds its skin four or more times.

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2. Compare the second and third stage of a butterfly life cycle.

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3. Find and copy a word that refers to sleeping for a long period of time.

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4. Fill in the missing words.

This is the \_\_\_\_\_ stage, when the caterpillar tissues are broken down and the adult's insect \_\_\_\_\_ are formed, including growing wings.

5. A predator will effortlessly see a chrysalis during the third stage.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain your answer fully, using evidence from the text.

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6. Number the events from **1-5** to show the order in which they occur. The first one has been done for you.

<b>1</b>	A butterfly lays cylindrical eggs on a leaf.
	A butterfly emerges with colourful wings. Female butterflies mate with males to produce eggs.
	The caterpillar begins to transform inside the chrysalis as the metamorphosis takes place.
	A larva hatches with interesting patterns, stripes or patches and sometimes spine-like hairs.
	The caterpillar creates a pupa, which is camouflaged in colour.

## Butterfly Life Cycle Questions

7. How long does it usually take a butterfly to learn to fly? Tick one.

- 1 or 2 hours
- 2 or 3 hours
- 3 or 4 hours
- 4 or 5 hours

8. Summarise what you have learnt about the butterfly life cycle using 25 words or fewer.

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# Butterfly Life Cycle Answers

1. Use the text to explain why the caterpillar sheds its skin four or more times.

**The caterpillar sheds its skin four or more times because it is getting bigger.**

2. Compare the second and third stage of a butterfly life cycle.

**Pupils' own response, such as: They are similar because in both stages they change appearance. They are different because in the second stage a caterpillar hatches out of a butterfly egg and in the third stage the caterpillar changes into a butterfly.**

3. Find and copy a word that refers to sleeping for a long period of time.

**hibernate**

4. Fill in the missing words.

This is the **transformation** stage, when the caterpillar tissues are broken down and the adult's insect **structures** are formed, including growing wings.

5. A predator will effortlessly see a chrysalis during the third stage.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain your answer fully, using evidence from the text.

**Pupils' own response, such as: I disagree with this statement because the chrysalis is usually brown or green so that it is camouflaged. Camouflaged means it blends in with the surroundings which would make it difficult for the predator to see.**

6. Number the events from 1-5 to show the order in which they occur. The first one has been done for you.

<b>1</b>	A butterfly lays cylindrical eggs on a leaf.
<b>5</b>	A butterfly emerges with colourful wings. Female butterflies mate with males to produce eggs.
<b>4</b>	The caterpillar begins to transform inside the chrysalis as the metamorphosis takes place.
<b>2</b>	A larva hatches with interesting patterns, stripes or patches and sometimes spine-like hairs.
<b>3</b>	The caterpillar creates a pupa, which is camouflaged in colour.

# Butterfly Life Cycle Answers

7. How long does it usually take a butterfly to learn to fly? Tick one.

- 1 or 2 hours
- 2 or 3 hours
- 3 or 4 hours**
- 4 or 5 hours

8. Summarise what you have learnt about the butterfly life cycle using 25 words or fewer.

**Answers will vary but should include the main aspects of each stage of the cycle.**