



The Kindergarten Chronicles

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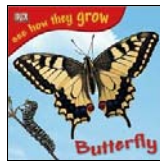
Beth Jacobsen, Goolsby Elementary

The Cycle of Life

Spring is here and we see signs all around us. Spring brings the promise of new life, and what better way to demonstrate this concept to kindergartners than through the study of a butterfly's life cycle? For this unit of study, we'll begin where we always should—with our standards. Our science standards ask us to have our students: "Use five senses to investigate the natural world, (K) 4.4", and "Record observations and explanations using pictures, words, or numbers (K)1.1". This also gives our students an opportunity to "Observe patterns in nature (K)1.3".

To allow your students to experience this life cycle firsthand, you can find butterfly gardens at school supply stores, hobby shops, or online by doing a simple search.

Begin your study by asking your students what they know about

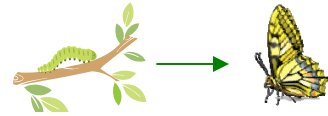


butterflies and recording their prior knowledge on a Circle Map.

Next, read a non-fiction book, such as *From Caterpillar to Butterfly* by Deborah Heiligman or *Butterfly: See How They Grow* by DK Publishing (this book has wonderful photographs, which is a nice feature).

Once you've started with good literature, you can allow your students to see the caterpillars! They typically come in a cup that includes their food, so all you need to do is set the cup in a place that allows all your children to watch them as they grow and change.

An important part of the learning process in this unit will be your Science Observation Journals. Create a journal where your students can record their observations several times a week. After you have introduced some key vocabulary words (caterpillar, chrysalis, pupa, larva) and have



them posted or written on the white board, allow your students to record their observations in their own words. Also, have them illustrate their observations. You may want to encourage them to use labels in their illustrations, as we find in most nonfiction texts. Be sure to give positive feedback, especially to those students who have used the vocabulary words in their writing and/or included an especially detailed illustration.

When the caterpillars form their chrysalides, be sure to include discussions about what is happening inside the chrysalides or the children may fear that the caterpillars have died. You can also have students make predictions about what is happening as the chrysalides are still.

Once the butterflies have emerged, be sure to have a big celebration when you release them into the air. While students may be sad to say good-bye to their new friends, you can turn it into a fun occasion!

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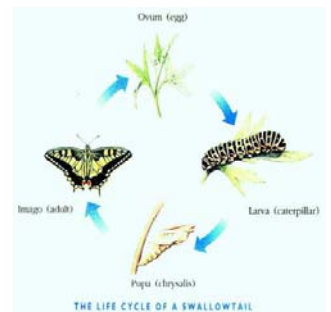
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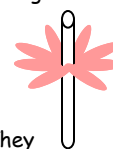
Science Meets Literacy



Chart it! Have each child make his or her own Butterfly Life Cycle chart. Click here for a printable to get you started: <http://www.earthsbirthday.org/butterflies/bflys/activitykit/unit2-g.html>. You can include the names of each stage (ovum, larva, pupa, imago), because children love to learn big words (especially scientific ones!) and expand their vocabulary (Expand vocabulary through listening, 7.K.3).

Story time. Allow your students to write and/or draw a fictional story about a caterpillar that turns into a butterfly. Try to include prewriting, editing, and revising (with your assistance). This covers many of our writing standards (5.K.1, 5.K.2, 5.K.3, 5.K.5, 6.K.2, 6.K.4). Have an "Authors' Share" day, allowing your students to read their stories to the class and celebrate their success!

Drink up! Teach your students how butterflies drink nectar from flowers, using their straw-like tongue (proboscis). Have each of your students make a flower, with the stem made out of a straw, and the top end of the straw inserted through the flower's center. Give each student a cup of lemonade and have them drink it through their flower straw. They



can also observe your classroom butterflies drinking sugar water by using a magnifying glass.



Left: Kindergartners observing a butterfly (on the ground) after it has been released.