

The Very Hungry Caterpillar: A Butterfly's Life Cycle



First Grade, Second Grade

Reading, Science,

by April Brown

July 28, 2015

In this lesson, you will use “The Very Hungry Caterpillar” to teach students about the butterfly life cycle. After listening to the story read aloud, students will use their knowledge to create their own butterfly life cycles!

Learning Objectives

- Students will be able to identify the four life stages of a butterfly.
- Students will be able to ask and answer questions to help determine or clarify the meaning of words in a text.

Materials and preparation

- [The Very Hungry Caterpillar](#) by Eric Carle
- Nonfiction butterfly life cycle books
- Class set of [Draw the Life Cycle of a Butterfly](#) worksheet
- Coloring supplies
- Board
- Markers
- Pencils

Key terms

- butterfly
- caterpillar
- chrysalis
- eggs
- retell
- ask
- answer

Attachments

- Draw the Life Cycle of a Butterfly (PDF)

Introduction (10 minutes)

- Explain to the students that they will be listening to the story *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle.
- Show the students the cover of the book.
- Ask the students what they think the book will be about by looking at the illustration on the cover and reading the title.
- Call on a few students to offer their ideas.
- Explain to the students that while you are reading, they should listen for the following words: **butterfly**, **chrysalis**, **eggs**, and **caterpillar**. Have them consider how these words relate to the story and the very hungry caterpillar.
- Explain that a butterfly is a winged insect. The butterfly starts as an egg and then hatches to be a caterpillar, which looks like a worm that will eventually grow into a butterfly. The caterpillar turns into a chrysalis, which is like a small protective house.
- Write the vocabulary words on the board (butterfly, chrysalis, and caterpillar).
- Explain to the students that you also want them to think about what happens in the beginning of the story, the middle of the story, and the end of the story.

Explicit Instruction/Teacher modeling (15 minutes)

- Read *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* aloud.
- When you hear the words you wrote on the board (caterpillar, chrysalis, eggs, butterfly), pause and ask your students what they think the words mean. Invite students to share their ideas with a partner.

- Provide sentence frames to support students in **asking** and **answering** questions about the word meanings (e.g. I'm wondering what the word ___ means. I think it means ___ because ___ / I think the word ___ means ___. I know this because ___.)
- When you get to the word cocoon, explain to the students that this word is similar to the word chrysalis.
- Pause and discuss pictures and what the pictures are showing the students. Invite students to discuss how the pictures help them understand the word meanings.

Guided Practice (15 minutes)

- Ask the students to explain, or **retell**, what happened in the beginning, the middle, and the end of the book.
- Next, point to the words on the board. Ask the students to stand up if they heard you read any of the words that were on the board.
- Explain to the students that the words on the board are the four stages of a butterfly's life cycle.
- Ask for a volunteer to come up to the board and put the life cycle stages in order from 1-4 (1 is the first stage and 4 is the last).
- Have the students write the numbers next to the words.
- Ask the students to share their connections about butterflies, the butterfly life cycle, and any of the stages that they've seen in nature.
- Explain to the students that they will get to illustrate the butterfly life cycle on their own.

Independent working time (20 minutes)

- Pass out coloring materials, pencils, and the Butterfly Life Cycle worksheets.
- Read the directions to the students, and read the caption in each box.
- Refer to the bottom of the sheet that gives a drawing tutorial for students to use.
- Instruct the students to begin illustrating their life cycle.

Related books and/or media

- **BOOK:** [The Life Cycle of a Butterfly](#) by Bobbie Kalman

Differentiation

- **Enrichment:** Instruct students to retell the life cycle of the butterfly in their own words on the back of the paper.
- **Support:** Provide a selection of other age appropriate books life cycles for students to look through. This will support students in generalizing their knowledge of life cycles to other living things.
- Have your students draw the pictures and cut them out, and have a partner order the stages for them.

Assessment (5 minutes)

- Rotate during independent work time. Check to make sure that the students are organizing the life cycle stages in order.

Review and closing (10 minutes)

- Invite students to come up with movements or a song to summarize the butterfly life cycle using the words they learned (caterpillar, chrysalis, eggs, and butterfly).
- Pick one of the movements, and practice as a class.
- Challenge students to turn and talk to a partner, explaining the meaning of one of the words they learned today during the lesson.

Science Draw the life cycle of a Butterfly

Draw in the four life stages of a butterfly

1 **Eggs**

A butterfly lays her eggs on a plant, so that the caterpillars will have something to eat when they hatch.

2 **Caterpillar**

The job of a caterpillar is to eat, eat, eat! Caterpillars can grow up to two inches long in just a few weeks.

3 **Chrysalis**

The caterpillar attaches itself upside down to a twig and transforms into a chrysalis to protect it while it turns into a butterfly.

4 **Butterfly**

When the butterfly hatches from its chrysalis, it becomes time to mate and find a place to lay eggs.

Here are some step-by-step drawings to help you get started!

