

BUTTERFLIES



The butterfly is an insect. Butterflies are noted for their wings, which are often colorful and bright.

Butterfly wings are a bit like bird wings. Bird wings are made of feathers, but butterfly wings are made of tiny overlapping scales. The wings are colored in various patterns. Some butterfly wings look iridescent (changing rainbow colors, depending on the light) because of the way light hits the scales.

Butterflies have an interesting life cycle. They start as eggs. When they are born, they are what we call caterpillars. This is the *larval stage* for the caterpillar. The caterpillars then move into a cocoon, becoming what we call a chrysalis. This is the *pupal stage*. When the insect comes out of the cocoon, we call it a butterfly. This is the *adult stage* for the butterfly. These clear stages of changing on the way to adulthood are called *metamorphosis*. Many animals go through metamorphosis, but the butterfly's changes are more dramatic than most.

Butterflies can be found almost all over the world. There may be as many as twenty thousand different species of butterflies.

Butterflies usually eat flower nectar. Because of this, they are important to the life cycle of many flowers. Butterflies also need minerals, which they usually get from water found in dirt and sand.

They reach their adult stage in the summer. Some butterflies migrate. The Monarch butterflies migrate about 3000 miles (4800 km) every year. They fly between Mexico and California.

ANSWER THE QUESTIONS ABOUT **BUTTERFLIES**

1. What kind of animal is a butterfly?
 - a. A bird
 - b. An insect
 - c. A spider
 - d. A mammal
2. Which of the following about butterfly wings is TRUE?
 - a. They are just like bird wings.
 - b. They are the colors of the rainbow.
 - c. They are made of scales.
 - d. All the wings are covered in the same pattern.
3. The butterfly life cycle is:
 - a. Egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, butterfly
 - b. Egg, insect, pupal, adult
 - c. Larval, pupal, crystal, adult
 - d. None of the above.
4. Metamorphosis is...
 - a. the process of growing up.
 - b. turning from one thing into another.
 - c. a major change.
 - d. the combination of all of the above.
5. Where can you find butterflies?
 - a. The butterfly habitat is anywhere it is warm.
 - b. You can find them in forests and tundra regions.
 - c. Butterflies are restricted to the Americas.
 - d. Butterflies can be found almost all over the world.
6. What do butterflies eat?
 - a. Dirt, sand, and nectar.
 - b. Nectar and minerals.
 - c. Flowers and other plants.
 - d. Other insects.