

Galena Creek Visitor Center

Butterfly Life Cycle Craft

Butterflies aren't born with beautiful wings and antennae. They start out completely different and have several stages before reaching the butterfly form we know. This craft will create a visual of all of those stages of life and explain the transitions between each stage.

For this activity, you'll need the following materials:

- Paper plates, one per student
- Markers
- Scissors
- 8.5- by 11-inch green construction paper
- Glue
- Dried white beans, orzo, or rice
- Rotini pasta
- Small shell pasta
- Bowtie pasta

1. Start out by writing "Life Cycle of a Butterfly" on the top of the plate. Draw perpendicular lines down the center and across the plate to create four equal sections.

2. Cut four leaf shapes out of the green paper and glue one to each section of the plate.

Butterflies, like most other insects, start out as eggs, laid by a female butterfly. Butterfly eggs are usually laid on a leaf or other part of a plant. Some butterflies lay eggs on only one species of plant, while others can lay eggs on several different species of plants.



3. Glue the bean, orzo, or rice to the leaf in the upper-left section to indicate the egg.

Once the egg hatches, a caterpillar emerges. Caterpillars eat their way out of the egg, using the fats and proteins of the eggshell as fuel to begin their lives. During the caterpillar stage of life, they eat and grow rapidly, shedding and regrowing their skin several times and ending up 100 times the size they were when they exited the egg.

4. Glue the rotini pasta to the upper-right section, to indicate the caterpillar. Draw an arrow from the egg, pointing to the caterpillar.

Once the caterpillar is fully grown, it enters the pupa stage, also known as the chrysalis. They attach themselves to a twig or leaf and a hard shell forms around

them. They can stay this way for weeks or months, depending on the species, transforming into their final form.

5. Glue the shell pasta to the lower-right section of the plate, to indicate the pupa stage. Draw an arrow from the caterpillar to the pupa.

After these three stages, a butterfly emerges from the pupa, with wings, six legs, and a proboscis mouth to feed on nectar. When the butterfly emerges, its wings are wet, so it has to wait until they dry before it can start flying. The butterfly then flies away from its host plant, where it grew from an egg to a caterpillar to a pupa and finally to a butterfly, in search of flowers to get nectar, and other butterflies to mate with. Once a butterfly has mated, it lays eggs on a host plant, and the processes starts again.



6. Glue the bowtie pasta to the lower-left section of the plate to indicate the butterfly. Draw an arrow from the pupa to the butterfly.

Photos via scholastic.com