

Butterfly Eggs



The butterfly starts its life as a tiny egg.



The female butterfly lays her eggs on the leaves of plants so that when they hatch, there will be something for them to eat.

Caterpillars



After about 1 or 2 weeks, the eggs will start to hatch and tiny caterpillars will wriggle out.

The tiny caterpillars start to eat straightaway. They continue eating and growing until they are many times bigger.



Pupa or Chrysalis

After about 4 weeks, the caterpillar stops eating and attaches itself to a leaf or twig.



Next, the caterpillar pupates. This means that it forms a hard outer shell called a pupa or chrysalis.

Inside a pupa or chrysalis

From the outside it looks as though nothing is happening, but inside the pupa or chrysalis, the caterpillar is changing into a butterfly.



Slowly, the chrysalis will appear to change colour as the outer shell becomes transparent. You can just about see the butterfly's wings inside this mature chrysalis.

Butterflies

After a few weeks, the pupal case splits and the butterfly pulls itself free.



At first the butterfly's wings are wet and crumpled and it cannot fly. The butterfly has to pump blood into its wings so that they can open. When its wings have dried, the butterfly can fly away.

Adult Butterflies

Adult butterflies
fly from flower
to flower feeding
on the flower's
nectar.



Soon, the female adult butterflies
begin to lay their own eggs and
the life cycle begins all over
again!

