

The life cycle of butterflies

Spring is in the air! Nature is waking up again and soon we will see all sorts of insects, including butterflies! In two lessons we are going to focus on the life cycle of butterflies using Eric Carle's famous book.

If you want to challenge the children, you can look at the activity plan about the life cycle of insects for groups 5-8 for more ideas.

Content aims

- Kerndoel 40: De leerlingen leren in de eigen omgeving veel voorkomende planten en dieren onderscheiden en benoemen en leren hoe ze functioneren in hun leefomgeving.
- Kerndoel 41: De leerlingen leren over de bouw van planten, dieren en mensen en over de vorm en functie van hun onderdelen.
- The children learn about the life cycle of the butterfly.
- The children can say what a caterpillar and a butterfly look like and what they can do.

Language aims

- Kerndoel 13: De leerlingen leren informatie te verwerven uit eenvoudige gesproken en geschreven Engelse teksten.
- Kerndoel 14: De leerlingen leren in het Engels informatie te vragen of geven over eenvoudige onderwerpen en zij ontwikkelen een attitude waarbij ze zich durven uit te drukken in die taal.
- The children learn keywords to describe the four stages of the life cycle of a butterfly.

Materials

- Large flashcards: egg, caterpillar, cocoon, butterfly, life cycle of the butterfly
- Small flashcards (each child should have one card): egg, caterpillar, cocoon, butterfly
- Book *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle (or a link to a video)
Link to videos of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*: <https://youtu.be/vkYmvxP0Ajl> (read by Eric Carle himself) or <https://youtu.be/75NQK-SmIYY> (animated version)
- Link to a time-lapse video of a monarch butterfly: <https://youtu.be/ocWgSgMGxOc>
- (optional) Link to information about butterflies in Dutch (SchoolTV): <https://schooltv.nl/video/van-ei-tot-vlinder-hoe-ontstaat-een-vlinder/>
- Link to a colouring page about the life cycle of butterflies: <http://www.supercoloring.com/coloring-pages/life-cycle-of-a-butterfly>
- Link to a song about being hungry: <https://youtu.be/ykTR0uFGwE0>
- Links to a song about hungry caterpillars: https://youtu.be/5gs8_VUSnMQ

Words for the children

- butterfly words: egg, caterpillar, cocoon, butterfly
- parts of the body: head, eyes, mouth, legs, wings
- verbs: eat, grow, fly, lay eggs, wait, change
- adjectives: *colours*, tiny, little, big, fat, hungry

Structures and phrases for the children

Groups 1-2:

This is an egg / a caterpillar.

We're eggs / caterpillars / cocoons / butterflies.

This is a tiny egg / big caterpillar.

This is a green leaf.

Hi! Bye!

Hurray! / Sorry.

Yes! / No!

Groups 3-4:

See groups 1-2

We wait / eat / fly.

What are you?

I'm an egg.

Hurray! I'm an egg, too!

Sorry, I'm a caterpillar.

It has (no) head / eyes / legs / wings.

Things for the teacher to say

Listen to me and repeat.

Look at the picture.

Watch me and copy me.

Let's read the book / Let's listen to the story.

Let's all be tiny eggs / caterpillars.

Let's change!

We're going to play a mix and switch / match game.

Walk up to someone and greet each other.

Say hi and give each other a high five!

The person with the shortest hair can start.

Match cards and form four large groups.

Do you know what to do?

Who can tell me what to do?

Shall we play the game?

Let's listen to a few people.

Who wants to show class what they can do?

Did you hear that? They used a full sentence.

Well done!

Great teamwork!

It's called a [*thinking time*] Very good!

Instructions

Lesson 1

Step 1 Activate the content

Since you want to pre-assess the children's knowledge, you can do this in Dutch.

Say that you are going to talk about butterflies. Ask the children what they know about butterflies.

Focus on the metamorphosis (or change) of the butterfly: *ei* / egg, *rups* / caterpillar (or larva), *pop* / pupa (or chrysalis), *cocon* / cocoon, *vinder* / butterfly. Show the flashcards to teach these key concepts. Also show [the time lapse video](#) of the caterpillar which turns into a monarch butterfly.

You can differentiate easily: in group 4 you can show [the SchoolTV video](#) on the life cycle of the butterfly.

Step 2 Activate the language

Using the step 1 flashcards, teach the keywords of the metamorphosis (change) in English: *egg*, *caterpillar*; *cocoon*; *butterfly*. First show the flashcard and say the word. Ask the children to repeat it. Then use the word in a short sentence and get the children to repeat it. In groups 3-4 use a longer sentence and get the children to repeat. Here are some examples:

- *Egg. This is an egg. This is a tiny egg. The tiny egg is grey.*
- *Caterpillar. This is a caterpillar. This is a big caterpillar. The big fat caterpillar is green.*

Also use the verb *change*. Then teach the words *hungry*, *eat*, *grow*, *tiny* / *little* and *big* / *fat* using TPR.

You could show the song about being hungry to repeat the word *hungry* and some other food words.

Step 3 Input

Read the book *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* or watch one of the YouTube videos. Talk about the content of the book, focussing on the metamorphosis. Here are some example questions to help you differentiate.

Easier questions	Harder questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is on the leaf in the moonlight? • What comes out of the egg / the cocoon? A caterpillar or butterfly? • What was the caterpillar before he was a caterpillar? An egg or a butterfly? • What will the caterpillar become? An egg or a butterfly? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happened first? What happened next? • Who or what put the egg there, do you think? • What does the caterpillar eat?

Step 4 Practice

Act out the story using TPR. Demonstrate the positions.

- 1: egg Sit on the floor, grasp your knees, and tuck your head under.
 2: caterpillar Stretch out on the floor and wriggle. Eat, eat, eat.
 3: cocoon Stand very still and cross your arms tightly across your chest. Wiggle a bit inside your cocoon after a while.
 4: butterfly Gently stretch your arms (wings) to let them dry and then fly around the room.

Next, act out each stage. Between each stage say: *Let's change.*

Then get the children to say what they are. In groups 3 and 4 they can also say what they do:

- We are eggs. [And we wait, wait, wait.]
 We are caterpillars. [And we eat, eat, eat.]
 We are cocoons. [And we wait, wait, wait.]
 We are butterflies. [And we fly, fly, fly.]

Step 5 Assessment

Hang up the flashcards in different parts of the classroom. Name an animal and get the children to point to the flashcard. Then ask one child to fly / wriggle / eat its way to the flashcard. Repeat.

Lesson 2

Step 6 Activating the content and the language

Recap the content and the language from lesson 1. Show the flashcards and ask questions about them. You can ask closed questions, or open questions if you feel the children are ready for this, e.g.:

Easier / closed questions	Harder / open questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who can point to the caterpillar? Is this an egg or a cocoon? Is the egg brown? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What's this in English? What's this called in English? What colour is it?

Watch one of the YouTube videos of the book again or show the YouTube video of the song [Hungry caterpillars](#).

Step 7 Input

Show the flashcards again. This time focus on what the animals look like and how they behave. Again, differentiate to challenge all the children.

Easier questions	Harder questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the egg / the caterpillar / the cocoon / the butterfly tiny or big? Does the egg / the caterpillar / the cocoon / the butterfly have a head / eyes / mouth / legs / wings? Can you point to the mouth / legs of the caterpillar / butterfly? Can the egg / the caterpillar / the cocoon / the butterfly eat / walk / fly? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does the egg / the caterpillar / the cocoon / the butterfly look like? What colour is the egg / the caterpillar / the cocoon / the butterfly? What parts of the body can you see? What can the egg / the caterpillar / the cocoon / the butterfly do? The butterfly flies away. What do you think it is going to do now?

Step 8 Practice

You are going to play a mix and match game. The children should greet each other. Then they need to talk about their cards. Choose the level that is best for your children. If they match, they keep playing to form a larger group. If they don't match, they need to find a new partner. In the end there should be four groups.

Use the flashcards (*egg, caterpillar, cocoon, butterfly*) and demonstrate the dialogue with a child. Then get two children to demonstrate the game. Check if everybody knows what to do. Hand out the small flashcards to the children at random. In groups 1-2 you could select 8 children or give the cards to those who want to play. Play the game. Give praise and feedback. Play again. Check that they understand by asking a few pairs to demonstrate.

	Easier dialogue	Harder dialogue
A	Say what is on your card: <i>Egg</i> .	Ask the question: <i>What are you?</i>
B	Say what is on your card: <i>Butterfly</i> .	Answer the question: <i>I'm an egg.</i>
A + B	The same? <i>Hurray!</i> Different? <i>Sorry. Bye.</i>	The same? <i>Hurray! We're eggs.</i> Different? <i>Sorry, I'm a caterpillar. Bye.</i>

Wil je meer weten over **coöperatieve werkvormen** zoals *mix and match* en hoe je deze in je Engelse lessen kunt gebruiken? Kijk op [het EarlyBird-portal!](#) Daar vind je meer informatie over de vakdidactiek van vvto Engels. | EarlyBird-portal \ didactiek \ coöperatief leren

Step 9 Production

At this stage, the content and the language should be fully integrated. Also develop the lower and higher thinking skills of the children. Use the flashcards to support the children while you discuss these questions.

- Can you name the four stages? The egg, the caterpillar, the cocoon, the butterfly.
- Can you put the four stages (flashcards) in the correct order?
- Can you compare the parts of the body of the caterpillar and of the butterfly? Head, eyes, mouth, legs, wings.
- Can you compare the behaviour of the caterpillar and the butterfly? Eat, grow, fly, lay eggs.

Step 10 Assessment

Hand out [the colouring page](#). Get the children to colour the four life stages of a butterfly. Walk around and ask individual children to tell you about their drawing.

Extension

- Sing [the song about being hungry](#) to repeat the word *hungry* and some more food words.
- Sing [the song about the hungry caterpillars](#).