

# Butterfly Day

by Judy Raymond and Room Ten, Maungawhau School

## Overview

In this factual recount, Room Ten shares their excitement when a monarch butterfly emerges from a chrysalis in their classroom. It includes an explanation, written by a child, of how a butterfly is formed.

## Suggested purposes

You could use this text to build the children's awareness of the butterfly life cycle and to develop the comprehension strategies of identifying main ideas, analysing and synthesising, inferring, and identifying point of view. It's also a useful model of using precise, descriptive language and of ways to make a recount engaging. The interest vocabulary in the text provides useful opportunities for extending and monitoring the children's reading strategies.

## Text features

(Focus on only one or two per session.)

- the precise, descriptive vocabulary
- the adverbs “carefully”, “clumsily”, “slowly”
- the subject-specific vocabulary – “autumn”, “caterpillars”, “chrysalis”, “hatch”, “monarch”, “science”, “swan plant”
- the varying points of view of the children
- the positive ending
- the changes of tense
- the inclusion of children's work
- the specific design features – the use of orange for the cover and pages 2 and 5, the use of text boxes, the butterfly graphics, the children's drawings, and the use of different fonts, font sizes, and curved print layout (linked by ellipses) on pages 6 and 7
- the close-up photographs
- the irregular past-tense verbs – “caught”, “hung”
- the compound words “butterfly”, “classroom”, “inside”, “outside”, “upside”, “sunshine”.

## Possible challenges

- the subject-specific vocabulary
- the words “autumn”, “caught”, “noticed”, “science”, and the children's names
- the time shifts (on page 2), from “Last Tuesday” to the events preceding Tuesday and (on page 3) back to describing what happened on Tuesday
- the idea of not being sure about liking something (on page 4).

## Introducing the text

If possible, bring in a swan plant with caterpillars or chrysalises on it. Otherwise, use the butterfly photograph on the title page as a discussion starter. Ask the children to tell you what they know about monarch butterflies. Include the words “chrysalis”, “monarch”, and “swan plant” in the discussion. You could use the life cycle photographs on pages 2 and 3 to confirm or clarify the children’s understanding. Note that the term “chrysalis” can refer to both the butterfly pupae and its hard outer case. (A cocoon is a spun silk covering around a pupa.) Tell the children that you have a book written by a class about a day when a monarch butterfly came out of its chrysalis right in front of them!

## During the reading

Read the title and the names of the authors. Ask the children to read the text silently, pausing at various points for discussion or to clarify any difficulties.

Page 2 – Support the children’s understanding of the time sequence by asking them to read to find out when the butterfly came out. Ask the children to read on to find out what happened before last Tuesday. *What word has the writer used to let you know that these things happened earlier?*

If the children aren’t familiar with the written form of the word “science”, you could ask them to read on to the word “table” and ask where a class might keep swan plants and caterpillars, or you could help them decode it by writing “sci-ence” on the whiteboard, reminding them that sometimes the “c” after an “s” is silent. Whichever strategy the children use to work it out, encourage them to cross-check – *Does it make sense? If it was “science”, what letters might you expect to see? Is there anywhere in the classroom you might be able to quickly find this word and check?*

Page 3 – If the children need help with “noticed”, prompt them to focus on the “no” and the following “t” sound and to read on. Remind them that “c” can have more than one sound. If necessary, help them “chunk” the word “cl-um (or ‘clum’)-si-ly”. Check that they understand what “clumsy” means. Tell them that this word is describing how the butterfly is fluttering. *Why was the butterfly “fluttering clumsily”?*

Pages 4 and 5 – The children may find it helpful to read on to the end of the sentence to work out “caught”. Remind them that this is the past-tense form of “catch”. You may need to reassure the children about the pronunciation of the children’s names. *What did the children think about the butterfly landing on them? How do you know? How would you feel?* If the children seem confused by Yong Lu’s uncertainty, talk about how, when you first try something completely new (like playing a game for the first time), you may not be sure whether you like it or not. It might be a bit scary because you don’t know what to expect. *Why did the butterfly keep trying to get up on their heads?*

Pages 6 and 7 – Before reading, encourage the children to think about which pieces of text to read first.

Page 8 – If the children need support with the decoding of “autumn”, you could remind them of the “au” sound in “caught” on page 4 and “Laura” on page 5. Reassure the children that the “n” is silent. *Why have the writers changed to the present tense for the last sentence?* Draw out the idea that it confirms that the experience was exciting (“We can’t wait”) and that there are more butterflies to come from the other chrysalises in the classroom.

## After the reading

(Choose only one or two per session.)

Listen to the children reread the text with a partner, observing the strategies they use to manage the challenges in the text.

Ask the children to talk with a partner about what they've learned about butterflies from this text. Record the information together on a group chart.

As a group, develop a glossary for some of the subject-specific words, such as "autumn", "butterfly", "caterpillar", "chrysalis", "science", and "swan plant".

Identify the adverbs in the text. Explain to the children that adverbs tell us *how* things are done and that they often end in "ly". Ask the children to find two adverbs on page 3. Read the sentences with and without the adverbs. Mime the actions of a butterfly "fluttering" and "fluttering clumsily". Draw out the idea that the adverb creates a more accurate picture. Repeat this activity for "carefully" on page 4.

Ask the children to reread pages 3 and 4, thinking about how the writers have described the butterfly. Draw out the idea that the writers have focused on what the butterfly *did*, using verbs and adverbs. Record the descriptive language on the whiteboard. Ask the children to focus on the close-up photograph on page 3 and brainstorm more words to describe the butterfly in detail.

Identify the points of view expressed in the text. Ask the children to find the part where the reader starts to find out what the children thought of the butterflies (page 4). *Was everyone happy about it? What did Laura and Shanaya think (on page 5)? Do you think everyone in the class would agree with the last sentence on page 8?*

Focus on the design of the book, for example, pages 6 and 7. *Why do you think the text is set out like this? How does it affect the way you read it?* Draw out the idea that the shape of the writing suggests the flight of the butterfly and that the increasing size adds to the feeling of building excitement. Ask the children to choose one design feature and say why they think it is (or isn't) effective.

Find compound words in the text and ask the children to split them. Remind the children of the strategy of looking for the biggest part of a word that they know when they're trying to work out unfamiliar words.

Focus on the irregular past-tense verbs "hung" and "caught". Explain that there are some verbs that can't have "ed" added to them and that the children need to use their knowledge of spoken English to help them decide what sounds right. *Could it be "catched"?* For ESOL children, who are less likely to be able to draw on their knowledge of English syntax, try to use these irregular verbs often in subsequent conversations.

## Suggestions for further tasks

Read the poem "Caterpillars" in the Ready to Read big book *Spish Splash!*

Find other texts about butterflies, using *Journal Search* and the library catalogue.

Make a poster depicting the life cycle of the monarch butterfly.

Start a class collection of adverbs and encourage the children to use them in their writing to add interest and information.

Write poems or short descriptions about butterflies, focusing on the use of descriptive verbs and adverbs.

Draw a labelled diagram of a butterfly.

Use information from the text to write a report about monarch butterflies. Present the report using one or more of the design features from the book.

Create butterflies with crayon and dye, using the photographs in the book as a reference.