

BUTTERFLY BASICS: OBSERVE LIKE A SCIENTIST

SUGGESTED AGE RANGE: K-8TH GRADE

Practice observing like a scientist by watching butterflies fly and feed. Look carefully and record your observations about butterflies' bodies and behaviors.

MATERIALS

[Lena Meijer Tropical Conservatory Live Stream](#)

[Types of Butterflies: Swallowtails Video](#)

[Types of Butterflies: Longwings Video](#)

[Types of Butterflies: Brushfooted Video](#)

[Slow Motion Butterflies Video](#)

[Blue Morphos in Slow Motion Video](#)

[Butterfly Field Journal](#) (downloadable PDF)

[Why These Wings Worksheet](#) (downloadable PDF)

Pencil and paper for answering questions and sketching

If doing the extension activities, you will need:

Notebook or sketchbook

Paint

Colored pencils

Markers

Crayons, etc.

VOCABULARY

Camouflage: something (such as color or shape) that protects an animal from attack by making the animal difficult to see in the area around it.

Predator: an animal that lives by killing and eating other animals; an animal that preys on other animals.

Symmetry: the quality of something that has two sides or halves that are the same or very close in size, shape, and position; the quality of having symmetrical parts.

Pattern: a repeated form or design, especially that is used to decorate something.

DIRECTIONS

Watch and Learn: Observe Like a Scientist

Watch the 3 Types of Butterflies videos to learn about [longwings](#), [swallowtails](#), and [brushfooted](#) butterflies. Choose a favorite type of butterfly and observe the video carefully. You can pause the video to look closely at butterflies and record your observations.

1. Pause the video to observe a butterfly you like. What does it look like? Draw the shape of one wing and sketch the pattern. Notice the symmetry on your butterfly.

- Record as many colors as you can find on your butterfly:



- Watch the butterflies in the videos move and feed. Watch the video of [butterflies in slow motion](#). What do you notice about their behavior?
- What is something that makes this type of butterfly unique?
- Watch the [Lena Meijer Tropical Conservatory Live Stream](#). Can you find the type of butterfly you chose? What did you observe that helped you to identify it?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Make Your Own Field Journal (Science, K–8th)

Scientists use field journals to record their observations, thoughts and questions about the environments they study. Find a notebook or a sketchbook in your home that you can use to explore the natural world around your house or in a nearby park. Ask yourself questions about what you see, and record or draw what you observe. You can use the [field journal](#) in the link as an example.

Design A Butterfly (Visual Arts, K–8th)

Learn about why butterflies' bright colors and bold wing patterns help them to survive by looking at the [Why These Wings](#) worksheet. Then, design and draw a butterfly of your own. How does its unique patterns and colors help it to warm itself, camouflage itself, or warn or confuse predators?

Explore Symmetry (Math and Visual Arts, K–3rd)

Butterflies are symmetrical, meaning their patterns and colors are the same on both sides of their bodies. Make symmetrical butterflies by folding a sheet of paper in half and creasing it. Open the paper, then paint half of your butterfly on one side. Press your paper back together and rub to create a symmetrical design. How many symmetrical butterflies can you imagine and create?

References:

Definitions for vocabulary sourced from:
<https://learnersdictionary.com/>



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