

# Whimsical Wings Monarch Curriculum (Grades K-2)



This curriculum guide is designed to align with both NSTA and North Carolina Essential Standards (NCES). It introduces students to the Monarch butterfly lifecycle through observation, inquiry, and creativity. Activities are aligned with early elementary science standards and promote hands-on learning.

## **Lesson Overview:**

- Lesson 1 - Meet the Monarch! Intro to butterflies and Monarchs. Includes a printable coloring activity.
- Lesson 2 - The Life Cycle in Action. Caterpillar - Chrysalis - Butterfly. Students label stages on a poster.
- Lesson 3 - A Monarch's Favorite Plant: Milkweed. Observation of milkweed and Monarch eggs.
- Lesson 4 - Wings and Wishes. Release day reflection and writing/drawing activity.

# MONARCH BUTTERFLY

## Life Cycle



1

Monarchs mate



2

The female lays eggs  
only on milkweed



3

The egg is very small -  
the size of a pinhead  
*Use magnifying glass*



10

It takes 3 to 4 hours  
for the wings to fully dry

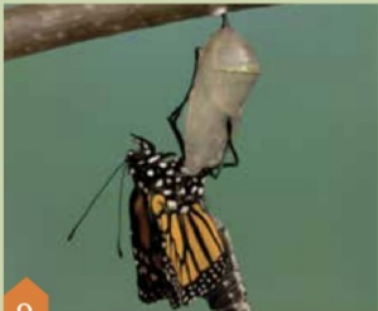
*How do I see the small caterpillars?*  
Use your magnifier and watch for small  
holes in the leaves. There's a caterpillar  
nearby! They will soon be big enough  
to see very well without your magnifier.

*The caterpillar is on the side  
of the netting or not moving.*  
This is okay. They could be molting or  
shedding their skin. They grow so fast they  
burst out of their old skin and grow new skin  
several times before they turn into a chrysalis.



4

A newborn monarch caterpillar  
is the size of an eyelash



9

A monarch dangles from the  
empty chrysalis (may take a day)

*What do the caterpillars drink?*  
The caterpillars don't need to be misted or  
get anything other than the nutrients in the  
leaves of the milkweed. Only when they turn  
into a chrysalis or butterfly do they need  
water from the mister.

*Can the caterpillars see and hear?*  
The caterpillars rely on their sense of smell  
to navigate to the tastiest leaves on the plant.  
They don't see very well. But they can hear!  
If you notice when they are bigger and hear  
a loud noise, they will "jump."

*Do the caterpillars and butterflies fight?*  
No. They can get in each other's way trying  
to get to the best parts of the plant, but  
they don't mean to be disrespectful to one  
another! They are gentle, loving creatures.



5

Caterpillars grow rapidly and  
eat only milkweed  
*Watch for holes in leaves!  
Warmer = faster growth, no direct sunlight*



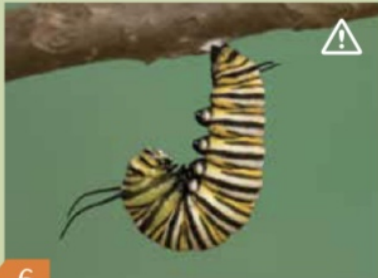
8

The butterfly emerges  
in 6-10 days  
*Mist 2-3 times per day*



7

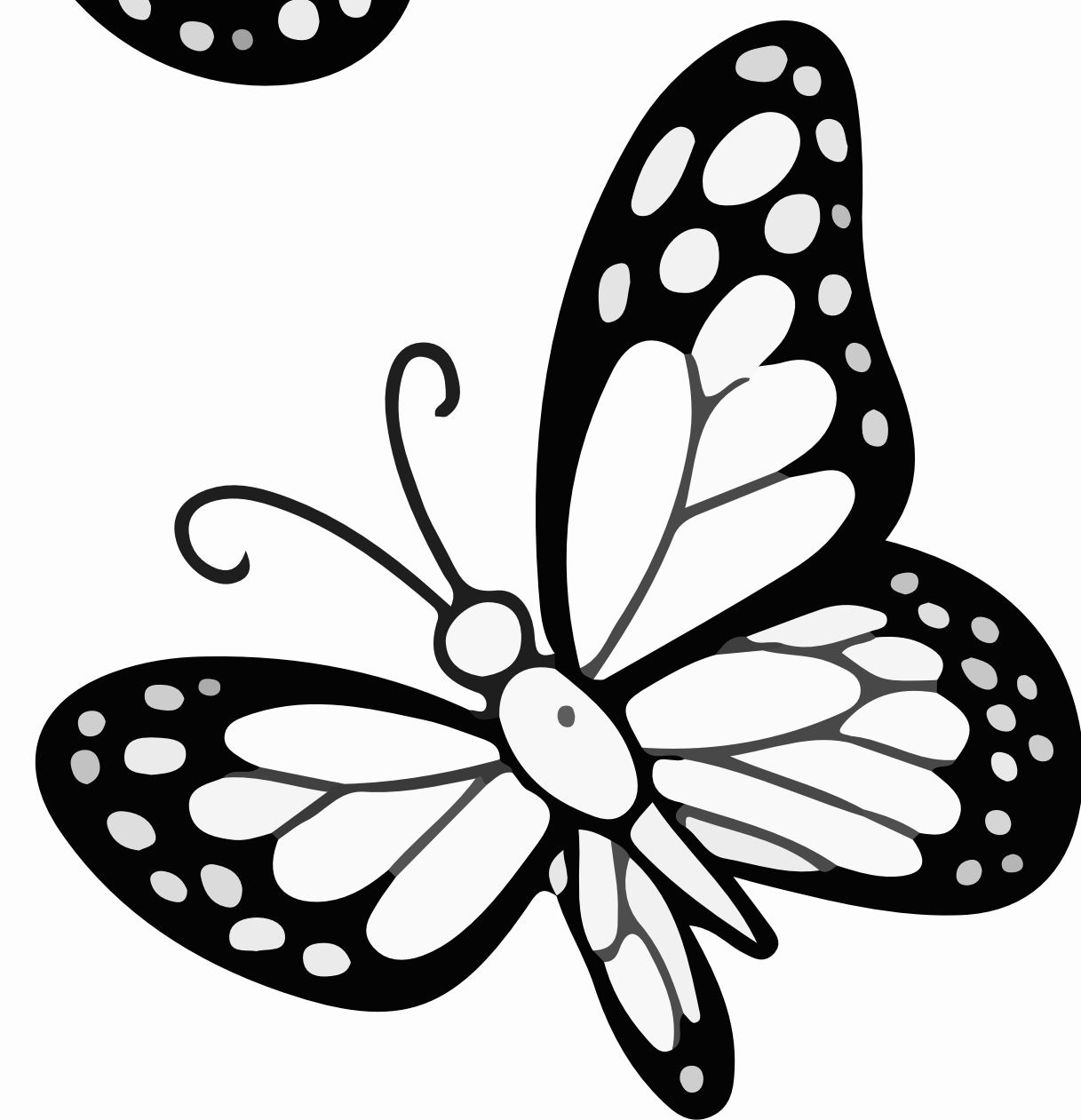
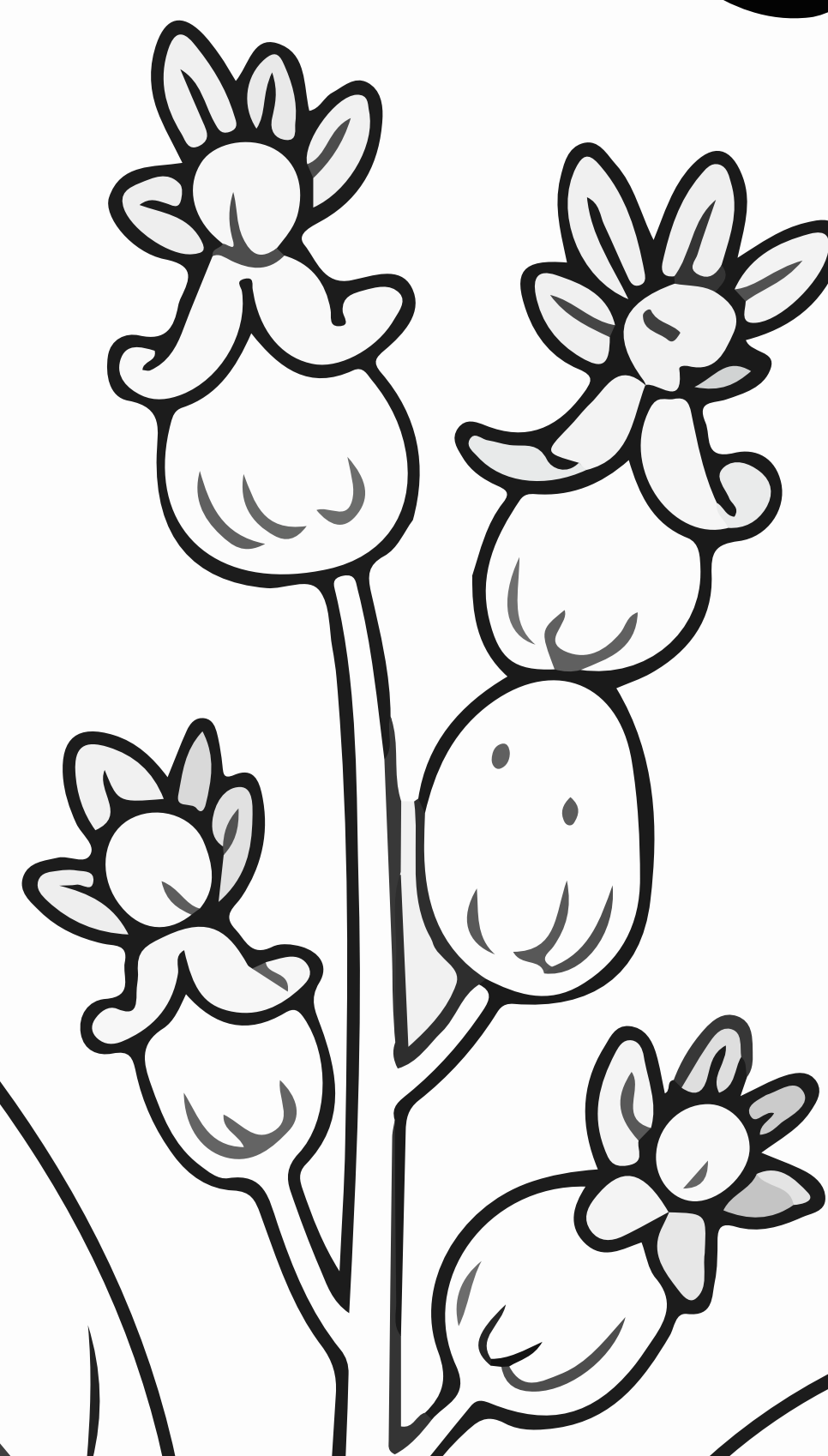
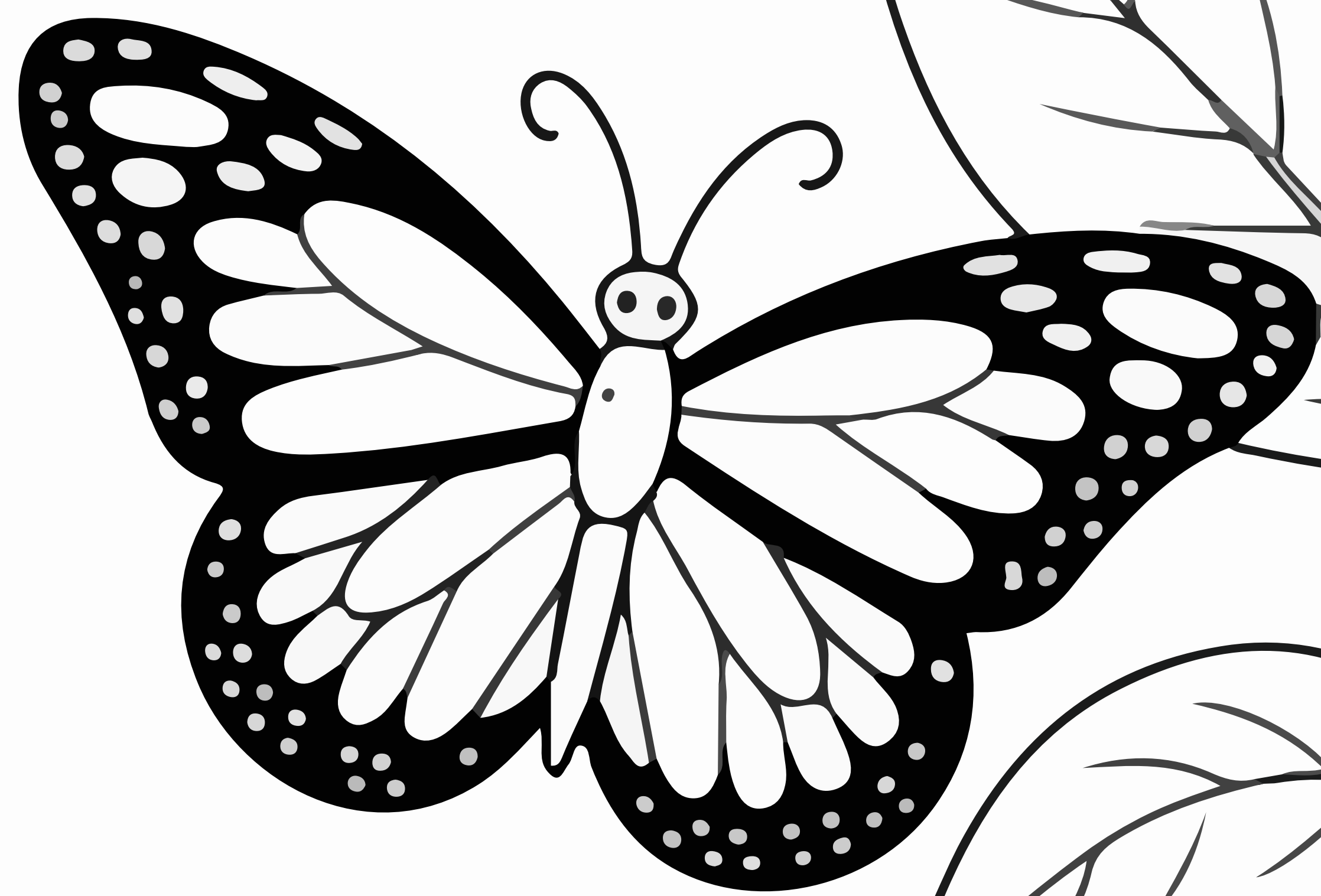
A newly formed chrysalis  
*Begin misting*



6

Caterpillars form a "J" shape  
before turning into a chrysalis  
*No bumping!*

# Plant Milkweed for Monarchs



Whimsical  
Wings

# Observation Journal Page



Monarch Butterfly Daily Observation Journal

Whimsical Wings Farms | [www.whimsicalwingsfarms.com](http://www.whimsicalwingsfarms.com) | [help@whimsicalwingsfarms.com](mailto:help@whimsicalwingsfarms.com)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Butterfly Stage (circle one): Egg   Caterpillar   Chrysalis   Butterfly

1. What do you see today?

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2. What is your butterfly doing?

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3. What do you think will happen next?

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Draw what you see:

[ Drawing Box ]



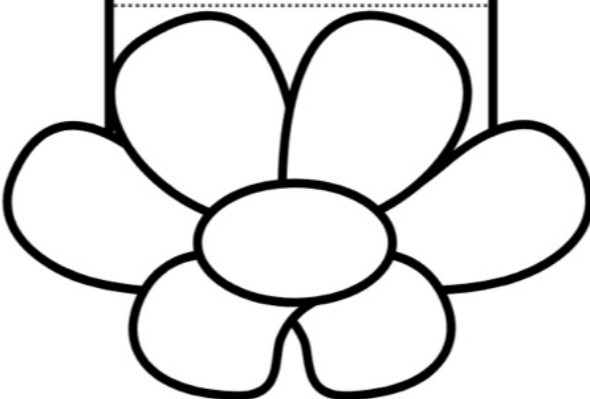


1

2

3

4



# Life Cycle of a BUTTERFLY

Instructions:

1. Color the butterfly and the stages of its life cycle.
2. Cut and paste the pictures in order on the boxes.
3. Cut around the butterfly template and fold the dotted horizontal lines into pleats.

eggs



caterpillar



chrysalis

butterfly

