

The Life Cycle of a Butterfly: Tiny's Four Lives

Read the story aloud together, then try the activities.

Name _____

Class _____

Date _____

On the underside of a leaf in Arjun's garden sat an egg no bigger than a sesame seed. A butterfly had laid it there on purpose — this was exactly the kind of leaf the baby inside would love to eat. For a few days the egg sat very still. Inside, something was growing.

One morning — crack! — out wriggled a tiny caterpillar. Arjun named her Tiny. Tiny's first meal was her own eggshell. Her second meal was the leaf. Her third meal was the next leaf, and the next, and the next. Munch, munch, munch. Tiny grew so fast that her skin got too tight, so she wriggled right out of it, wearing a brand-new, bigger skin underneath. She did that four times!

After about two weeks, Tiny was big and fat and full. She climbed up a twig, hung upside down, and wriggled out of her skin one last time. Underneath was a hard, smooth case called a chrysalis. "Is she sleeping?" asked Arjun. "Not at all," said his grandmother. "Inside, she is being rebuilt from the inside out."

Arjun checked the chrysalis every day. From the outside, nothing seemed to happen. But inside, Tiny's caterpillar body was changing completely — growing wings, long legs, big eyes and a curly tongue like a straw. After about ten days, the chrysalis turned see-through, and Arjun could see the colours of wings folded inside.

Then the chrysalis split open. Out climbed a butterfly with crumpled, damp wings. She hung very still while she pumped her wings full and let them dry in the sun. "She has to wait," whispered his grandmother. "If she flies too early, her wings won't work." An hour later, Tiny opened her wings wide — orange and black and beautiful — and flew to a flower to drink its sweet nectar.

All summer, Tiny visited the garden. And one day, Arjun saw her land on a leaf, curl her body, and leave something behind on the underside: a tiny egg, no bigger than a sesame seed. "Here we go again," said Arjun, smiling. The life cycle had come full circle.

1. Match each word to its meaning

Write the letter next to each word.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1. Life cycle ____ | A. shedding old skin to grow bigger. |
| 2. Larva ____ | B. the stage inside the chrysalis. |
| 3. Moulting ____ | C. the hard case a butterfly forms around itself. |
| 4. Pupa ____ | D. a big change in body shape, like caterpillar to butterfly. |
| 5. Chrysalis ____ | E. the sweet liquid inside flowers that butterflies drink. |
| 6. Metamorphosis ____ | F. the stages a living thing goes through, again and again. |
| 7. Nectar ____ | G. the scientific name for a caterpillar. |

2. Put Tiny's four stages in order (1-4).

- [] Caterpillar
- [] Chrysalis
- [] Butterfly
- [] Egg

3. Answer the questions

1. Why did the butterfly lay her egg on that leaf?

2. Why did Tiny keep wriggling out of her skin?

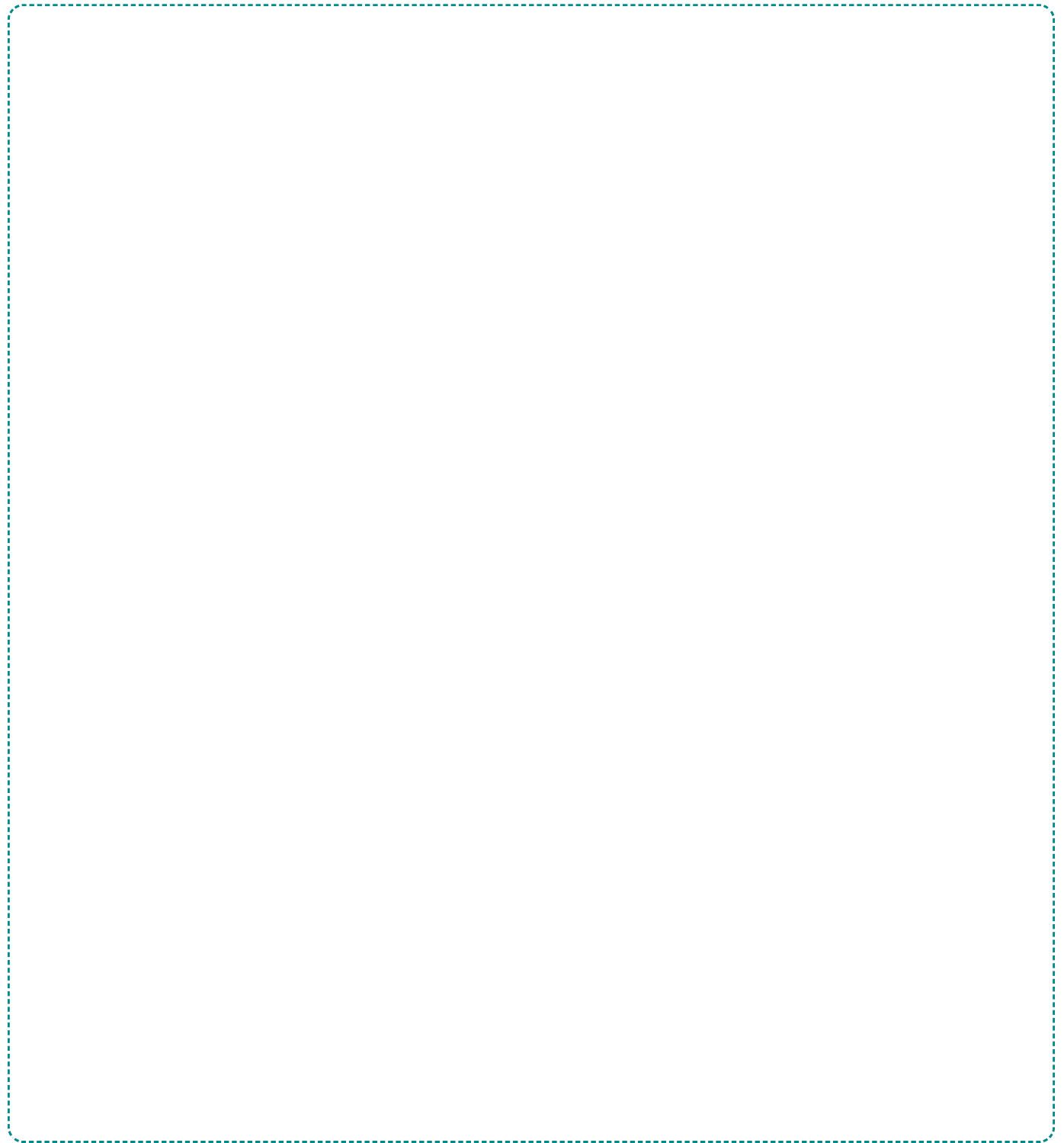
3. Was Tiny asleep inside the chrysalis?

4. Why did the new butterfly wait before flying?

5. What are the four stages, in order?

4. Draw and label

Draw the butterfly life cycle as a circle with arrows: egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, butterfly.

A large, empty rectangular area defined by a dashed teal border, intended for a child to draw and label the butterfly life cycle. The area is square-shaped and occupies most of the page below the instructions.

Answer key (for teachers and parents)

On its own page so you can leave it out when printing for children.

1. 1-F 2-G 3-A 4-B 5-C 6-D 7-E

2. 1. Egg 2. Caterpillar 3. Chrysalis 4. Butterfly

3.1 Because it was the food the caterpillar would need.

3.2 She was growing so fast her skin became too tight.

3.3 No — her body was changing into a butterfly.

3.4 Her wings needed to fill out and dry.

3.5 Egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, butterfly.