

ELINOR WONDERS WHY

140: BUTTERFLY BABIES

Written by
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Elinor's Question: *What do baby butterflies look like?*

Logline: *When the kids go searching for baby butterflies in the forest, they're surprised to discover that caterpillars are baby butterflies.*

Curriculum goals: LS3. Understand that all animals need food in order to live and grow, that they get their food from plants or from other animals, and that plants need water and light to live and grow. [The kids watch caterpillars eat the leaves of certain plants]

LS4. Understand that all animals and plants have a life cycle, can reproduce, and change and grow over time. [The kids observe caterpillars turning in to chrysalises and then into butterflies]

LS7. Understand that young animals and young plants are very much, but not exactly like their parents. [The kids discover that caterpillars share some similarities with butterflies, but also look very different]

LS8. Begin to understand that there are many different kinds of living things and how they may be the same or different. [The kids observe different species of butterflies]

SEP3b. Compare and contrast objects and events by describing similarities and differences in detail. [The kids compare large and small butterflies, and compare caterpillars and butterflies]

SEP8b. Obtain information using various age-appropriate texts, text features, and other media to help answer a question and/or support an explanation. [Olive looks in a nature book to learn about butterfly species, chrysalises, and metamorphosis]

SEP8e. Use basic science and engineering content vocabulary when investigating and describing observable phenomena. [The kids learn and use the term "metamorphosis"]

Main Characters: Elinor, Olive, Ari, Mr. Bat

Secondary Characters: Miri

Props: Monarch butterflies, caterpillars, flowers, magnifying glass

Locations: Park, Forest Path, Forest Clearing

FIRST DRAFT: July 24, 2019
SECOND DRAFT: August 15, 2019

It's a beautiful summery day. ELINOR, OLIVE, and ARI are walking down a path in the park with MR. BAT, who is pushing MIRI in a stroller. Miri is all snuggled up in a blanket.

Everybody <SFX: GIGGLES>.

Ari makes funny faces at his little sister, who <SFX: GIGGLES AND LAUGHS>.

6 MR. BAT 6
(mock anger) Hey, I'm adorable too!

The kids have a <SFX: LAUGH>.

The kids look around. A monarch butterfly flutters in and hovers above the stroller.

<https://images.app.goo.gl/aBSqLrSE6PPKiEjW8> *

8	ARI	8	*
	I see a butterfly. Butterflies are		*
	my favorite.		*

<SFX: OOOHH> as the kids follow the butterfly. The butterfly
flies low over Miri. Miri waves her arms at it. <SFX: BABY
GIGGLES> *

9 ARI (CONT'D) 9 *
It looks like Miri thinks *
butterflies are pretty cool, too. *

PAN: The butterfly flutters over Miri's stroller and lands on
a milkweed plant that's growing nearby. *

The kids follow the butterfly as Mr. Bat settles on a bench
and plays with Miri in the background. *

CU: The kids cluster close to observe the butterfly.

10 ARI (CONT'D) 10 *
How amazing is that? I like any *
animal with wings. Wings just add a *
little extra coolness, you know? *

Ari flaps his wings and they all <SFX: GIGGLE>. *

11 ELINOR 11 *
Butterflies sure are interesting. *
Hey, maybe we should spend today *
exploring butterflies? *

12 OLIVE 12 *
But we can't fly like Ari. Maybe we *
should observe something that's *
lower to the ground. *

At that moment, Olive notices a stripy monarch caterpillar on
a lower milkweed leaf.

13 OLIVE (CONT'D) 13
Wait, look. There's a caterpillar
on this plant, too. Caterpillars
are *my* favorite. Maybe we should
spend today looking at
caterpillars?

14 ELINOR 14
Hmm. Butterflies and caterpillars
are BOTH pretty interesting. Let's
observe them both. Olive, can you
write down what we see? *

15 OLIVE 15 *
Sure. *

Olive takes out her notebook and divides a page into two
columns, one for butterflies and one for caterpillars. *

CLOSE UP: The butterfly, fluttering over the flowers.

16	ELINOR	16	*
	Ari, what do you notice about this		*
	butterfly?		*

17	ARI	17	*
	It can fly. Just look at those		*
	awesome wings.		*

CLOSE UP: Olive's notebook, where she's drawn a flying butterfly under the butterfly column. *

CLOSE UP: The caterpillar is crawling along the leaf, its legs moving in a cool wave.

18	ELINOR	18	*
	What about that caterpillar, Olive?		*

19	OLIVE	19	*
	Well, the caterpillar can't fly,		
	but I love the way it crawls. How		
	does it move all those legs at the		
	same time?		

20	ARI	20	*
	Wow. I only have TWO legs and I		*
	still trip sometimes.		

Ari does an exaggerated fall backwards. <SFX: GIGGLE> *

21	OLIVE	21	*
	Ari, you are so funny!		*

CLOSE UP: Olive's notebook with a drawing of a caterpillar walking along. *

22	ELINOR	22	
	What else is interesting about		
	butterflies and caterpillars?		

BACK ON: The butterfly, slowly opening and closing its wings as it drinks. *

23	ARI	23	*
	Butterflies have awesome patterns		*
	on their wings. They're so		
	colorful. I wish I had a t-shirt		*
	like that.		

THOUGHT BUBBLE shows Ari wearing a fancy monarch-patterned shirt, looking proud of himself. BACK ON: The caterpillar, still munching.

24 OLIVE 24
True. But just LOOK at the
caterpillar's cool stripes. I wish
I had a pair of pants with that
stripes like that. *

THOUGHT BUBBLE shows Olive wearing a pair of fancy
caterpillar-striped pants, looking proud of herself.

25 ELINOR 25
They're both very pretty. *

CLOSE UP: Olive's notebook with a drawing of the fancy pants
and the fancy shirt. *

BACK ON: The butterfly. As Ari talks, it lifts up from the
flower and flutters into the air. *

26 ARI 26
Well, a butterfly-

PAN OUT TO: The butterfly flying overhead.

27 ARI (CONT'D) 27
Hey, come back here! I was TRYING
to tell my friends how cool you
are.

<SFX: GIGGLE> The kids follow the butterfly back to the
stroller as it flutters over to Miri and lands on her nose.

28 OLIVE 28
<GASP!> It landed on Miri's nose!

CLOSE UP: Miri stares at the butterfly, eyes crossed. She
makes a tiny, cute <SFX: BABY SNEEZE>. The kids <SFX: GIGGLE>

PAN OUT to the kids. The butterfly rises up to fly around the
kids' head.

ANGLE ON: Olive looking at Miri.

29 OLIVE (CONT'D) 29
Butterflies are great, but baby
bats are pretty amazing, too.

ZOOM OUT to all the kids clustered around the stroller.

30 ELINOR 30
You know, I don't think I've ever
seen a baby butterfly.

The kids all look thoughtful.

31 ELINOR (CONT'D) 31
I've seen bat babies, bird babies,
bunny babies... but no butterfly
babies!

32 OLIVE 32
You're right, Elinor. I don't think
I've ever seen a baby butterfly.

33 ARI 33
I wonder what baby butterflies look
like?

34 ELINOR 34
Hmm. Well, Miri looks like a tiny
version of you and your dad. Maybe
baby butterflies look just like
grown-up butterflies, but tinier.

*

THOUGHT BUBBLE showing a parent monarch butterfly holding a
smaller, cuter butterfly in a bundle. The bubble pops and
Elinor has an idea.

35 ELINOR (CONT'D) 35
I know what we should do today.
Let's look for baby butterflies.

After an <SFX: EXCITED YEAH! OK! WALLA>, the kids look at the
butterfly fluttering over their heads.

36 OLIVE 36
Let's follow that butterfly to see
if it has any babies.

The butterfly begins to fly away.

37 ELINOR 37
It's getting away! Let's go! We
need MORE OBSERVATIONS!

With a <SFX: GIGGLE>, the kids run off after it. Mr. Bat,
who's been watching this whole exchange with benign
amusement, waves them goodbye.

38 MR. BAT 38
Happy exploring, kids!

2. EXT FOREST PATH -- CONTINUOUS

The kids enter the forest, walking along a path, following
the butterfly as it flutters here and there.

39 OLIVE 39
That butterfly sure flies a lot. I
wonder where it's going.

The kids jokingly come up with ideas.

40 ELINOR 40
Maybe it's late for butterfly
school?

41 OLIVE 41
Or maybe it's going to a butterfly
party!

42 ARI 42
Or maybe it's going to a baseball
game. Because it's a BATTER-fly.

43 OLIVE 43 *
(giggle) Oh Ari. *

The kids <SFX: LAUGH>. They keep following the butterfly down
the path, and it leads them to...

3. EXT. SUNLIT FOREST CLEARING -- CONTINUOUS

38 The monarch butterfly flies into a beautiful sunlit clearing 38
that isn't too far down the path. The space is full of
monarch butterflies, plus multicolored flowers, including
lots of common milkweed plants. The kids are awed by this
pretty place. <SFX: WHOOA WALLA> *

44 ARI 44
Olive, you were right! It's like a
butterfly party.

ANGLE ON: The butterflies, enjoying their milkweed.

45 ELINOR 45
Ok, let's see if we can find any
baby butterflies.

The kids split up. ANGLE ON: Olive examining one patch of the
clearing where a few butterflies are flying around some
yellow flowers.

46 OLIVE 46
(to herself) Hmm. No butterfly
babies here.

ANGLE ON: Elinor, looking at a different patch of the
clearing with blue flowers. All the butterflies look like
full-size adult butterflies.

47 ELINOR 47
(to herself) Any babies here? Nope.

ANGLE ON: Ari, who is flying, hovering above a patch of milkweed with some butterflies.

48 ARI 48
 (to himself) Just more of those
 orange butterflies over here. They
 sure are cool, though.

The kids regroup.

49 ELINOR 49
Did anyone find any baby
butterflies?

50 OLIVE 50

I just saw a bunch of those orange
butterflies, all about the same
size.

51 Same here. ARI 51

Elinor looks thoughtful.

52 ELINOR 52
I wonder where all the baby
butterflies are?

53 ARI 53
Maybe baby butterflies are too tiny
to see?

54 OLIVE 54 *

Well, if they're really small,
we'll need some help to see them.

Olive reaches into her satchel and pulls a magnifying glass. She uses it to look around on the nearby leaves. CU on the view through her magnifying glass. There's a tiny spider.

55 OLIVE (CONT'D) 55

I see a little spider. It's really
cute, but it's not a baby
butterfly.

*

The magnifying glass view moves to a nearby ant.

56 OLIVE (CONT'D) 56
And there's an ant. It's very
interesting... But no baby
butterflies.

The magnifying glass view continues to move around, until an enormous eye appears!

57 OLIVE (CONT'D) 57
Aah!

BACK ON: The kids. Olive jumps backward, startled. We see that Ari has bent down to look too, and Olive saw his magnified eye.

58 OLIVE (CONT'D) 58
Ari!

59 ARI 59
Sorry!

<SFX: LAUGH>.

60 OLIVE 60
Hmm, we didn't see any tiny baby butterflies. What if we can't see them because they're all inside their houses?

Ari looks around.

61 ARI 61
I don't SEE any little houses around.

The kids all look around.

62 OLIVE 62
Me neither.

63 ELINOR 63
I don't think butterflies live in houses. I think they live OUTSIDE.

64 ARI 64
Yeah. Besides, how would they even build a house? They're way too small to lift a hammer.

Ari mimics holding and using a tiny little hammer. <SFX: LAUGH>.

65 ELINOR 65
Hmm, we can't seem to find any baby butterflies. That is SO interesting!

At that moment, Olive glances at one of the nearby milkweed plants and notices it has a caterpillar on it.

66 OLIVE 66
Hey, look. It's a caterpillar!

67 ARI 67
It's one of those caterpillars with
the fancy stripes.

<SFX: OOOH> The kids cluster around the caterpillar. As they
watch, it climbs under a stem and forms a J shape.

68 OLIVE 68
Wait, what's the caterpillar DOING?

69 ARI 69 *
It's hanging upside down. I love *
hanging upside down. Hmm, I think I *
like caterpillars now. *

CU: The caterpillar begins to shed its skin and form a
chrysalis. <SFX: GASP> *

70 ARI (CONT'D) 70
Whoa, what's happening?

71 ELINOR 71
It looks like it's getting rid of
its old skin.

TIME LAPSE (or other effect) of the butterfly becoming a
pretty green chrysalis (in reality, this can happen over the
course of 3-4 minutes: https://youtu.be/JkWr5k2H__Y).

72 OLIVE 72
It turned into some kind of green
pod.

NOTE: we can't say cocoon because only moths make cocoons.

73 ELINOR 73
And now it's just sitting there.

74 ARI 74
This is. So. Awesome.

BACK ON: Olive has turned to look at some of the other
milkweed plants.

75 OLIVE 75
Oh! I see another one of those
green pods over here.

ANGLE ON: Olive notices another pod, but it's darker and it's
twitching.

76 OLIVE (CONT'D) 76
And there's one over here, but it's
darker. Wait. This one is MOVING.

The kids cluster around the moving chrysalis. CU: The
chrysalis opens and the butterfly emerges, its wings wrinkled
at first, so it looks pretty strange.

77 ELINOR 77
It's breaking open!

78 ARI 78
What IS that? Is it an alien?

79 OLIVE 79
It can't be an alien... Can it?

The butterfly begins to pump up its wings.

80 ELINOR 80
Wait. I don't think that's an
alien. I think that's a... a...

81 ELINOR/OLIVE/ARI 81
Butterfly!

The kids <SFX: GASP> as the butterfly finishes pumping up its
wings. It flutters into the air.

BACK ON: The kids.

82 ARI 82
What just happened?

83 OLIVE 83
Hmm. Let's think about what we saw.

Olive gets out her notebook. CU: Olive's notebook. She draws
a caterpillar.

84 OLIVE (CONT'D) 84
First, we saw a caterpillar.

85 ELINOR 85
And then we saw it turn into a kind
of pod.

Olive draws an arrow coming from the caterpillar and
connecting to a pod.

86 ARI 86
But then we saw one of those pods
break open, and an alien - I mean,
a butterfly - came out.

ELINOR/OLIVE/ARI (CONT'D)

They turn into butterflies
Now we know.

OLIVE: Here's a caterpillar
Watch it climb up
It wiggles and wiggles
And turns into a pod

ALL: Caterpillars change
As they grow.
They turn into butterflies
Now we know.

*

ARI: The pod sits still
Until it gets a crack
What comes out?
A grown-up butterfly!

ALL: Caterpillars change
As they grow.
They turn into butterflies
And now we know.

*

98

ARI

98

Hey let's go tell my dad and Miri
what we figured out.

*

With an <SFX: EXCITED YEAH WALLA>, the kids run off.

4. PARK -- DAY

Mr. Bat and Miri are hanging out at the small bridge in the
park, watching fish in the water below. The kids run up to
meet them.

*
*
*

99

ARI

99

Dad! Dad! - guess what? We went
looking for baby butterflies, but
we couldn't find any!

100

OLIVE

100

Yeah, that's because we were
looking for tiny butterflies. But
then we found out...

101

ELINOR

101

CATERPILLARS are the baby
butterflies!

102

ARI

102

They turn into a pod, and then a
butterfly comes out!

103 MR. BAT 103
Wow, you figured that out by
yourselves?

104 ARI 104
Yeah, we did it by making
OBSERVATIONS!

105 MR. BAT 105
What smart scientists you are!

<SFX: EXCITED YEAH WALLA>.

ANGLE ON: Elinor looks down at Miri. <SFX: BABY GIGGLE>

106 ELINOR 106
Mr. Bat, it's amazing that baby
bats like Miri look a lot like
grown up bats. But caterpillars
look really different from
butterflies!

107 MR. BAT 107
Yes, Elinor! Some animals have
babies that look just like their
parents, and some animals have
babies that go through a big
change. When an animal makes a big
change, it's called metamorphosis.

108 OLIVE 108
Me-ta-MORPH-o-sis. I like that
word. *

At that moment, the same butterfly from the beginning returns
and flutters about before landing on Miri's little head.

109 ARI 109
You know, with Miri all snuggled up
in her blanket, she kiiinda looks
like a caterpillar. I wonder what
would happen if SHE turned into a
butterfly...

THOUGHT BUBBLE showing MR. BAT pushing Miri in a stroller.
Miri bursts from the blanket and unfolds huge butterfly
wings. She flies into the air, giggling as Ari's dad jumps up
and down trying to catch her.

110 MR. BAT 110
Well, if she did, she'd still be
adorable, just like her brother...
and their Dad.

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The kids all <SFX: LAUGH>. We follow the butterfly up and over the trees as we...

END.