

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

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<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.		*

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	
	I like butterflies. They have wings, just like me!		*

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

11	ARI (CONT'D)	11	
	I know! Let's do some butterfly-watching today.		*
			*

12	ELINOR	12	
	Great idea.		*

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

13	OLIVE	13	
	Wait, look. There's a caterpillar on this plant, too. Caterpillars are <i>my</i> favorite. Maybe we should watch caterpillars instead.		*
			*

14	ELINOR	14	
	Hmm. Butterflies and caterpillars are BOTH pretty interesting.		*

CLOSE UP: The butterfly, fluttering over the flowers. Ari tries to sell butterfly-watching.

15	ARI	15	
	Yeah, but butterflies can <i>fly</i> . Flying just add a little extra coolness, you know?		*
			*

BACK ON: The kids. Ari hovers a little and they all <SFX: GIGGLE>.

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

16	OLIVE	16	*
	Well, a caterpillar can't fly, but		
	I love the way it crawls. How does		
	it move all those legs at the same		
	time?		

17 ELINOR 17
I only have TWO legs and I still
trip sometimes.

Elinor does an exaggerated fall backwards. <SFX: GIGGLE>

18 OLIVE 18
Elinor, you are so funny!

19 ELINOR 19
What else is interesting about
butterflies and caterpillars?

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

20	ARI	20
	Well, butterflies have awesome	
	patterns on their wings. They're so	*
	colorful! I wish I had a shirt like	*
	that.	

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

21 OLIVE 21

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

like that!

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

22 ELINOR 22
They're both very fancy!

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

ARI

Well, a butterfly-

PAN OUT TO: The butterfly flying overhead.

24 ARI (CONT'D) 24
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.

25 OLIVE 25
 <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.

26 OLIVE (CONT'D) 26
Butterflies are great, but baby
bats are pretty amazing, too.

ZOOM OUT to all the kids clustered around the stroller. Elinor has a curious thought.

27 ELINOR 27
You know, I don't think I've ever
seen a *baby* butterfly.

The kids all look thoughtful.

28 ELINOR (CONT'D) 28
I've seen bat babies, bird babies,
bunny babies... but no butterfly
babies!

A beat as Olive considers.

29 OLIVE 29
You're right, Elinor. I don't think
I've ever seen a baby butterfly
either.

30 ARI 30
I wonder what baby butterflies look
like?

31 ELINOR 31
 Hmm. Well, Miri looks a lot like
 you and your dad, only smaller.
 Maybe baby butterflies look just
 like grown-up butterflies, but
 tinier.

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

32 ELINOR (CONT'D) 32
I know what we should do today.
Let's look for baby butterflies. *
Olive, is that okay? I know you *
wanted to see caterpillars. *

33 OLIVE 33 *
(thinking) *
That's true, but now I'm really *
curious about baby butterflies. *
Let's do it! *

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

34 ELINOR 34 *
Let's follow that butterfly to see
if it has any babies.

The butterfly begins to fly away.

35 ELINOR (CONT'D) 35
It's getting away! C'mon! 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.

36 MR. BAT 36
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.

37 OLIVE 37
That butterfly sure flies a lot. I
wonder where it's going.

The kids jokingly come up with ideas.

38 ELINOR 38
Maybe it's late for butterfly
school?

39 OLIVE 39
Or maybe it's going to a butterfly party!

40 ARI 40
Or maybe it's going to a baseball game. Because it's a BATTER-fly.

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

3. EXT. SUNLIT FOREST CLEARING -- CONTINUOUS

The monarch butterfly flies into a beautiful sunlit clearing 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>

41 ARI 41
Olive, you were right! It's like a butterfly party.

ANGLE ON: The butterflies, enjoying their milkweed.

42 ELINOR 42
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.

43 OLIVE 43
(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.

44 ELINOR 44
(to herself) Any babies here? Nope.

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

45 ARI 45
(to himself) Just more grown-up butterflies over here. They sure are cool, though.

*

The kids regroup.

46 ELINOR 46
Did anyone find any baby
butterflies?

47 OLIVE 47
I just saw a bunch of those orange
butterflies, and they're all about
the same size.

48 ARI 48
Same here.

Elinor looks thoughtful.

49 ELINOR 49
I wonder where all the baby
butterflies are?

50 ARI 50
Maybe baby butterflies are too tiny
to see?

51 OLIVE 51 *
Well, if they're really small,
we'll need magnifying glass to see
them. *

Olive reaches into her satchel, pulls out a magnifying glass
and offers it to Elinor. *

52 ELINOR 52 *
Thanks, Olive. *

Elinor and Olive use the magnifying glass to look around on
the nearby leaves. CU on the view through their magnifying
glass. There's a tiny spider and an adult spider. *

53 ELINOR (CONT'D) 53 *
I see a baby spider standing next
to a grown-up spider. Awww cute,
but it's not a baby butterfly. *

The magnifying glass view moves to a nearby group of snails.
There's a large one and two little ones. *

54 OLIVE 54
And here are some snails. There's a
big grown-up snail and two baby
snails. They're very interesting...
But no baby butterflies. *

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

55	OLIVE/ELINOR	55	*
	Aah!		
	BACK ON: The kids. Elinor and Olive jump backward, startled.		*
	We see that Ari has bent down to look too, and the girls saw his magnified eye.		*
56	ELINOR	56	*
	Ari!		
57	ARI	57	
	Sorry!		
	<SFX: LAUGH>.		
58	ELINOR	58	*
	Hmm, we didn't see any tiny baby butterflies.		*
59	OLIVE	59	*
	What if we can't see them because they're all inside their houses?		
	Ari looks around.		
60	ARI	60	
	I don't SEE any little houses around.		
	The kids all look around.		
61	OLIVE	61	
	Me neither.		
62	ELINOR	62	
	I don't think butterflies live in houses. I think they live OUTSIDE.		
63	ARI	63	
	Yeah. Besides, how would they even build a house? They'd need a really tiny hammer.		*
			*
	Ari mimics holding and using a tiny little hammer. <SFX: LAUGH>.		*
			*
64	ELINOR	64	
	Hmm, we can't seem to find any baby butterflies. I wonder why not. That is SO INTERESTING!		*
			*
	At that moment, Olive glances at one of the nearby milkweed plants and notices it has a caterpillar on it.		

65	OLIVE	65	
	Hey, look. It's a caterpillar!		
66	ARI	66	
	It's got those fancy stripes like		*
	we saw before.		*
 <SFX: OOOH> The kids cluster around the caterpillar. As they watch, it climbs under a stem and forms a J shape.			
67	OLIVE	67	
	Wait, what's the caterpillar DOING?		*
 CU: The caterpillar begins to shed its skin and form a chrysalis. <SFX: GASP>			
68	ARI	68	
	Whoa, what's happening?		
69	ELINOR	69	
	It looks like it's turning green.		*
 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). DESIGN NOTE the chrysalis is under the old skin. The old skin splits and the new (green) skin bursts out as the old skin is bunched up and pushed up to the top. You don't need to show the old skin in detail but make sure you don't show the caterpillar just fading from stripy to green.			
70	OLIVE	70	
	It turned into something new. It		*
	looks a little like a green pea		*
	pod.		*
 NOTE: we can't say cocoon because only moths make cocoons.			
71	ELINOR	71	
	And now it's just hanging there.		*
72	ARI	72	
	This is. So. Awesome.		
 BACK ON: Olive has turned to look at some of the other milkweed plants.			
73	OLIVE	73	
	Oh! I see another one of those		
	green pod-things over here.		*
 ANGLE ON: Olive notices another pod, but it's darker and it's twitching.			

74 OLIVE (CONT'D) 74
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.

75 ELINOR 75
It's breaking open!

76 ARI 76
What IS that? Is it an alien?

77 OLIVE 77
It can't be an alien... Can it?

The butterfly begins to pump up its wings.

78 ELINOR 78
Wait. I don't think that's an
alien. I think that's a... a...

79 ELINOR/OLIVE/ARI 79
Butterfly!

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

BACK ON: The kids.

80 ARI 80
What just happened?

81 OLIVE 81
Hmm. Let's think about what we saw.

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

82 OLIVE (CONT'D) 82
First, we saw a caterpillar.

83 ELINOR 83
And then we saw it turn into a kind
of pod.

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

84 ARI 84
But then we saw one of those pods
break open, and an alien - I mean,
a butterfly - came out.

Olive draws an arrow coming from the pod and connecting to an adult monarch butterfly.

85	OLIVE	85	
	But what does this MEAN?		
	The kids think <SFX: HMMM>.		*
86	ELINOR	86	
	I think... I think that the caterpillars turn into butterflies.		*
	BACK ON: the kids. <SFX: GASP> They're amazed. On the notepad, Elinor traces the steps again.		*
			*
87	ELINOR (CONT'D)	87	
	First the caterpillar turns into a pod, and then after a while, it turns into a butterfly.		*
88	ARI	88	*
	Ohhhh...		*
	Elinor has a thought.		*
89	ELINOR	89	*
	But that would mean...		*
90	OLIVE	90	
	The butterfly babies weren't missing. They were right in front of us this whole time.		
91	ELINOR	91	
	Caterpillars ARE baby butterflies!		*
	That's SO INTERESTING!		*
92	ARI	92	*
	(dramatically)		*
	I can't believe it! Baby butterflies are caterpillars?		*
			*
	Olive mock-glares at the caterpillars.		*
93	OLIVE	93	*
	And caterpillars turn into butterflies?		*
			*
94	ARI	94	
	Wait. Olive, I just realized something. If caterpillars turn into butterflies, then that means...		*
			*
			*
			*

95 OLIVE 95 *

That the animal I like... *

96 ARI 96 *

And the animal I like... *

97 ARI/OLIVE 97

Are the SAME ANIMAL.

Ari and Olive high five and hug, sharing the excitement.

98 ELINOR 98

You both sure know how to pick cool
animals to watch. *

The kids sing a song. While they sing, the camera switches
between Olive taking close looks at caterpillars, Elinor
looking at the chrysalises, and Ari looking the butterflies.

99 ELINOR/OLIVE/ARI 99

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

OLIVE: A caterpillar crawls. *

Then, before our very eyes, *

It wiggles, hangs, and changes. *

Now it's a green pod. Surprise! *

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

ARI: The pod stays still *

Then it opens wide *

What comes out?

A grown-up butterfly!

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

As the song ends, the kids stand or sit in the middle of the
clearing, surrounded by butterflies.

100 ARI 100

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.

101	ARI	101
	Dad! Dad! - guess what? We went looking for baby butterflies, but we couldn't find any!	

102	OLIVE	102
	Yeah, that's because we were looking for <i>tiny</i> butterflies. But	*
	then we found out...	

103	ELINOR	103
	CATERPILLARS are the baby butterflies!	

104	ARI	104
	They change into a pod, and then a butterfly comes out!	

105	MR. BAT	105
	Wow, you figured that out by yourselves?	

106	ARI	106
	Yeah, we did it by making OBSERVATIONS!	

107	MR. BAT	107
	What smart scientists you are!	

<SFX: EXCITED YEAH WALLA>.

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

108	ELINOR	108
	Mr. Bat, it's amazing that baby bats like Miri look a lot like grown up bats. But caterpillars look really different from butterflies!	

109	MR. BAT	109
	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.	

110 OLIVE 110
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.

111 ARI 111
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.

112 MR. BAT 112
Well, if she did, she'd still be
adorable, just like her brother...
and their Dad.

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

FADE OUT. *

SEGMENT 2. *

1. EXT PARK -- DAY *

Open on Ari flying in the sky next to a cloud of monarch
butterflies, all flying in the same direction. He flies down
to land by Elinor, Olive, maybe a few other kids and Señor
Tapir, who sits with his guitar on a tree stump. A butterfly
lands on every single kid's head. *

113 ARI 113
Look at all the monarch
butterflies! *

Butterflies fly past Senor Tapir as a butterfly sits on his
nose. *

114 SENOR TAPIR 114
And they're all flying in the same
direction! *

Elinor giggles a butterfly lands on the tips of her ears,
while other butterflies flutter around. *

115 ELINOR 115
Where are they all going? *

116 SEÑOR TAPIR 116
Good question, Elinor. I have a
song about two scientists who
figured that out. *

Señor Tapir starts to sing. After a line or two, we
transition to a simpler style of animation that describes
what he is singing. *

117 SEÑOR TAPIR (CONT'D) 117
Fred and Norah Urquhart were
husband and wife,
Who both really loved being
outside. *

2. EXT TORONTO -- DAY *

We see a map of North America, and a star appears on the city
of Toronto. We zoom in quickly to that spot on the map, to
see Fred and Norah Urquhart (who are Eastern cottontail
rabbits in 1940s style clothing; Fred has a distinct
mustache), holding hands as they stand in a field next to
train tracks, where hundreds of monarch butterflies fly
around the skies and land on plants around them. *

118 SEÑOR TAPIR (CONT'D) 118
They lived up north in Canada,
where bright summer skies,
Were filled with monarch
butterflies, *

Thousands of monarch butterflies fly (in the same direction)
through the sky over the trees, whose leaves have turned from
green into fall colors. Fred and Norah look up curiously at
the butterflies flying over their heads, as the last bunch of
butterflies fly away, leaving the sky with zero butterflies. *

119 SEÑOR TAPIR (CONT'D) 119
But every year, before it would
freeze,
The butterflies all flew away in
the breeze!
So Fred and Norah decided to find
Where butterflies spent their
wintertime. *

Fred and Norah walk around different outdoor parks and
fields, looking for any sign of the butterflies. *

120 SEÑOR TAPIR (CONT'D) 120 *
Fluttering butterflies, where are *
you flying? *
Where are going? Where could you *
be? *
Fred and Norah never stopped trying *
To solve the butterfly mystery. *

In an outdoor park, Fred carefully wraps a small sticker-like *
tag (the kind used to put price tags on products) with a few *
numbers on it around the lower wing of a butterfly. He lets *
the tagged butterfly fly free. *

121 SEÑOR TAPIR (CONT'D) 121 *
They tagged lots of butterflies and *
told lots of folks, *
If you see where they went *
please let us know. *

A pair of beavers point at two tagged monarch butterflies on *
a milkweed plant outside their house. A kid squirrel points *
at a tagged monarch butterfly that lands on a fence. *

122 SEÑOR TAPIR (CONT'D) 122 *
They spotted a few, but not many *
more, *
So they looked even farther away *
than before. *

We see the same map of North America, and this time we see *
the path from Toronto, Canada down to the Monterey Peninsula, *
California (and perhaps we see a question mark appear here on *
the map), and then a path all the way down to southern Texas *
(and perhaps we see a question mark here on the map). They *
drive around Texas in a vehicle (from the early 1970s), *
looking at Texas trees/parks, without any butterflies. *

DESIGN NOTE: Fred and Norah are now older (30 years older *
than when they started looking for the butterflies - maybe *
just different hats, grey mustache and glasses?) *

123 SEÑOR TAPIR (CONT'D) 123 *
Fluttering butterflies, where are *
you flying? *
Where are going? Where could you *
be? *
Fred and Norah never stopped trying *
To solve the butterfly mystery. *

Fred and Norah stand among a forest absolutely packed with *
monarch butterflies on every surface. Fred inspects a tree *
trunk covered in monarch butterflies. *

We see the same map of North America, with a path from
Toronto to California to Texas and now down to the Sierra
Madre mountains of Michoacan Mexico.

After most of their lives, they
finally found them!
Millions of monarchs on the side of
a mountain!
Way down in Mexico, so far away!
They finally figured it out!
Hooray!

Fred and Norah happily hug each other as millions of
butterflies flutter around them.

3. EXT PARK -- DAY

Señor Tapir finishes singing the song in front of the kids.
All the butterflies on the kids' faces start to fly away in
the same direction and join the butterflies in the sky.

124	SEÑOR TAPIR (CONT'D)	124
	Adios butterfly amigos!	

125	ELINOR	125
	Have fun in Mexico!	

END.