A Butterfly's Life Cycle Dance

What are the life cycle stages of a butterfly?

Grades K-2 Lesson: A Butterfly's Life Cycle Dance
Grade Band: K-2
Arts Subject: Dance
Other Subject: Science

SUMMARY

In this K-2 lesson, students will choreograph an original dance that communicates the life cycle stages of the monarch butterfly. They will read Eric Carle's book, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, and explore the monarch butterfly migration process.

PREPARATION

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Determine important details from Eric Carle's book *The Very Hungry Caterpillar.*
- Recall events from *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* through illustrations.
- Describe the sequence of a butterfly's life cycle.
- Examine photographs of the stages of the monarch butterfly life cycle.
- Plan a sequence of movements that demonstrate the monarch's life cycle stages.
- Choreograph and perform a dance focusing on the life cycle of the monarch butterfly.

Standards Alignment

National Core Arts Standards

DA:Cr1.1.K Respond in movement to a variety of stimuli (for example, music/sound, text, objects, images, symbols, observed dance).
DA:Cr1.1.1 Explore movement inspired by a variety of stimuli (for example, music/sound, text, objects, images, symbols, observed dance, experiences) and identify the source.
DA:Cr1.1.2 Explore movement inspired by a variety of stimuli (for example, music/sound, text, objects, images, symbols, observed dance, experiences) and suggest additional sources for movement ideas.

Common Core State Standards

ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.1 With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.2 Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.
ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.2 Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.

Lesson Connection: A Butterfly's Life Cycle Dance
Copyright The Kennedy Center. All rights reserved.
Materials may be reproduced for educational purposes.
Updated July 2021

ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.5 Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.
ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.7 With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear (e.g., what moment in a story an illustration depicts).
ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.7 Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.
ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.7 Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.
ELA-LITERACY.W.K.2 Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.

Next Generation Science Standards
1-LS3-1. Make observations to construct an evidence-based account that young plants and animals are like, but not exactly like, their parents.
3-LS1-1. Develop models to describe that organisms have unique and diverse life cycles but all have in common birth, growth, reproduction, and death.

Recommended Student Materials
Editable Documents: *Before sharing these resources with students, you must first save them to your Google account by opening them, and selecting "Make a copy" from the File menu. Check out Sharing Tips or Instructional Benefits when implementing Google Docs and Google Slides with students.*

- Slide: The Monarch Butterfly
- Elements of Dance
- Criteria of Success: Butterfly Dance
- Brainstorm Facilitation Questions
- Criteria for Success: Butterfly Dance

Books

- *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle

Videos

- Illuminated Films: *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*
- Monarch Butterfly Amazing Migration
- Monarch Metamorphosis Time Lapse
- The Amazing Monarch Life Cycle

Websites

- Eric Carle's Cocoon Explanation

Lesson Connection: A Butterfly's Life Cycle Dance
Copyright The Kennedy Center. All rights reserved.
Materials may be reproduced for educational purposes.
Updated July 2021

Teacher Background
Teachers should have an understanding of life cycles and be comfortable with creative movement for learning. For early elementary, the elements can be described as an art form in which a dancer moves through space and time with energy. For more detail, use the Elements of Dance Organizer from the Perpich Center for Arts Education.

Student Prerequisites
Students should have some general knowledge of dance, but it is not necessary.

Accessibility Notes
Modify movements and allow extra time as needed.

INSTRUCTION
Engage
1. Display the monarch butterfly image from the Slide: The Monarch Butterfly.

2. Discuss the butterfly. *Ask the students: What do you know about butterflies? Have you ever seen a monarch butterfly, like this one? How would you describe this monarch butterfly?* Using the Life Cycle Diagram from Slide: The Monarch Butterfly, explain that some animals, like cats, are born small and get bigger, but keep just about the same shape. Others, like butterflies, grow through metamorphosis, a process of changing from one form to another.

3. Read Eric Carle's book *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* aloud to the class, showing the illustrations. This book can usually be found in your public or school library or you can view Illuminated Films: *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*.

4. Review the life cycle of the butterfly as described in the book: egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, and butterfly. Optionally, display the image of the four stages of the monarch butterfly life cycle. Discuss with the class that the book uses the word "cocoon" when monarch butterflies actually have a chrysalis. Read "Eric Carle's Cocoon Explanation" below to understand Carle's use of the word "cocoon" in his book.

> *"My caterpillar is very unusual. As you know caterpillars don't eat lollipops and ice cream, so you won't find my caterpillar in any field guides. But also, when I was a small boy, my father would say, 'Eric, come out of your cocoon.' He meant I should open up and be receptive to the world around me. For me, it would not sound right to say, 'Come out of your chrysalis.' And so poetry won over science!"* - *Eric Carle*

5. Invite students to share comments, questions, and scientific observations about what they see as you visit each image of the Life Cycle Diagram from the Slide: The Monarch Butterfly. Define chrysalis for students. The enclosing case or covering of a pupa. *Ask students: What physical features do you notice about a butterfly?*

Lesson Connection: A Butterfly's Life Cycle Dance
Copyright The Kennedy Center. All rights reserved.
Materials may be reproduced for educational purposes.
Updated July 2021

Build

1. Share information about the life of the monarch butterfly. Monarch butterflies are very unusual and migrate like birds. There are no other butterflies that do this. Butterflies don't live as long as birds, so the butterflies that fly south for the winter are not the same butterflies that return to their homes as far north as Canada.

2. Watch the short video Monarch Butterfly Amazing Migration. As students watch the video, ask them to observe the life cycle stages and behaviors of adult butterflies.

3. Tell students that like scientists, artists use their skills of observation and analysis. Many artists observe their natural surroundings and use what they see to give them ideas and inspiration for their pictures, dances, and music. Artists also use their imaginations to take what they see and make it different from what it might seem to be.

4. Tell students they are going to brainstorm movements to create, or choreograph, a dance that tells a story of the life cycle of the monarch butterfly. To do this, they will need to think about the movements a monarch butterfly makes throughout its life cycle like gliding, pulsing, flowing, sailing, wiggling, being still, and squirming.

5. Introduce the basic Elements of Dance Guide. Dance is a form of communication. It is an art form in which a dancer moves their body through space and time with energy. This can be broken down with a simple demonstration by the teacher or a student volunteer, who can move as you explain *Who?* (the dancer) *does what?* (moves) *where?* (through space) *when?* (and time) *how?* (with energy.)

6. Connect the movements of a monarch butterfly to those of a dancer. *Do butterflies "dance?"* Tell students that there are specific things to look for in dance and to utilize the Criteria for Success: Butterfly Dance as a guide.

7. Show students the Monarch Metamorphosis Time Lapse and The Amazing Monarch Life Cycle videos. Lead a discussion around each of the stages of the monarch's metamorphosis: *coming out of the egg, the walking caterpillar, emerging from the chrysalis, eating and gently flapping, flying from flower to flowe*r. Encourage students to observe and use descriptive words for the movements they see, as well as use their imaginations to "fill in the blanks" of what they might not have seen. Remind them they will be using the movements of the butterfly as the basis of their dance to express the life cycle of the butterfly.

Apply

1. Tell students they will work together in small groups to create or choreograph a dance focusing on the life cycle of the monarch butterfly. Students will use the information they've learned to develop their dances.

Copyright The Kennedy Center. All rights reserved.
Materials may be reproduced for educational purposes.
Updated July 2021

2. Use the Brainstorm Facilitation Questions to generate ideas about how to create a butterfly dance. Remind them that dance is a form of communication and that they will express the life cycle stages of the monarch butterfly in their dances.

3. Give each group a Butterfly Dance Organizer to record their dance. Optionally, display the Elements of Dance Guide as they work to meet the criteria. Encourage students to experiment with different kinds of movements that could show the four stages of the butterfly's life cycle. Walk around the groups as they are trying out different steps and movements, assisting as needed.

4. Share and review the ways each group's dance will be assessed using the Criteria for Success: Butterfly Dance.

5. Give students time to plan and rehearse their dances.

Reflect

1. Assess students' knowledge with a performance. Allow time for each group to present its dance to the class, school, or community. Invite the class to provide positive comments and feedback.

Credits

Original Writer, Maureen Carroll
Rebecca Haden, Adaptation
Editor, JoDee Scissors

Lesson Connection: A Butterfly's Life Cycle Dance
Copyright The Kennedy Center. All rights reserved.
Materials may be reproduced for educational purposes.
Updated July 2021