

## Fun Facts about Butterflies

### **Their wings are transparent:**



They are covered by thousands of tiny scales that reflect light giving them their vibrant colors.

### **Taste with their feet:**



Their taste buds are located on their feet, so when they land on a flower, they use their feet to taste the nectar. Butterflies live on a liquid diet feeding off of the nectar from flowers.

### **Cannot live on sugar alone:**



They need minerals, too. To supplement its diet of nectar, a butterfly will occasionally sip from mud puddles, which are rich in minerals and salts. This behavior, called puddling, occurs more often in male butterflies, which incorporate the minerals into their sperm. These nutrients are then transferred to the female during mating and help improve the viability of her eggs.

### **Are Master Migrants:**



Some butterflies are incredible travelers and can go on long journeys across vast distances. For example, the Monarch butterfly travels thousands of miles from North America to Mexico during the annual migration period.

## Fun Facts about Butterflies Continued

### **Metamorphosis Magic:**

Butterflies go through a magical transformation called metamorphosis. They start as tiny eggs, hatch into caterpillars, form a chrysalis, and finally emerge as beautiful butterflies!



### **Must Assemble Its Own Proboscis—Quickly**

A butterfly that can't drink nectar is doomed. One of its first jobs as an adult butterfly is to assemble its mouthparts. When a new adult emerges from the pupal case or chrysalis, its mouth is in two pieces. Using palpi located adjacent to the proboscis, the butterfly begins working the two parts together to form a single, tubular proboscis. You may see a newly emerged butterfly curling and uncurling the proboscis over and over, testing it out.



### **See a World of Color:**

Butterflies are nearsighted but can see a much wider range of colors than we do! They can see ultraviolet light, which is invisible to our eyes. This ability helps them spot colorful patterns of flowers and navigate their way through the world in a way we can only dream of.




### **Have a special way of Staying Warm:**

Butterflies are cold-blooded, which means they rely on the sun to warm their bodies because they cannot fly if it's too cold. But on cloudy days they have a clever trick on staying warm. They bask in the sunlight with their wings open to absorb as much warmth as possible.




## Fun Facts about Butterflies Continued

### A Newly Emerged Butterfly Can't Fly:




Inside the chrysalis, a developing butterfly waits to emerge with its wings collapsed around its body. When it finally breaks free of the pupal case, it greets the world with tiny, shriveled wings. The butterfly must immediately pump body fluid through its wing veins to expand them. Once its wings reach their full size, the butterfly must rest for a few hours to allow its body to dry and harden before it can take its first flight. Also, they only fly during the day.

### Life span of a Butterfly:






Is short as they often live just a few weeks. Once it emerges from its chrysalis as an adult, a butterfly has only two to four short weeks to live, in most cases. During that time, it focuses all its energy on two tasks: eating and mating. Some of the smallest butterflies, the blues, may only survive a few days. However, butterflies that overwinter as adults, like monarchs and mourning cloaks, can live as long as nine months.

### They can fly pretty fast



Some species fly up to 12 miles per hour, which is quicker than it looks when they're fluttering by.

### Butterflies are important pollinators



Like bees, they help plants grow by moving pollen from flower to flower while they sip nectar.

## Fun Facts about Butterflies Continued

### **They Employ Tricks to Avoid Being Eaten**

Some butterflies fold their wings to blend into the background, using camouflage to render themselves all but invisible to predators. Others try the opposite strategy, wearing vibrant colors and patterns that boldly announce their presence. Bright colored insects often pack a toxic punch if eaten, so predators learn to avoid them.



### **They're cold-blooded**

Butterflies need warmth from the sun to be active. That's why you often see them sunbathing with their wings spread wide.



### **Each wing pattern is unique**

No two butterflies have the exact same markings, just like our fingerprints.



### **Some butterflies are masters of disguise**

Certain species can camouflage themselves to look like leaves or even owl eyes to scare away predators.



## Fun Facts about Butterflies Continued

### **Caterpillars have huge appetites**



Some caterpillars can grow more than 100 times their size in just a few weeks before becoming butterflies.

### **Butterflies don't chew food**



Instead, they sip it through a special tube called a proboscis, which works like a straw for nectar.

### **Their wings aren't really colored**



The bright colors come from tiny scales that bend light. That's why some wings look shiny or even rainbow-like.

### **A butterfly's wings are very delicate**



The colorful scales on butterfly wings can rub off if touched. That's why it's best to admire them with our eyes, not our hands.

**Explore the internet with your parents to discover many more interesting facts about Butterflies!**