



Name: _____

The Life of a Monarch Butterfly

Have you ever seen a bright orange and black butterfly fluttering through a garden? That is likely a Monarch. These insects are some of the most famous creatures in the world. They may look delicate, but they are actually very strong and have a very busy life!

A Magical Transformation

Every Monarch begins its life as a tiny, round egg. When the egg hatches, out crawls a very hungry caterpillar. A Monarch caterpillar only eats one thing: the leaves of a milkweed plant. As it eats, it grows so fast that it has to shed its skin several times.



Monarch butterfly life cycle

Next, the caterpillar builds a hard, green shell called a chrysalis. Inside this shell, something amazing happens. The caterpillar's body completely changes. After about two weeks, the shell pops open, and a beautiful butterfly crawls out to dry its wings in the sun. This change is called metamorphosis.

Bright Colors for Safety

The Monarch's bright orange and black wings aren't just for looking pretty. In nature, bright colors are often a "warning sign" to predators like birds.

Because Monarch caterpillars eat milkweed, their bodies carry a special juice that tastes very bitter and can make birds sick. A bird that tries to eat a Monarch will remember those bright orange wings and stay away the next time! This is a type of protection that helps the butterfly stay safe.





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Important Pollinators

Butterflies are very important pollinators. As they fly from flower to flower to drink sweet nectar using their straw-like tongues (called a proboscis), they carry pollen on their legs.



This helps flowers and vegetables grow new seeds. Without pollinators like the Monarch, many of the fruits and flowers we love wouldn't be able to grow. By helping plants, butterflies help keep our whole planet healthy.

1. Why are the Monarch's wings bright orange and black?
 - A) To help them hide in the orange flowers.
 - B) To warn predators that they taste bitter and are not safe to eat.
 - C) To help them absorb more sunlight to stay warm.
 - D) So they can find their friends more easily in the sky.

2. Why does the author compare the butterfly's tongue to a straw?
 - A) To show that butterflies are messy when they eat.
 - B) To help the reader understand how the proboscis sucks up liquid nectar.
 - C) To explain that butterflies only eat at birthday parties.
 - D) To show that the tongue is made of plastic.

3. What is the main idea of the entire passage?
 - A) Caterpillars are very hungry and eat milkweed.
 - B) Monarch butterflies have a unique life cycle and an important job in nature.
 - C) Birds do not like the taste of orange and black wings.
 - D) Metamorphosis is a long word that means "to change."