

SIMPLE SCIENCE



Ladybug Life Cycle

Ladybugs aren't so cute when they're born—you may not even recognize them. They hatch from eggs and look like tiny alligators. The new bug is called a larva, and it takes about 21 days for it to grow up to be a ladybug beetle.

Eggs

Mother ladybugs lay 10 to 15 eggs on the underside of a leaf. They look like tiny, elongated yellow jelly beans.



Larva

Larvae crawl out of their eggs and begin to look for food. Mother bugs make sure there are lots of aphids or mites nearby because the larvae will eat a lot of them before they become adults. Ladybug larvae look like tiny alligators—and they bite!



Bigger Larva

After a few days, the little larvae begin to grow, and soon they shed their skins. This is called “molting,” and it happens several times. If you look closely you can see old skins clinging to leaves or to the grass in your ladybug jar.



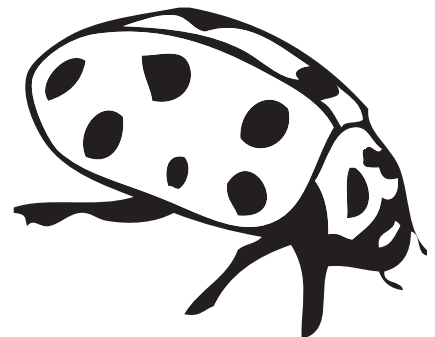
Pupa

In about two weeks, the bigger larvae begin to look a little different, something like a lobster without legs and claws. They attach themselves to a leaf and hardly move at all. They are doing something extraordinary under their skins.



Imago or Adult

In another few days the ladybug splits its pupa and emerges looking very different. For the first few hours it's pale and soft. Its shell quickly hardens. Its color becomes brighter. Now it looks just like its mother—a perfect adult ladybug beetle. What seems like amazing magic is one wonderful way the natural world works: ladybug metamorphosis.

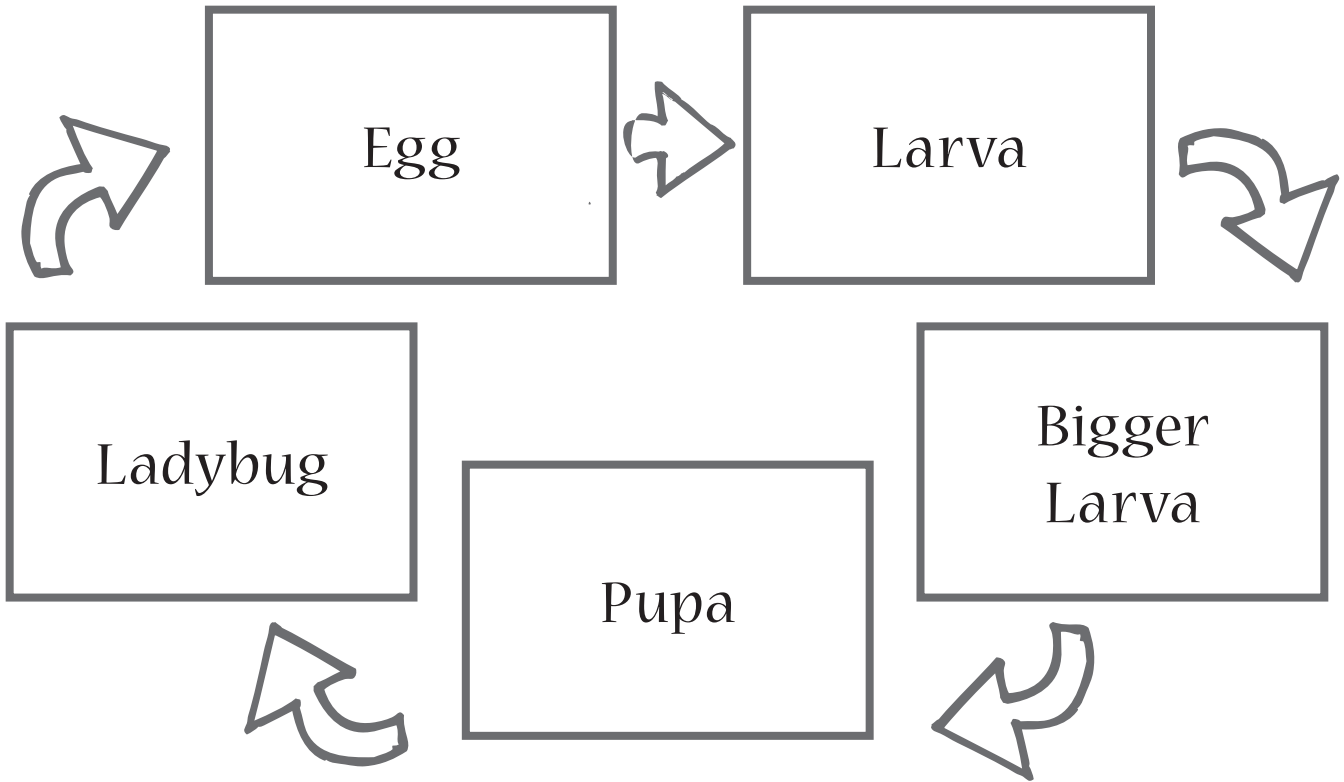




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Name _____



Color these pictures. Then cut them out, and paste or tape them onto the life cycle chart.
 Be sure to match each picture to the correct life cycle stage, in order from egg to ladybug!

