

Butterflies: Scientific Observation and Journals



Teacher Prep

Set up a small table and one or two chairs in a quiet part of the room.

Place resource materials such as trade books, Word Wall, magnifying loupe or hand lens, pencils, colored pencils, a ruler, journal pages or booklets, tray for completed journal pages or booklets. Place the cup of caterpillars (covered) on the table.

Procedures

1. What do you know about butterflies? Draw a web on the board. Ask students to share what they know about butterflies as you record answers. You can use instead the KWL Chart method. Create a Word Wall and add vocabulary words as they come up.
2. Hold up the cup of caterpillars and talk about their care and handling. Information is on the website: earthsbirthday.org
3. Explain that over the next three weeks each student will have a turn to sit at the table, observe the cup of caterpillars and record observations on their journal page.
4. Hold up a journal page and explain how to use it. Write your name, the date and specimen – Painted Lady Butterfly, at the top of the page. Demonstrate the use of the magnifying loupe or hand lens.
5. Qualitative Observation: Look closely in the cup and describe with words what you see. What shape are they? Are they smooth or fuzzy? What color are they? How do they move? What else is in the cup? Record on a journal page.
6. Quantitative Observation: Now count and measure everything that you observe in the cup. How many caterpillars are there? How many legs do they have? How long are they? How many frass balls (insect poop) can you count? Record on the journal page.
7. Scientific Drawing: Carefully look and draw one caterpillar, chrysalis or butterfly depending on what stage they are at. Pay special attention to the shape, features such as legs, eyes, mouth, webs, frass, food, etc.
8. Label the parts of the drawing such as larva, pupa or adult, legs, eyes, mouth, webs, frass, food by drawing a line to the part. Use colored pencils to color accurately.
9. Reflect on observations: (use the back of the page) Practice making analogies; What does the larva remind you of? The design on the larva looks like . . . , describe feelings, memories and experiences, ask questions. Write a poem or story, etc.
10. Place completed journal page or booklet in the designated tray or box. Put the cup of caterpillars up out of reach.
11. Compile all of the pages to create a booklet or use the pages for display.