Name:
NATIO.

Monarch Butterflies: Beautiful But Poisonous

by Kelly Hashway

If you've ever seen a monarch butterfly, then you've probably noticed their bright orange and black colors. It makes them easy to see in the sky. You may think this would put the Monarch in harm from predators, but these bright colors are actually what protect the butterfly. Monarchs eat a plant called milkweed, which is why they are sometimes called



"milkweed butterflies." Milkweed contains toxins that are not poisonous to Monarchs but are poisonous to other living things. These toxins that are a regular part of the Monarch butterfly's diet make them poisonous to predators. A bird flying through the sky will leave the flashy colored Monarch alone because it knows those bright colors mean the Monarch is poisonous.

Monarch butterflies actually begin eating milkweed as larvae. As you probably know, butterflies begin as caterpillars. Monarch butterflies lay eggs on milkweed plants, and when an



egg hatches, the young caterpillar, or larva, begins to eat the milkweed. The caterpillar will eat the plant for about two weeks and grow to approximately two inches long. The caterpillar will then spin a silk pad and attach itself upside-down to a twig or leaf. Next it sheds its yellow, black, and white striped skin. This is the first step in the caterpillar's transformation to a butterfly.

Underneath the old skin of the caterpillar is a hard layer of skin called a chrysalis. The caterpillar will keep this chrysalis, or pupa, around its body and stay inside it for two weeks while it changes into a Monarch butterfly. The chrysalis will become transparent when the butterfly is ready to emerge. The Monarch uses the blood in its body to inflate its wings. Then it will hang in that same spot for hours until its wings dry and it can fly.

Monarch butterflies can live for very different
lengths of time depending on what time of year they
emerge from their chrysalis and become adult butterflies.
If a Monarch reaches adulthood in early summer, it will
most likely live for only two to five weeks. But if the
Monarch becomes an adult at the end of the summer
months, it will migrate south and live for about eight to nine months.



Monarchs can be found all over the world in tropic and sub-tropic areas. And if you'd like to observe them in your own yard, plant milkweed and wait for the Monarchs to come for a feast.

	Monarch But	utterflies: Poisonous	
	by Kelly Ha	shway	
1.	What is a butterfly larva ca	lled?	
	a. caterpillarc. pupa	b. chrysalisd. a Monarch	
2.	About how long is a Mona	ch in the larvae stage? _	
3.	Which would be the best wa. place a dish of fraction b. plant milkweed in c. cut down large to d. place a small po	uit on the lawn In the yard	terflies to your yard?
4.	Explain how a Monarch bu	tterfly's bright colors help to	protect it from predators.
5.	Re-read these sentences	s from the article.	

Next it sheds its yellow, black, and white striped skin. This is the first step in the caterpillar's <u>transformation</u> to a butterfly.

Which is the best definition for the underlined word.

- **a.** grow older
- **b.** sleep
- **c.** remove
- d. change

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Vocabulary Activity

Fill in the missing letters to create a vocabulary word from the story. Then write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.



1.	r y i i pupa stage of a butterfly	
2.	r a n e n see-through; clear	
3.	n f to fill up	
4.	i g to move to another place	
5.	w i small branch	
6.	e a † a large meal	
7.	o i s poisons	
	 Super Teacher Worksheets - <u>www.supert</u>	eacherworksheets.com

Name:	

Monarch Butterflies: Beautiful But Poisonous



In the article, "Monarch Butterflies: Beautiful But Poisonous", you learned that a monarch butterfly's bright colors warn predators that is it poisonous to eat.

Think of another animal species that has a special way of protecting itself from predators. Write a paragraph to explain what the animal is and how it keeps from being hunted by predators.
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ANSWER KEY

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1.	What is a	a butterfly larva called?	<u>a</u>	
	a.	<u>caterpillar</u>	b.	chrysalis
	c.	pupa	d.	a Monarch
2.	About ho	ow long is a Monarch in	the	e larvae stage? 2 weeks
3.	a. b. c.	ould be the best way to place a dish of fruit on plant milkweed in the cut down large trees place a small pool with	the yar	<u>d</u>
4 .	·	·		right colors help to protect it from predators.
5.	Ne	these sentences from ext it sheds its yellow, b the caterpillar's <u>transf</u>	ola	ck, and white striped skin. This is the first step
	a.	s the best definition fo grow older remove	b.	ne underlined word. <u>d</u> sleep <u>change</u>

ANSWER KEY

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Fill in the missing letters to create a vocabulary word from the story. Then write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.

	Super Teacher Worksheets - <u>www.super</u>	rteacherworksheets.com
7.	toxins hint: poisons	<u>toxins</u>
6.	feast hint: a large meal	<u>feast</u>
5.	twig hint: small branch	twig
4.	migrate hint: to move to another place	<u>migrate</u>
3.	i n f l a t e hint: to fill up	<u>inflate</u>
2.	transparent hint: see-through; clear	transparent
1.	chrysalis hint: pupa stage of a butterfly	<u>chrysalis</u>