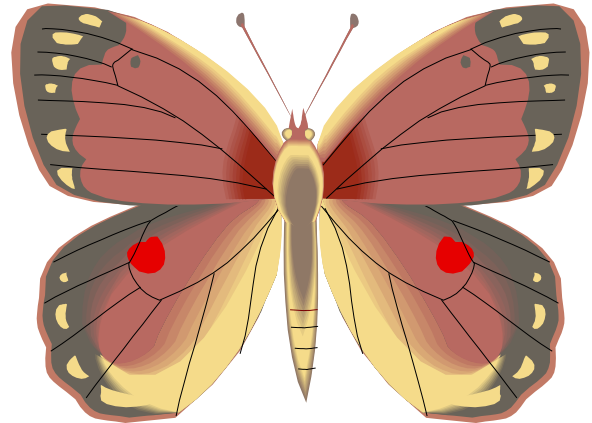


Butterflies and moths are flying insects that have brightly coloured wings. There are about 100 000 different types of butterflies and moths in our world today. They live in all regions, except Antarctica.

## PHYSICAL FEATURES

Like all insects, butterflies and moths have three pairs of legs. Their bodies are divided into three parts: the head, thorax and abdomen. Butterflies have a large eye on both sides of their head and two pairs of wings on the middle part of the body. When you touch them you can feel dust-like scales. They grow in rows and give the wings their special colours. These insects have a good sense of taste, especially for sweet things .

Butterflies and moths can be big or small. The smallest moths have wings that are only a few mm wide. Some have wingspans of up to 30 cm.



## DIFFERENCES

Although butterflies and moths may look alike they are different in some ways. The best way to tell them apart is by looking at their feelers or antennae . Butterfly feelers are thinner and the ends have small round knobs on them. Moth feelers don't have these knobs, they look like more like feathers.

Butterfly wings are usually more colourful and brighter than those of moths . Moths have a thicker body and smaller wings than butterflies.

Most butterflies fly during the daytime while moths are more active at night.

## BEHAVIOUR

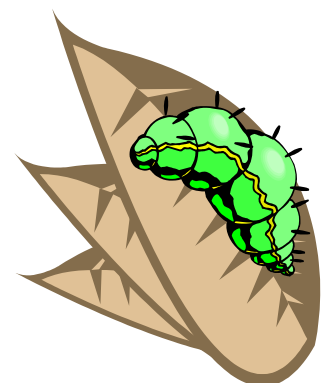
Butterflies and moths eat the nectar of flowers. Some species also eat mosses and ferns. Others may eat seeds and dead plants that lie on the ground.

Some insects travel over large distances. Several species in Europe and North America migrate to warmer regions during the winter and come back to their normal habitat in summer.

## LIFE CYCLE

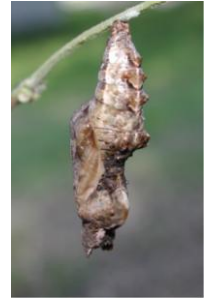
Butterflies and moths pass through four stages in life:

- **EGG**  
The first stage is the egg. Females lay their eggs on plants.
- **LARVA**  
Eggs hatch into small worms that are known as caterpillars. Such caterpillars are busy and hungry. They eat a lot, sometimes twice as much as their own weight every day. After a few days their bodies become too big and their skins crack open. This is called moulting . A caterpillar can shed its skin many times during this phase.



- **PUPA**

After moulting, caterpillars rest. Sometimes they bury their bodies into the ground. Other caterpillars hide in logs or rest in cocoons that they make. This resting stage can last for a few weeks, sometimes even for a whole winter. During this period a caterpillar changes into an adult butterfly.



- **ADULT**

When caterpillars come out of their rest the wings are soft and wet. They fan the wings to pump blood into them and to dry and harden them. After a few hours the adult butterfly is ready to fly. Most adults live between four and six weeks. Some live only a few days while others may live up to ten months.

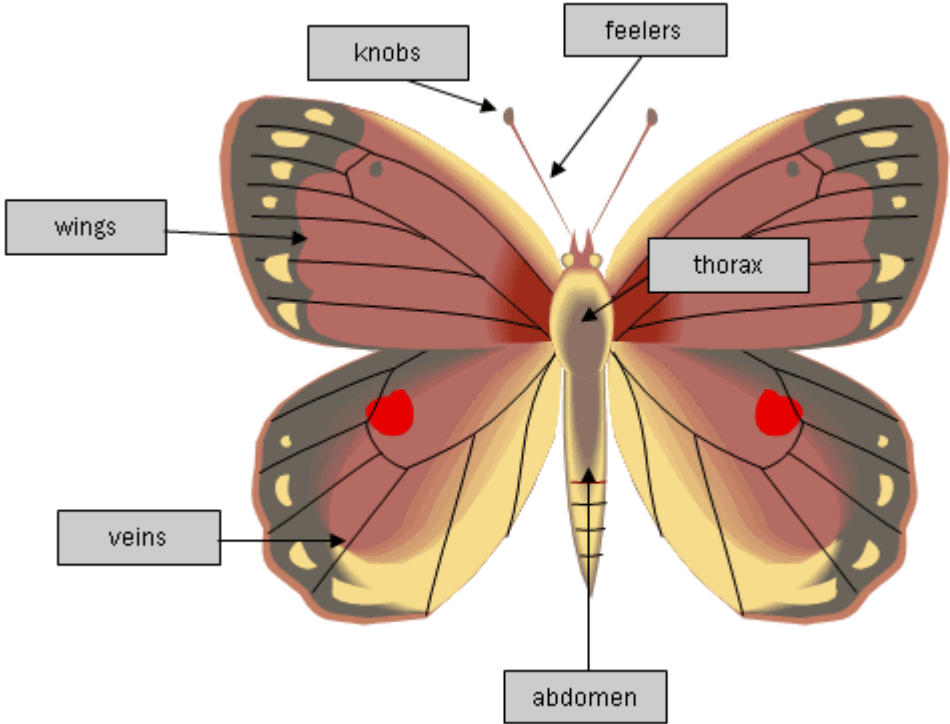
Butterflies and moths have many enemies, especially birds. In order to survive they protect themselves in different ways. Some butterflies have a bad smell. Other species have strange marks on them that frighten away birds. In addition, many butterflies and moths that are in rest look like dead animals or the twigs of leaves.

## WORDS

abdomen = the end part of an insect's body  
adult = a grown-up  
bury = to dig  
caterpillar = a wormlike animal  
cocoon = a cover that insects make to protect themselves while they are growing  
distance = how far something is from something else  
divide = split up into  
enemy = a person or animal that hates you and wants to harm you  
especially = above all  
except = apart from  
fan = to move the wings very quickly  
feather = something soft that covers the body of an animal  
female = relating to a woman  
feeler = one of the two long things on an insect's head  
fern = a plant with green leaves that are sharp like feathers  
habitat = the natural home of a plant or animal  
harden = to make hard  
hatch = a baby comes out of an egg  
hide = to keep yourself in a place where you cannot be seen  
in addition = also  
knob = a small round piece of something  
leg = a long thin part of the body of an insect, normally used for walking  
log = a thick piece of wood from a tree

mark = something unusual on your skin  
migrate = to travel from one region to another and then come back again  
moss = small green plant that grows on wet earth  
moth = an insect like a butterfly; it flies mainly at night  
nectar = the sweet liquid that insects collect from flowers  
pass through = go through  
protect = guard, defend  
row = line  
scales = flat pieces of skin that cover the body  
seed = a small hard object of a plant from which a new plant can grow  
sense of taste = here: they are good at tasting things and knowing what they are  
smell = odour, aroma  
species = a group of animals that are much alike  
stage = phase, time  
survive = to continue to live on  
thorax = part of an insect's body between the head and the abdomen  
twig = a very small branch of a tree  
weight = how heavy something is  
wing = a part of an insect's body that it uses for flying  
wingspan = the distance from one end of the wing to the other

### The Parts of a Butterfly



A silkworm



The eggs of a moth