

Life Cycle of a Butterfly



Insects are *invertebrates*. This means that their skeletons are on the outside of the body, instead of inside. It is called an *exoskeleton*. An insect's body is divided into three sections: the head, the thorax and the abdomen. They have two antennae and six legs and they hatch from eggs. Some insects go through three stages of a life cycle, and some go through four stages.

The butterfly goes through four stages of a life cycle.



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Butterflies start life as tiny **eggs** laid on top of leaves. The butterfly lays them on leaves they like to eat. When the egg hatches, out comes the **larva, or caterpillar**. They eat and eat. As they grow, they shed their skin or *exoskeleton*. When the caterpillar has grown to its full size, it cocoons as a **chrysalis**. This is called the pupa stage. When the caterpillar is done forming inside the pupa, a **butterfly** will emerge. At first its wings are folded, but within hours they pump blood into them and are ready to fly.

