

## Butterfly or Moth?

### *Scientific Background*

Butterflies and moths are both members of the Order Lepidoptera. They each have two pairs of scaly wings, undergo complete metamorphosis, and usually have a coiled, tube-like mouthpart, called a proboscis.

The differences between butterflies and moths are subtle, but there are a few ways to distinguish between them. There are exceptions to the following rules, but they hold true for most members of the Lepidoptera species.

<b>Characteristics of Butterflies</b>	<b>Characteristics of Moths</b>
Butterflies have a thin, straight pair of antennae, which end in a small club. The antennae are said to be “knobbed.”	Moths have large, feathered antennae particularly in the males that help them to sense female pheromones.
Butterflies are not active at night.	Many moths are nocturnal.
Butterflies pupate inside a hardened shell called a chrysalis.	Moths spin a silk cocoon to pupate in.
Many butterflies have bright, colorful patterns on their wings.	Nocturnal moths' wings are usually plain brown, grey, white, and black.
Butterflies frequently fold their wings above their backs when they are perched.	Moths rest with their wings spread out to their sides.
Butterfly bodies are slight and smooth.	Moth bodies tend to be plump and hairy.
Butterflies can move their fore and hind wings independently.	Moths' fore and hind wings are connected.

### *Vocabulary*

- antennae
- cocoon
- knobbed
- nocturnal
- proboscis
- scaly
- chrysalis
- feathery
- Lepidoptera
- pheromone
- pupa
- wing

*Vocabulary definitions can be found in the **Backyard Bugs** Glossary.*

### *Thinking Question*

Why are butterflies brightly colored? Why are moths plain colored?

### *Exploratory and Extension Activities*

**Additional Exploratory and Extension activities are available in the Backyard Bugs Teacher's Guide.**

#### **Reading and Responding to *The Very Hungry Caterpillar***

Read *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle (Scholastic Paperbacks, 1990, ISBN: 0590431196). Discuss similarities and differences between this caterpillar and the hickory horned devil or the Monarch caterpillar.

#### **Nocturnal Bugs**

Read aloud *Night Fliers: Moths in Your Backyard (Backyard Bugs)* by Nancy Loewen and Brandon Reibeling (Picture Window Books, 2003, ISBN: 1404801448). Discuss other creatures that are active at night. Make a list of the nocturnal bugs featured in ***Backyard Bugs***.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

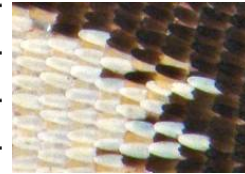
### Butterfly or Moth?

Cut out the pictures below.  
Paste them in the box that matches the insect.

Monarch Butterfly



Luna Moth



# Answer Key

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Monarch Butterfly



Luna Moth

