

Metamorphosis

Activity Sheets

Create 3D paper pyramids which show insect lifecycles.



Ladybirds change appearance completely 4 times during their lifetime in a process called metamorphosis. A small egg hatches into a larvae, then after 21 days the larvae develops a hard shell called a pupa which is fixed to a surface and doesn't move. Inside the larvae changes into an adult ladybird, emerging from the pupa after 5-7 days. 7-spot Ladybirds are extremely useful natural pest controllers, as both larvae and adult beetles love eating lots of aphids.



Shieldbugs are brilliant, natural shape shifters, which radically change appearance numerous times before adulthood through a process called incomplete metamorphosis. The shieldbug's outer shell does not stretch, so when it gets too tight for the growing insect, it splits and falls off to reveal a new, freshly developed larger shell underneath. Each change of form is known as an instar and each can look very different from the one before.



Butterflies change appearance completely 4 times during their lifetime in a process called metamorphosis. In spring, a small egg hatches into a caterpillar, which can be spotted feeding hungrily on nettle leaves before sticking itself to the underside of a branch or leaf and developing a hard outer shell called a chrysalis. The chrysalis hangs motionless. But, hidden inside the caterpillar changes form completely, emerging from the chrysalis as a beautiful adult butterfly. Adults hibernate over winter in dark nooks & crannies.



Female Rose Chafer Beetles lay their eggs underground and the large squishy grub which hatch from the eggs live in the soil for a couple of years feeding on decaying vegetation. This processing of green waste helps to fertilise the soil, so Rose Chafer grubs are a great help to gardeners. When the larvae are ready to metamorphosise they construct a hard shell of soil around themselves and emerge from the ground two weeks later as beautiful iridescent green beetles, which can be seen buzzing around gardens during summer months, helping to pollinate a range of flowers and nibbling on the odd flower petal.