Year 6 reading comprehension: The Life of a Monarch Butterfly

English · Reading comprehension
Level: Easy

Student: _____ Date: _____

Instructions
- Read the text first. There are 3 questions. Read each one carefully.
- Circle the best answer. Look back at the text to find the words that tell you.
- A grown-up can read the text aloud — that's fine.
- The answers are at the end. Check them together when you have finished.

Questions

Read this, then answer questions 1–3.





The Life of a Monarch Butterfly

A monarch butterfly begins life as a tiny egg, about as big as a pinhead, stuck to the underside of a leaf. The female lays her eggs only on milkweed plants, because milkweed leaves are the only food her caterpillars will eat. After about 4 days, a caterpillar chews its way out of the egg and eats its own eggshell first. Then it eats leaves almost non-stop for about 2 weeks. During this time its skin does not stretch, so it sheds its skin 4 times and grows a new one each time. When it is fully grown, the caterpillar hangs upside down from a twig and makes a green case called a chrysalis. Inside the chrysalis, its body is slowly rebuilt, and this stage lasts about 10 days. Just before the butterfly comes out, the chrysalis turns clear and the orange wings can be seen through it. The new butterfly pumps fluid into its crumpled wings, then waits for a few hours for them to dry before it flies. Most adult monarchs live for 2 to 6 weeks, but monarchs that rest through the cold winter months can live for several months.

1. A gardener pulls up every milkweed plant in a garden. What is most likely to happen to the monarchs there?

Circle one answer.

- ○ **A** The caterpillars would start eating other plants.
- ○ **B** The butterflies would lay their eggs inside chrysalises.
- ○ **C** No new monarch caterpillars would hatch in that garden.
- ○ **D** The adult monarchs would live for several months.

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2. Why does a caterpillar shed its skin?

Circle one answer.

- ○ **A** The leaf it sits on has become too cold.
- ○ **B** Its skin does not stretch.
- ○ **C** It eats leaves almost non-stop.
- ○ **D** It is getting ready to make a chrysalis.

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3. Which of these is NOT given in the text?

Circle one answer.

- ○ **A** Monarch caterpillars eat many kinds of plant.
- ○ **B** A caterpillar sheds its skin 4 times.
- ○ **C** The chrysalis turns clear before the butterfly comes out.
- ○ **D** Most adult monarchs live for 2 to 6 weeks.

Answer key

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1. C — No new monarch caterpillars would hatch in that garden.

The text says: “The female lays her eggs only on milkweed plants, because milkweed leaves are the only food her caterpillars will eat.” The female lays her eggs only on milkweed, because her caterpillars eat nothing else. So: No milkweed means no eggs are laid there, so no new caterpillars hatch.

2. B — Its skin does not stretch.

The text says: “During this time its skin does not stretch, so it sheds its skin 4 times and grows a new one each time.” The words because and so point to the reason.

3. A — Monarch caterpillars eat many kinds of plant.

The text says: “The female lays her eggs only on milkweed plants, because milkweed leaves are the only food her caterpillars will eat.”