



The Very Hungry Caterpillar Teaching Plan

USING *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle

About the Book

A small caterpillar emerges from an egg and begins eating everything in sight. Finally, it is no longer hungry and no longer small. The big, fat caterpillar builds a cocoon around himself and finally emerges as a beautiful butterfly. In fact, what Carle calls the cocoon is really the pupa or chrysalis. *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* is unique in that it actually has the holes eaten by the caterpillar. Like most of Carle's books, it is illustrated with tissue-paper collages replete with color and detail.

Introducing the Book

Here are a few strategies for introducing the book to the class.

- **Cover Story** Display the book and invite children to describe the caterpillar. Ask: *Does he look happy? How do you think the artist made this caterpillar?* Read aloud the title and ask: *Why do you think the caterpillar is so hungry?*
- **Page Flip** Invite children to flip through the pages of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. Ask: *What do you notice that's different about this book?* Talk about the holes in the pages and the different sized pages. Tell the class that the author made the book this way on purpose. Ask children to think about why as they read the story.
- **Building Background** Ask children what they know about caterpillars. Have they ever seen one? Held one? How did it feel? What happens to caterpillars? Begin a K-W-L (What We Know, What We Want to Know, What We Learn) Chart on poster paper. List children's knowledge in the first column and their questions in the second. After reading the story, revisit the chart to add information to the third column. You might also wish to have some nonfiction books on caterpillars and butterflies on hand to augment children's knowledge.

Caterpillars

What We KNOW

they're fuzzy

they crawl

What We WANT to Know

What We LEARN

Reading the Book

Try using these ideas after you have read the book at least once with the class.

Basic Concepts

The book offers an opportunity to review several basic concepts.

- Counting: Invite children to count out the food that the hungry caterpillar eats each weekday. Ask: *How many things does he eat on Saturday? How many more things is that than he ate on Friday?*
- Days of the Week: Write the days of the week on the chalkboard and have children tell what the caterpillar does on each day. Ask volunteers to identify each day of the week on a calendar.
- Back and Front: Point out that the short pages of the book show both the front of the fruit on one side and the back of the fruit on the other. Ask children to point out other examples of back and front in the classroom (books, classmates, chairs).

Changes

Review the changes that the caterpillar undergoes. Then ask if children can think of other things that change. Ask: *Do pets change? How? Do trees change? Have you changed?* Help children recognize that all living things grow and change.

After Reading the Book

Try these ideas to extend children's understanding and appreciation of the story.

Make Caterpillars and Butterflies

Children can have fun retelling the story with their own caterpillars and butterflies.

To make caterpillars: use discarded egg cartons, pipe cleaners, paints or markers.

1. Cut apart a carton to make a six-hump caterpillar.
2. Paint the carton including a face on one end.
3. Poke two holes for antennae and insert pipe cleaners.

To make butterflies: use basket shaped coffee filters, paints, pipe cleaners.

1. Fold the filter in half, then open it again.
2. Drip paint on the center fold. Let it spread and dry.
3. Pinch the filter in the center, then wrap a pipe cleaner around it to be the butterfly's body.