

## **Cool Facts on the Painted Lady Butterfly**

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### **Life Cycle Facts:**

- Painted Lady Butterflies will go through their entire life cycle (egg, larvae/caterpillar, pupa/chrysalis, and adult) in less than a month!
- Butterflies make a chrysalis; moths make a cocoon. They are different. A chrysalis is made from hardened protein as the butterfly caterpillar sheds one last time. A cocoon is made from silk the moth caterpillar spins around itself. A butterfly pupa has nothing spun around it.

### **Egg Facts:**

- Painted Lady Butterfly eggs are a light green color and as small as a pin tip.
- When the egg hatches, the new caterpillar will eat its egg.

### **Caterpillar Facts:**

- Painted Lady Butterfly caterpillars will eat thistle, sunflower, okra, and other plants in the Asteraceae family.
- Painted Lady caterpillars will shed their skin four times as they grow.
- Painted Lady caterpillars spin silk to help support and protect themselves.
- Painted Lady caterpillars hang upside down in a "J" shape when they are ready to pupate.

### **Chrysalis Facts:**

- While a chrysalis, much of the caterpillar's body liquifies and reassembles as a butterfly.
- The chrysalis can shake violently to ward off predators!

### **Butterfly Facts:**

- A few hours before the butterfly emerges, the chrysalis turns a dark (almost black) color.
- A few minutes (5-60) before the butterfly emerges, the chrysalis turns clearer and you can see the wing through the chrysalis.
- The new butterfly cannot eat or fly when it is born!
- The new butterfly's wings are wet and folded when it emerges. It hangs from its chrysalis to dry, harden, and stretch its wings and body.
- The new butterfly must assemble its proboscis before it eats. When it is born the proboscis is separated into two tubes that must be connected in order to eat.
- The butterfly "tongue" is a proboscis rolled up under its face. The proboscis is hollow--butterflies sip nectar as you would sip through a straw.
- A new butterfly drops meconium out its abdomen shortly after it is born. The meconium looks red (like your blood) and is made from left over caterpillar parts that the butterfly doesn't use.
- Butterfly blood is clear.
- Butterflies breathe (obtain oxygen) through spiracles--small holes in their bodies.
- Painted Lady Butterflies use four legs. They are part of a family of butterflies known as the brush-foot butterflies (Nymphalidae) because their front two legs are so small they are useless. You can see them stuck to the butterflies' thorax.
- Painted Lady Butterflies enjoy eating oranges, watermelon, other fruits, and sugar water.
- Painted Lady Butterflies live in every continent in the world *except* Australia and Antarctica.
- Painted Lady Butterflies have many predators--wasps, mantises, birds, and other animals may eat the butterflies, eggs, larvae, or pupae.
- The adult Painted Lady Butterfly only lives about two weeks!<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Source: <http://preschoolpowolpackets.blogspot.com/2013/04/cool-facts-about-painted-lady.html>