

Name _____



The Incredible Life Cycle of a Moth

Moths go through an amazing transformation during their life. Like butterflies, moths have a life cycle with four distinct stages: egg, larva, pupa, and adult. This process, called metamorphosis, helps moths grow and change from tiny eggs into beautiful, flying insects.

The first stage of a moth's life is the egg stage. Female moths lay their eggs on plants, tree bark, or leaves. These eggs are very small, sometimes no bigger than a grain of sand! A female moth may lay hundreds of eggs at a time. After about 4 to 10 days, the eggs hatch into caterpillars.

The second stage is the larva, or caterpillar, stage. Caterpillars are small, worm-like creatures with a huge appetite. They spend their time eating plants, leaves, or fruits to gain energy for the next stage of their life. This is when the moth grows the most. Depending on the species, the larva stage can last from a few weeks to several months.

Next comes the pupa stage, which is when the caterpillar stops eating and forms a protective cocoon around itself. Inside this cocoon, the caterpillar undergoes a dramatic transformation. It grows wings and changes into an adult moth. This stage can last anywhere from 1 to 3 weeks, though some moth species stay in their cocoons through the winter to survive cold temperatures.

Finally, the adult moth emerges from the cocoon, completing its life cycle. Adult moths live for a short time—usually just a few weeks. During this time, their main goal is to find a mate and start the cycle again. Some species, like the luna moth, don't even eat as adults because their only purpose is reproduction.

The entire life cycle of a moth can range from a few weeks to several months, depending on the species and environment. Every stage is important, and together, they create one of nature's most fascinating processes. From tiny eggs to fluttering adults, moths show us how nature can transform in incredible ways.