

Art Exploration

SYMMETRY PAINTING



Using paint and paper, see if you can recreate the symmetry of a butterfly's wings.

Materials Provided:

Paper Butterfly Template

Materials Needed:

Paintbrush or Q-Tip

Paint, watercolor or acrylic

Alternative: Chalk

Instructions:

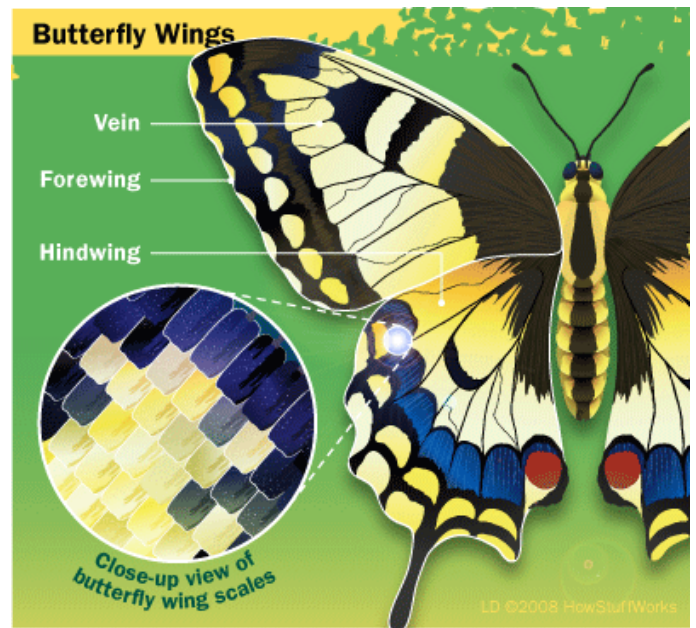
1. This is a simple project that creates beautiful and unique results. First, decide how you'd like to decorate your butterfly template. We recommend using paint (watercolors or acrylic are fine), but if you don't have any paint at home, you can also try using chalk.
2. Open your butterfly template, and paint or decorate only **ONE SIDE** of the butterfly's wings. Choose whichever side you like, but do not place paint or chalk beyond the fold.
3. When you've finished painting or decorating your wing, and while your paint is still wet, fold your butterfly closed. Press the folded butterfly gently from the outside, to make sure your paint or chalk transfers to the other wing.
4. Gently open your butterfly!



The wet paint, when transferred, makes a perfect reflection on the other wing of your butterfly. You'll notice that the designs are not exactly the same -- they are mirror reflections of one another, meaning that everything appears on the opposite side. This is just how a butterfly's wings appear in nature.

If you'd like to, after your butterfly has dried, you can place a pipe cleaner or popsicle stick over the fold, and glue it down to act as the butterfly's body.

DID YOU KNOW? When a butterfly first emerges from its cocoon or **chrysalis**, its wings are wet and wrinkled, too! Butterflies must wait for their wings to dry before attempting to fly.



The Anatomy of Butterfly Wings

Butterfly wings are made of very thin layers of a protein called **chitin**. On top of these chitin layers are thousands of tiny scales that, besides being responsible for the incredible colors found on butterflies, also protect the insects and aid in air flow as they fly.

Can I hurt a butterfly by touching its wings?

Unfortunately, yes. The scales on butterfly wings are very sensitive, and can be rubbed off by human fingers. If you've ever touched a butterfly and noticed a dusting on your fingers afterward, you've seen this in action. A butterfly can live with missing or damaged scales, but it will not be able to warm itself as well.

Butterfly wings themselves are very fragile, and can easily be torn or broken by human hands. For those reasons, it's best to watch these beautiful creatures from afar.

Why do butterfly wings look so different?

Butterflies wings come in all kinds of shapes, colors and patterns. Sometimes, they look the way they do to attract a mate. Other times, a butterfly's wings are designed to help them **camouflage**, or blend into their surroundings.

The wings of an owl butterfly mimic the fierce stare of an owl, to scare away predators. Other butterflies disguise themselves as green leaves, dead leaves, snakes, and even bird poop!