

The Magnificent Monarch: A Study of the Meadow-Dweller

Learning objective: To retrieve information from a non-chronological report and make inferences based on the text provided.

Read the report carefully. Use evidence from the text to support your answers. Aim to use full sentences for all responses.

The Monarch butterfly is a remarkable insect known for its vibrant orange and black wings. Primarily found in North America, these creatures are famous for their awe-inspiring migration, covering thousands of miles to reach warmer climates. Unlike other butterflies, the Monarch undergoes a complete metamorphosis. It begins its life as a tiny egg laid on a milkweed leaf. Once the hungry larva, or caterpillar, emerges, it consumes the milkweed foliage, which makes the insect toxic to potential predators. After growing, it forms a protective chrysalis. Inside this silken chamber, the butterfly undergoes a profound transformation before emerging as a winged adult. Adult Monarchs feed exclusively on nectar from flowers, playing a vital role in pollination. However, habitat loss and climate change pose significant threats to their survival. Conservationists are currently working to plant more milkweed to ensure these travellers have enough food during their arduous journey. Their survival is essential for the delicate balance of our meadow ecosystems, as they help sustain the plant life upon which many other species rely.

Word bank: habitat · migration · nectar · larva · chrysalis · metamorphosis · indigenous

1. According to the text, what specific plant does the Monarch larva rely on for survival and protection? (1 mark)

2. List two physical characteristics of the adult Monarch butterfly mentioned in the passage. (2 marks)

3. Why might the Monarch's toxicity be considered an evolutionary advantage? (2 marks)

4. Explain why the author describes the Monarch's journey as 'arduous'. Use evidence from the text to support your answer. (2 marks)

5. Do you think humans have a responsibility to protect the Monarch's habitat? Justify your opinion with reference to the text. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a scientific diagram of the Monarch butterfly's life cycle, labelling each stage from egg to adult as described in the report.



Extension challenge: Research the term 'migration'. Compare and contrast the migration of the Monarch butterfly with the migration of a bird species of your choice. What might happen to the meadow ecosystem if the Monarch population were to decline significantly? Justify your prediction.