

Butterfly Investigations

For these investigations it is best if you have an area that butterflies visit.

Descriptive Investigations

- Search for butterfly habitat in your schoolyard using Butterfly Habitat pages answering the question, “Does our schoolyard have the 5 things butterflies need for their habitat
- Count the number of butterflies observed on a sunny day answering the question, “How many butterflies can we observe on a sunny day?”
- Go out every day in May or during a week and count butterflies answering a similar question to, “How many days in May do we see Butterflies in the Schoolyard?” (counting page provided).
- When do we first see butterflies in May? Again, go out every day and record when you first see butterflies.

Comparative Investigations

- Do we see more butterflies on sunny days or cloudy days in the spring? OR Do butterflies prefer sunny or cloudy days in spring (May)?
- If you plant a butterfly garden or even a big pot you could ask the question, “Do we see more butterflies before or after the garden was planted?” observing 5 days before the plants go in and 5 days after.
- Another idea is to plant butterfly attracting plants in 2 big pots and place one in the shade and one in the sun. You would need to observe for butterflies on sunny days. Then your question becomes, “Do butterflies prefer sun or shade?”

Butterfly Habitat

Sunny area



Water source



Basking area



Nectar flowers







Wild patches



Butterfly Investigation

Do we see butterflies more on sunny days or cloudy days in the spring?

Date	Sunny Days 	Butterflies Seen 
	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
	6	
	Total number of days butterflies seen	

Date	Cloudy Days 	Butterflies Seen 
	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
	6	
	Total number of days butterflies seen	

Butterfly Investigation

Question: Do we see more butterflies on cloudy days or sunny days in spring? OR Do butterflies prefer sunny or cloudy days in spring?

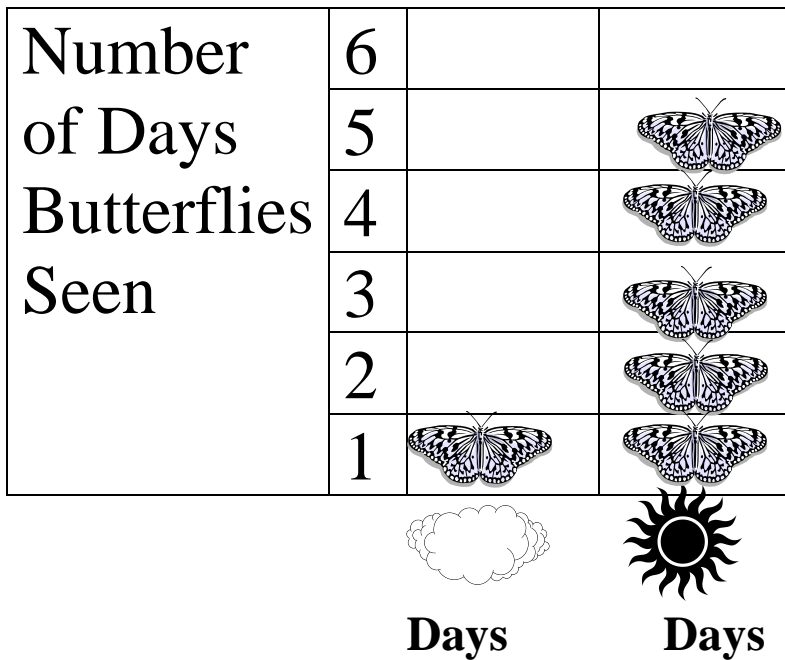
Prediction: Either predict for the class as a whole or have them predict. Say something like “We know butterflies like to bask in the sun so I would predict butterflies would be seen more on sunny days.”

Procedure:

1. Go outside to the area where you have seen butterflies.
2. Make sure you go out at the same time each day.
3. Decide whether sunny or cloudy and write date in the correct chart.
4. Sit quietly for 10 minutes OR walk around the schoolyard on the same path each day.
5. Record the number of butterflies you saw.
6. Record for 6 cloudy days and 6 sunny days and compare sunny days to cloudy days.

Analyze Data

Create a simple graph with students similar to below.



Conclusion: Butterflies prefer sunny days because we saw butterflies during 5 sunny days and saw butterflies only once on a cloudy day

Butterfly Investigation-2

Question: How many days in May do we see butterflies in the schoolyard?

Note: Since this is a descriptive type of question, and does not compare, students are **not** expected to predict the outcome.



Procedure:

1. Go outside to the area where you have seen butterflies.
2. Make sure you go out at the **same time** each day.
3. Decide whether sunny or cloudy and record under sunny or cloudy column.
4. Sit quietly for 5 minutes **OR** walk around the schoolyard on the same path each day.
5. Record the number of butterflies you saw.
6. At the end of the month total the number of days butterflies were seen.
7. You could also compare the number of cloudy days seen and number of sunny days seen. However, this is not quite a fair comparison since May has 31 days.
8. If you do this every year you could compare how many days butterflies were seen from year to year.

Name _____

Butterfly Investigation

Do we see more butterflies in the sun or in the shade?

Day	Sun 	Shade 
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
Total number of days butterflies seen		

Extension: Plant butterfly attracting plants in 2 big pots and place one in the shade and one in the sun. Observe only on sunny days. Question would be, “Do butterflies prefer sun or shade?”

Procedure:

1. Go outside to count butterflies on 6 sunny days.
2. Have $\frac{1}{2}$ the class go to the shady site and $\frac{1}{2}$ of the class go to the sunny site-switch groups each day, so all students go to the shade 3 days and the sun 3 days.
3. Have students count butterflies and record.

Butterfly Observations

Date	Butterflies? Yes or No	Cloudy or Sunny	
May 1			Date butterflies first observed
May 2			
May 3			
May 4			
May 5			
May 6			
May 7			Number of days butterflies were observed
May 8			
May 9			
May 10			
May 11			
May 12			
May 13			
May 14			
May 15			
May 16			
May 17			
May 18			
May 19			
May 20			
May 21			
May 22			
May 23			
May 24			
May 25			
May 26			
May 27			
May 28			
May 29			
May 30			
May 31			

