

A Butterfly Collection

The following is a series of texts related to butterflies. This series includes two poems, an editorial, and an excerpt from an encyclopedia article.

To a Butterfly

by William Wordsworth (1770–1850)

I've watched you now a full half-hour,
Self-poised upon that yellow flower
And, little butterfly! indeed
I know not if you sleep or feed.
How motionless! Not frozen seas
More motionless! And then
What joy awaits you, when the breeze
Has found you out among the trees,
And calls you forth again!

This plot of orchard-ground is ours;
My trees they are, my sister's flowers;
Here rest your wings when they are weary,
Here lodge as in a sanctuary!
Come often to us, fear no wrong;
Sit near us on the bough!
We'll talk of sunshine and of song,
And summer days, when we were young;
Sweet childish days, that were as long
As twenty days are now.

Haiku

by Matsuo Basho (1644–1694)

Translated from Japanese

With every gust of wind,
the butterfly changes its place
on the willow.

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A Butterfly Collection *(Continued)*

Save the Monarch Butterflies!

An Editorial by Roselle Martinez

The beautiful monarch butterfly is one of North America's most common butterflies. It is famous for its remarkable annual migration from the northern part of the continent to Mexico, where millions of monarchs spend the winter packed tightly together in one small area. This migration is a wonder of nature—yet this behavior has now put the monarch at risk!

Every September monarchs from the northeastern United States fly down the East Coast and westward to Mexico. Monarchs from the western United States take a different path down the West Coast. After about two months of flying time, millions of butterflies reach their sanctuary: a few secluded valleys in central Mexico. In the warm climate of these hidden places, far from most human activity, the butterflies create one of nature's great spectacles, covering every tree with blazing color. The show lasts until spring, when the butterflies return north.

But while they are all crowded together, the monarchs are highly vulnerable. If the environment in those valleys were disturbed, the whole species could easily be hurt or even wiped out! That is why for many years those few scientists who knew about the monarchs' winter sanctuary kept its location a secret.

In recent years, however, the monarchs' secret has been revealed. Today, the butterflies' winter refuge is invaded by crowds of tourists who disturb the environment by their visits. Worse still, local farmers, needing more land to farm, have been intruding on the area. They are cutting down trees in some areas and making it difficult for the butterflies to survive.

For those who care about monarch butterflies, there's only one thing to do: act immediately to protect the species' winter sanctuary. Local farmers must be aided so that they no longer need to take land away from the butterflies. Tourist visits to the butterflies' hidden valleys must also be limited. Unless these steps are taken soon, in a few years the monarch butterfly of North America may be just a beautiful memory.

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Resource Links

 RDI Book 1: p. 409

SAM Keywords: Cross Text

A Butterfly Collection *(Continued)***Monarch Butterfly****An Encyclopedia Excerpt**

The monarch butterfly, which is one of the more than 100,000 species of butterflies, has colorful black and orange wing patterns. Each summer, millions of these creatures flutter around fields, forests, and backyards in Canada and the United States. They also live in Central and South America.

Bright Colors = Danger

The bright colors of the monarch are more than just decoration; they are a secret weapon in the butterflies' defense against predators. These bright colors warn animals and other insects that the monarch is not a tasty treat. In fact, the monarch is poisonous to many animals, such as birds and grasshoppers. The poison inside the monarch comes from the milkweed plant, which monarch caterpillars eat before they change into adult butterflies.

Eating, Sleeping, and Flying

Once the caterpillars become adult butterflies, they do not eat at all—they only drink: they have a long tube, called a proboscis (pruh-BOSS-kus), which is used for feeding. They suck nectar from flowers and blossoms. Monarchs eat during the day, because they fly best when they are warm and the sun is out. When the weather is cool, they often rest on a rock or tree limb to absorb the sun's warmth and gain the energy to fly again. When they take flight, monarchs flap their wings about 5 to 12 times a second. At night, butterflies are inactive, but they don't exactly sleep. In fact, they cannot even shut their eyes, because they have no eyelids.

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Resource Links

 RDI Book 1: p. 410

SAM Keywords: Cross Text

A Butterfly Collection *(Continued)*

Monarchs on the Move

Monarchs are different from most other butterflies in that they migrate thousands of miles from the north to the south every winter, as many birds do. There are two major populations of monarchs—one that spends the winter along the coast of California, and the other that winters in central Mexico. In the spring, the Mexican monarchs migrate back to the United States, laying eggs on milkweed plants as they travel. The adults die off before they reach the northern states, and their young continue the journey. By the end of summer, the butterflies migrate southward. Although these butterflies have never been to Mexico, they somehow find their way to the valleys that are the wintering areas for their population.

A Monarch Sanctuary

The precise location of the monarch's winter home in Mexico was a mystery until 1975. In that year, a scientist discovered the mountainous region west of Mexico City, measuring about 20 miles by 40 miles, where hundreds of millions of monarchs go from November to March. The fir trees of these mountain forests provide protection for the butterflies from snow and rain. In some areas there are as many as four million butterflies per acre. With so many butterflies in a small area, they are very vulnerable. In 2002, disaster struck, when a brutal winter storm came through the area, killing millions of monarchs. About three-quarters of all the butterflies there died from the wet, cold weather. One of the hardest hit areas, El Rosaria, is located at the edge of a deforested area, where the butterflies were less protected.

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Cross-Text Analysis

To understand as much as you can about a topic, read a variety of texts about the topic and compare the information.

Passage: _____

Topic: _____

Text	Genre	Important Information or Ideas

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