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What is a Butterfly

Butterflies are the adult flying stage of certain insects belonging to an order or group called Lepidoptera. Moths also belong to this group. The word "Lepidoptera" means "scaly wings" in Greek. This name perfectly suits the insects in this group because their wings are covered with thousands of tiny scales overlapping in rows. The scales, which are arranged in colorful designs unique to each species, are what gives the butterfly its beauty.

Like all other insects, butterflies have six legs and three main body parts: head, thorax (chest or mid section) and abdomen (tail end). They also have two antennae and an exoskeleton.

Both butterflies and moths belong to the same insect group called Lepidoptera. In general, butterflies differ from moths in the following ways: (1) Butterflies usually have clubbed antennae but moths have fuzzy or feathery antennae. (2) Butterflies normally are active during the daytime while most moths are active at night. (3) When a butterfly rests, it will do so with its wings held upright over its body. Moths, on the other hand, rest with their wings spread out flat. Butterflies will, however, bask with their wings out-stretched. (4) Butterflies are generally more brightly colored than moths, however, this is not always the case. There are some very colorful moths.

