

**TEKS-Based Activity for Grade 5**

# Copycat

**Description:**

In this activity students observe the similarities and differences between the monarch butterfly and the viceroy butterfly. Students identify why the viceroy butterfly mimics the monarch butterfly.

**Time Frame:**

1 lesson (45 minutes)

**Correlation to Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills:**

During this activity, students will be exposed to the following Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills:

**Note:** Some TEKS statements below end with a ; or *and* and nothing thereafter—this indicates that further TEKS statements follow but are not included here.

**(5.9) Science concepts.** The student knows that adaptations may increase the survival of members of a species. The student is expected to:

- (C) predict some adaptive characteristics required for survival and reproduction by an organism in an ecosystem.

**Note:** The TEKS listed here are the main content TEKS for this activity; however, this activity may also cover additional content and process skills included in other TEKS.

**Materials:**

Pictures of monarch and viceroy caterpillars and butterflies (one for the teacher and one for each student or student group)  
Monarch and Viceroy Butterflies information sheet (included at the end of this activity)

**Background Information:**

Viceroy butterflies have color and markings similar to monarch butterflies. This is called mimicry. Mimicry is when one organism mimics another to avoid being caught by a predator. In this case, the viceroy butterfly mimics the unpleasant-tasting monarch butterfly to avoid being eaten by birds

**Procedures:**

1. Display pictures of monarch and viceroy caterpillars and butterflies. Ask students to describe their similarities and differences.
2. Place students in small groups and distribute the Monarch and Viceroy Butterflies information sheet as well as pictures of the caterpillars and

butterflies. Ask students to create a Venn diagram listing the differences and similarities between viceroys and monarchs.

3. Ask students to explain why similarities between the two are important to the good-tasting viceroy caterpillars and butterflies.

# Monarch and Viceroy Butterflies

## Information Sheet

Monarch and viceroy butterflies share some similarities but also have some differences. Monarch butterflies taste bad to birds because the butterflies eat the bitter-tasting milkweed plant. This makes birds avoid monarch butterflies.

Viceroy butterflies, on the other hand, do not eat milkweed plants. This means that birds like to eat viceroy butterflies because the butterflies do not taste bad. However, because viceroys look like monarchs, birds have learned to avoid the viceroys as much as the monarchs.