

Materials Needed

- Squares of brightly colored, crisp paper. (Magazine and calendar pictures work well)
- Something for the stem, such as pipe cleaner or straw
- Thin string, or wire, for hanging.
- Tape

Grade Range

Pre-K

Topics/Skills

Art
Butterflies
Shapes
Fine motor skills

Learning Standards

[National Visual Arts Standards: Creating](#)

Duration

30 – 45 minutes

Prep Time

5 – 10 minutes

Folded Flutter-bys

Create a butterfly shape from two diagonally folded squares!



Children will develop finger dexterity and eye-hand coordination as they create brightly colored butterflies to hang from a string. This activity reinforces the concept of the diagonal by folding a square from corner to diagonal corner. Accordion folding helps with finger dexterity and eye-hand co-ordination.

Activity Challenge

Create a butterfly shape from two diagonally folded squares.

Preparation

1. Review the Materials Needed list and collect materials.
2. Cut squares to create the butterfly. Each butterfly requires 2 paper squares of different sizes. A good pairing is a 15 cm (6") square with a 10 cm (4") square. This is a 3 to 2 ratio.

To Do

1. Start by having the student place a paper square diagonally with one corner pointing towards the student on a firm surface. Accordion-fold the square **on the diagonal** starting with the corner closest to the student and then making $\frac{1}{2}$ cm to $1\frac{1}{2}$ cm ($\frac{1}{4}$ " to $\frac{3}{4}$ ") width folds.
2. Fold the second square in the same way. One way to create the folds is to make downward folds over the square edge of a table or similar surface. Next pinch the fold, bring the fold upward, and fold toward the opposite corner matching the starting width. Repeat until the entire square is folded.
3. Fold the chenille stem in half. Twist, starting at the folded center, until about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the folded stem is twisted. Add tape to hold the stem in place.
4. Pinch the folded squares together in the middle and center them. The smaller square should be facing downward, between the folded stem and above the twisted section of the stem.
5. Twist the stem above the wings (folded squares) to secure them in place. Curl the two ends of the chenille stem to form antennae. Bend the wings at the center to open.

Observation

- How does the folded flutter-by look like a butterfly?
- How might you change the design the more closely resemble a real butterfly?

Extensions

Create a mobile showing the four stages of a butterfly's life cycle. A mobile is a decorative structure that is suspended to turn freely in the air. Wind chimes are an example of a mobile.

The Content behind the Activity

Butterflies are a favorite spring theme in many classrooms. Their brightly colored, diversely patterned wings, combined with their erratic but graceful flight, captures children's attention and imagination. Like other members of the order Lepidoptera (meaning scaled wings), butterflies undergo a dramatic change in form, and behavior, from the juvenile to adult stages. Many species, like the butterfly, develop rapidly from egg to adult, which makes them ideal subjects for life cycle studies in the classroom. Evidence of butterflies exists from the early Cretaceous period and their development is linked to the evolution of flowering plants (angiosperms). The plural for the word antenna can be spelled antennas (adding an s) or antennae (which is the Latin form). In the United States, the plural used most often for insects is the Latin form. Butterflies have curled or clubbed antennae, while moths have feathery or pointed antennae. There are about 17,500 species of butterflies in the world, with around 750 species native to the United States. Many people enjoy planting "butterfly gardens" that contain desirable flowers and plants for butterflies, including aster, daylilies, lavender, and lilac.