

Summer Birds: The Butterflies of Maria Merian

A RIF GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

Themes: Life Science, Insects, Butterflies, History

Grade Level: K to 2nd grade

Book Brief: Maria is fascinated by caterpillars and butterflies. She uses careful observation and her artistic talent to document their life cycles.

Author:

Margarita Engle

Illustrator:

Julie Paschkis

Content Connections:

Science, Social Studies, Art



TIME TO READ!

BEFORE WE READ, LET'S LOOK AT...

The Cover: Have students make predictions about the book based on the title and front cover illustration.

What is a summer bird? Who is Maria Merian? Explain that she was born in 1647 in Germany.

The Pictures: Take a brief picture walk through the book. Ask students what they can tell about the setting and time period of this story based on the illustrations.

Prior Knowledge: What do your students already know about butterflies? Where do butterflies come from? What's special about their life cycle? Find Germany on a map.

Vocabulary: nectar, cocoon

Purpose for Reading:

"While we read, look for clues to explain why Maria risks her life to study insects."



WHILE WE READ



MONITORING COMPREHENSION

◆ In Maria's time, why did people think insects were evil?

- ◆ Do Maria's parents know she's studying insects?
- ◆ Why is Maria's notebook so important?
- ◆ What would have happened if Maria had been caught?

LET'S THINK ABOUT

Our Purpose: "Why do you think Maria studies insects even though it's illegal? What details in the book give us clues?"

Extending Our Thinking: Ask these open-ended questions: "Would you have done the same thing Maria did, or would you have been too scared?" "Why is it important to learn more about things we don't understand?" "Where do butterflies go in the winter? How can you find out?" "How old would Maria be today?"

NOTE TO EDUCATORS

- ◆ Extension Activities for Educators also available.
- ◆ Vocabulary Scaffolding Sheet also available.



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