



The following are ideas for using *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* in the classroom.

Submitted by [Faye Kirchoff](#)

When I read this book (the hardbound edition) to my 3 year old, 5 years ago, my child loved poking the little holes with his fingers and play finger “peek-a-boo”. It then gave me the idea to get a piece of red fabric, stuffing, and needle and thread. I immediately sew it into a caterpillar like the one in the book and gave two little black eyes. With that we had a playful caterpillar which went thru the holes of each fruit. We also play hide-and-seek and peek-a-boo as the plush caterpillar went thru the holes. This toy gave us hours of story play.

Submitted by Mush11301994@aol.com

I am a substitute teacher and have to be prepared when there are no lesson plans left for me. As a filler, I read *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and use body movements to teach young children the life cycles of the butterfly.

1. Egg: Have children hold their ankles, bend down, and round their body like the shape of an egg.
2. Larva: Squirm like a worm.
3. Pupa: Crawl into a sleeping bag (large pillowcases, leap frog bags) with colorful kerchiefs inside.
4. Butterfly: Children pop out of the bag swaying their colorful kerchiefs behind them.

Following this, we usually watch *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* video.

Submitted by [Karen G. Johnson](#)

Our son is turning one. He didn't gain weight the first two months of his life. But he has made up for it! (Now at 25 pounds!) And he is STILL HUNGRY!

We decided to use the theme of one of our favorite books, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, for his 1st birthday. (We have 3 other children.) We invited friends and family to a picnic to celebrate our own “Very Hungry Caterpillar” turning into a beautiful “1-year-old” (written inside of a butterfly drawing). We served a fruit salad (like the recipe on your caterpillar exchange) and the foods eaten by the Very Hungry Caterpillar at our picnic. We had a caterpillar pinata, games catching tissue paper butterflies, and the cake? A long cupcake caterpillar weaving throughout the picnic buffet!

Thank you, Mr. Carle, for so many wonderful stories, such as this one, that we treasure in our home library!

Submitted by [Jaime Stewart](#)

I am student teaching in a kindergarten class and we are learning beginning sounds. To help the learn the letter and sound of “Cc” I had the students make a class caterpillar after reading *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. I made a circles of green paper and had each of the students draw a picture of something that begins with the letter “Cc.” Each of the circles represented a piece of the caterpillars body. I told students that our caterpillare was very hungry and needed lots to eat. I made the face using a paper circle with wiggly eyes and pipe cleaners as antennae. This was a

great way to assess whether students could correctly pull up “Cc” words. The students really loved seeing their caterpillar displayed in the hall with their “Cc” words.

Submitted by [R. Hoon](#)

After reading the book ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar***, my first grade class discussed the concept of collages, and then the students made their own collages. They glued pieces of fabric, string, tissue paper, construction paper, and clips from magazines to create a butterfly. We mounted each collage on a solid piece of construction paper.

Submitted by [Trevor Block](#)

My three year old son loves the book, and has done some activities based on it at school. The other night, after I'd finished reading it to him at bedtime, he asked if we could eat what the caterpillar eats on Saturday. So tomorrow morning, we're going shopping for chocolate cake, strawberry ice cream, a lollipop, pickles, etc., etc. I don't think he'll get through it all unless he just has a small taste of each, and it's not as healthy as the 1 apple, 2 pears, 3 plums fruit salad, but it was his idea and I'm sure we'll have a ball doing it.

Submitted by [Shanon Lutz](#)

I teach 3rd grade and use ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar*** when teaching about life cycles. I first read the story and then go through each of the stages of a butterfly's life cycle with my students: 1) Egg 2) Caterpillar (Larva) 3) Pupa (Inside of the cocoon) and 4) Adult Butterfly. I give my students a circular piece of construction paper divided into four parts. They use yarn, Q-tips, tissue paper, and scraps of construction paper to make a 3D collage of a butterfly's life cycle. The kids love it and they never forget the life cycle of a butterfly!

Submitted by Jeanne

I plan to do a problem solving activity with this book. I will ask the children how many pieces of food did *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* eat?

Submitted by [Rose Smart](#)

My Kindergarten class loves to hear ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar***. For an art experience, we paint caterpillars with biocolor and several color drops. Then, we use a wedge of plastic to fan the colors into a vibrant rainbow caterpillar. When dry, we insert this creature into a large painted fruit. Of course, the children all refer to this as ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar*** by Eric Carle as they are learning about authors and illustrators in their Language Arts program. Thank you for such a lovely story and please continue to inspire our children to create with such love of language and art.

Submitted by [Lisa Carter](#)

I created my own mini version of ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar*** for my 4 and 5 year-old students to color, cut and sequence. On each page is written the day of the week and includes a drawing of the food the caterpillar ate that day. Each page is progressively longer, just as in the book. The children draw in the caterpillar on each page and the cocoon and butterfly on blank pages in the back. Then the children punch a hole in each food item using a hole puncher which is great for fine motor development and lots of fun for the kids! I ask the parents to have their child retell the story using the pictures as clues. This helps reinforce days of the week, counting, and sequencing skills, and the kids love being able to “read” it all by themselves!

Submitted by Darlene Jarosz

I teach 4 and 5 year olds in Virginia. We really love the book ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar***. After I read the story, we make caterpillars out of cardboard egg cartons. We paint them green and then add wiggly eyes and pipe cleaner antennae. Then the next day we use toilet paper rolls to make cocoons. I have the students paint them and we let them dry. The next day, I give them pre-cut paper butterflies and have the children decorate them and glue them to a popsicle stick. After the butterflies have dried, we insert our them into our cocoons. Then we pull them out and witness their changes!

Submitted by Zeder Pough

I am a preschool teacher involved with 3 and 4 year olds. I used ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar*** to teach the preschoolers how Caterpillars and Butterflies grow, change, and eat. The following is a list of things we did in class:

1. I read the book using flannel board pieces to represent the items in the book. Then I gave each child a flannel board piece and as I read the book, that child placed their piece on the flannel board as it was mentioned in the story.
2. I had the children paint several paper plates different colors. After they were dry, I stapled the plates together, punched a hole in the top of plates, attached fishing line to it, and hung it from the ceiling of the classroom. By stringing the plates together, you can make the catterpillar as long as you want. I attached two pipe cleaners for the antennae and a large black construction paper circle for the eyes.
3. For this next activity, you will need two paper towel tubes per child. Let each child paint two empty paper towel tubes any color they want. After the paint has dried, slit each tube down one side and have children use a hole puncher to punch two to three holes on each side of the slit. These holes will be used to attach the tube to the child's lower arm. Lace elastic through the holes, then tie. Have children to glue crepe paper streamers to the top of the paper towel tubes. For the antennae, staple a strip of construction paper around the child's head, use hole puncher to punch two holes in the front of the headband, and insert one pipe cleaner into each hole. After wings and antennae are prepared, have the children go outside and run. The crepe paper streamers will fly from their arms like butterfly wings.
4. Cut out flower shapes from construction paper that will cover paper cups. Fill paper cups with fruit juice, insert a straw into the middle of the paper flowers and let children drink "nectar" from the flowers. I used this after letting the children "fly" like butterflies outside.

Submitted by Amy D.

I am a children's librarian and have noticed that children love to be involved in the story. I had some volunteers cut construction paper fruits and junk food for each child. A green piece of ribbon with a bead tied to the end serves as the caterpillar. We have 25 ziploc bags prepared to hand out before the story. The children love to have their caterpillar eat the fruits and other foods while the story is going on.

Submitted by Debbie Nysewander

My kindergarten class learned to recognize their names with the book ***The Very Hungry***

Caterpillar. Instead of eating foods, the students made a caterpillar from green circles, and he ate one letter per circle. When they finished they could see the letters that were in their own name.

Submitted by [Lindsay](#)

I am a student in the College of Education at Arizona State University with specialization areas in both French and German. I am required to volunteer at local high schools in order to gain experience. Last spring, I was in a second-year German class. I used **The Very Hungry Caterpillar (Die Kleine Raupe Nimmersatt)** to teach students the words for several food items. Before I read the story to students, I asked them to write down all of the German words that they understood (along with their English equivalents). This was an excellent way to test the students' comprehension. As I read, I did not show the pictures of the book to the students, so they could not cheat (unless they already knew the story and the majority did not). It was a fun activity, and it could easily be used with other languages.

Submitted by [Marisa](#)

I used this book with my insect theme and also in a Grade 2 math class. We read the book and then I had the children graph the amounts of food that the caterpillar ate on each day of the week. To extend this work, I created a set of Hungry Caterpillar Word Problems. For example, on Monday 6 hungry caterpillars ate through 4 apples each. Students then had to graph the amount of fruit the hungry caterpillars ate each day of the week. The students loved it.

Submitted by [Melissa](#)

I am going to be a first grade teacher in the fall of 2000. In one of my college classes, I created a **Very Hungry Caterpillar** bulletin board that kindergarten students could use to count, sort, and categorize. I made the foods out of construction paper with velcro backings, and listed the days of the week at the top. The bottom half of the bulletin board had different food categories such as fruit, meat, sweets, and other. These spaces all had velcro circles so it could be used over and over in many different ways. This was a great interactive bulletin board and I can't wait to use it again in my Eric Carle author study unit this school year!

Submitted by [Becky Burke](#)

My first graders wrote their own stories based on **The Very Hungry Caterpillar**. Then they made slide shows using Kid Pix Deluxe. They had fun sharing their shows with classmates and with other classes. Their shows were even e-mailed to parents.

Submitted by [Sue DeFabbia](#)

I teach ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages). As part of a several week author study with my kindergarten class, I made a board game to go along with **The Very Hungry Caterpillar**. I drew a leaf with an egg as the start square, then in every two or three spaces, I drew pictures of the foods the caterpillar eats along his journey. A picture of the butterfly is at the end of the game. Children roll the dice at each turn, and when they land on one of the squares with a picture of food, they recite the corresponding line from the story. This provides wonderful, repetitive language practice, as well as practice in counting as they move along the board.

Submitted by [Cathy Furlong](#)

This is an idea for **The Very Hungry Caterpillar** that I got from a workshop many years ago. I glued wiggly eyes on a bright green sock and then used felt to make all of the foods in the story. Each food has a slit cut out of the middle. As the story is read, I wear the sock caterpillar on my

hand and the children feed the food to the caterpillar by putting it over the sock. The caterpillar and food then go into a plastic bag and magically appear as a felt butterfly. (I tuck the butterfly into the palm of my hand inside the sock before I start). I made this about 15 years ago and assumed it would last a year, maybe two. It is still around! The children absolutely love this activity.

Submitted by [Marlene Ochman](#)

At the start of school, we always have a book fair. We create our own bookmarks using gummed paper circles in the shape of the caterpillar. We add features with markers and then use them to mark our favorite pages in a book. In the spring, we revisit the book and make a caterpillar using tissue paper and glue on paper to create a wall hanging for each child's room. The final project is making a butterfly using a coffee filter, colored markers, and a clothespin. We draw on the filter with many colors and add drops of water. Once dry, we fold the filter to make wings and tuck it inside the clothespin. We add paper antennae and a magnet so the children can hang the butterflies on their refrigerators at home.

Submitted by [Tori Tovar](#)

This year for my daughter's birthday we had a **Very Hungry Caterpillar** Party. The decorations included all types of bugs including **The Grouchy Lady Bug** and **The Very Quiet Cricket**. Her cake was a line of cupcakes with green icing, forming the shape of a caterpillar. She received other books from Eric Carle's **Very** series and a caterpillar doll. For the invitations, I made a caterpillar out of green construction paper circles and added an apple with a hole punched out of it. All the invited children's parents raved on about what an original and cute idea it was, and it was SO easy!

Submitted by [Kathy Brown](#)

We made caterpillar books that the children could take home to retell the story. We also took yellow work gloves and cut off all of the fingers. We made each finger into a finger puppet with wiggly eyes and antennae. The finger puppets were connected to the book with string so they wouldn't get lost. The children would retell the story using the puppet as they turned the pages.

Submitted by [Nicole Power](#)

I am a speech pathologist in Oklahoma. I use **The Very Hungry Caterpillar** to teach my students the concept of before and after. Because of the graduated pages in the book, the child can view all the fruits the caterpillar eats at the same time. Then I ask the student "What did he eat after the pear?" "What did he eat before the strawberry?" I do the same thing on the page with all the junk food. This book is also great to teach sequencing.

Submitted by [Patricia](#)

I use the book **The Very Hungry Caterpillar** with young children with language disorders. I created a very detailed unit to be used in short therapy sessions with a small group of children. The objective of the unit is to teach the children the basic components of a story: beginning, problem, action, outcome, & end. Before reading the book, we take one or two sessions to prepare for the book. I do an activity where the children color the four life stages of a butterfly and then glue them to a picture of a tree on construction paper. This picture is displayed in the classroom. We then discuss the book in stages and with each stage we have an interactive activity to help the child remember and restate the stage. The activities include art projects and role playing. Many concepts are integrated in each lesson of the unit. Some of these concepts are:

sequencing, syntactic forms (e.g. plurals, past tense, etc.), following verbal commands, answering questions, vocabulary building, descriptive language, using complete sentences, classification, etc. I spend two or more months with this book twice a week for twenty minutes at a time. Many of the ideas given on this website can be incorporated in the lessons—in fact I will incorporate some of them. Thank you for sharing your ideas, and if anyone would like more details on how I implement this language unit or communication goals that may be targeted, please e-mail me.

Submitted by Mrs. Claypool's Creative Class

First, we read ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar***. Next, we painted three pieces of construction paper using marbles, Q-Tips, spoons, sponges and our fingers! We traced circles and feet and cut them out. Mrs. Claypool taped the caterpillar together, put goggly eyes on it, and hung it up. For the butterfly, Mrs. Claypool cut an outline of a butterfly. The children ripped tissue paper and taped it on. Mrs. Claypool laminated each butterfly and hung them up for a beautiful display!

Submitted by [Motoko](#)

We received this recipe from one fan of Eric Carle 's book. Thought you will find it useful in your cooking venture.

Very Hungry Caterpillar Fruit Salad

- 1 Apple
- 2 Pears
- 3 Plums
- 4 Strawberries
- 5 Oranges
- Bunch of Mint Leaves

Peel, pare, seed, hull and section each fruit. Cut into bite-sized pieces. Then put them all together in a big bowl and chill. Garnish each serving with a sprig of mint. Serve to a small group of friends, after reading a good book. You'll enjoy every bit of it.

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