

Lesson Plans for The Very Hungry Caterpillar



WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY ERIC CARLE

“This all-time favorite not only follows the very hungry caterpillar as it grows from egg to cocoon to beautiful butterfly, but also teaches the days of the week, counting, good nutrition and more. Striking pictures and cleverly die-cut pages offer interactive fun.” - [The Very Hungry Caterpillar, 1969 - Eric Carle](#)

Art

Tissue Paper Butterflies

Prep time: 5-10 minutes

Supplies: plain paper, ripped-up tissue paper in multiple colors, glue and water mixture, paintbrushes, smocks (optional)

Instructions: This is an excellent activity to have the children help to prep. Hand the children the full tissue paper pieces and have them rip it up to their hearts content. When you have a decent sized pile (based on the number of children in your class), place the pieces in a container and lay out the rest of the supplies. If you like, draw out the rough shape of a butterfly. Otherwise,

allow the children to glue pieces of tissue to their paper in a roughly butterfly shape. This is their creation; it doesn't need to be perfect! You can always draw the shape of the butterfly after the tissue has dried and have them cut it out.

Fingerpaint Caterpillar

Prep time: less than 5 minutes

Supplies: Paper, red and green paint, paper plate or plastic tray, The Very Hungry Caterpillar reference photo (below), smocks (optional)

Instructions: This is a great activity for multiple age groups. Set out the red and green paint on a plate or tray. Have the children fingerpaint their own Very Hungry Caterpillar. For infants, place the paint directly on the paper and place it inside a large Ziplock bag. This way they can “paint” without getting it everywhere (or eating it).



STEM

Playdoh Caterpillar

Prep time: less than 5 min.

Supplies: red and green playdoh, playdoh tools, reference photos or book, ruler, pipe cleaners (optional)

Instructions: Looking to the book for reference, have your children attempt to make the Very Hungry Caterpillar using playdoh! This activity allows students to explore the ways our hands and playdoh tools can shape

their work. Help them measure their caterpillars as they go to see it “grow”. Use the pipe cleaners for feet. How do the children interact with the materials? What questions do they pose, aloud or to themselves? Do they create the caterpillar or does their own creativity take over? Ask them about it!



Photo from one of my own classroom activities, a variation on the theme.

Literacy

Reference Cards

Below you will find real photo reference cards for some of the various food items the caterpillar encounters throughout the book. These aren't meant to be flashcards! Rather, they are display photos to post in your room or use in the story box (below) or place in your writing center. Whichever way you use them, hopefully they allow your students to connect further with the story.

Caterpillar Books

Caterpillars and butterflies are always a popular topic in an early childhood classroom. Luckily, the wonderful Librarians at NPL have created a great list of non-fiction books to browse through and use in your own class: [Bugs and Insects | Nashville Public Library](#) (You can always type “caterpillar” or “bug” into the NPL search bar and find other lists that have been created too!)

Dramatic Play

The Very Hungry Caterpillar Story Box

Prep time: less than 5 minutes

Supplies: basket or box, elements from the story The Very Hungry Caterpillar; toy caterpillar and/or butterfly, toy food, leaves, toy or art created sun.

Instructions: This activity is an easy way to help children recreate the story of The Very Hungry Caterpillar over and over again or create their own story using the same elements. Be sure to have the book available for the children to browse through and use as a reference. [The Very Hungry Caterpillar Storytelling Basket - The Imagination Tree](#)



The Very Hungry Caterpillar
STORYTELLING BASKET



Music

Two Little Butterflies Fingerplay

(Sung to the tune of Two Little Blackbirds)

Start by holding up both index fingers

Two little butterflies sitting on a hill

One names Jack and one named Jill

Fly away Jack! Fly away Jill!

Hide one finger behind your back then the other

Come back Jack! Come back Jill!

Bring your “butterflies” back one at a time

Other verses:

Sitting on a cloud...one named Quiet and one named Loud

Sitting on a stick...one named Slow and one named Quick

Flying in the sky...one named Low and one named High

[Two Little Butterflies: Storytime Fingerplay](#)

Table Activity/Small Groups

Hole Punch Fruit

Prep time: 20+ minutes but only if you want all the fruit prepped before the children use it. Otherwise, you can cut out more as they are using the hole punch.

Supplies: Red, green, blue/purple, and orange construction paper. scissors, pencil, a hole punch children can use

Instructions: We're recreating the fruit the Very Hungry Caterpillar ate throughout the week! This activity is mainly a quick fine motor exercise that

allows for both concentration and conversation, meaning you can chat about the book while the children work. Roughly sketch out the shapes of the apple, pears, plums, strawberries, and oranges on the respective pieces of construction paper. You'll need enough for each child to hole punch at least 2-3 (or all of them, if you're feeling ambitious!). Cut them out all at once or just enough for the small group you're working with. Older children can, of course, cut out their own. Hand the children a child-safe hole puncher and let them loose on the fruit! [Very Hungry Caterpillar Fine Motor Activity](#)



Pom-Pom Caterpillar

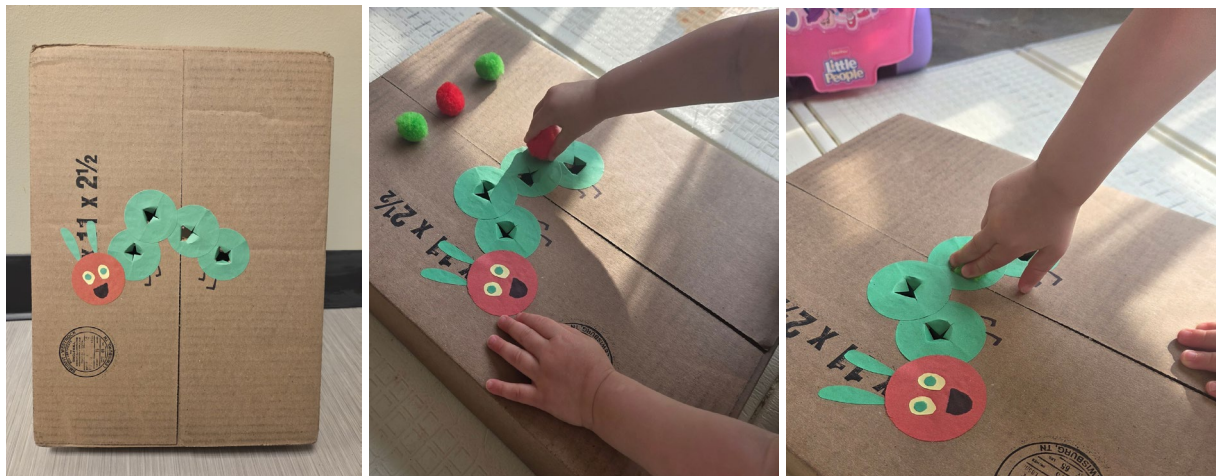
Prep time: 15-20 minutes depending on how detailed you make it

Supplies: Empty cardboard box (tissue, amazon, etc.), red/green/yellow construction paper, scissors, pom poms, black marker

Instructions: Punch 3-4 holes in the top of your empty box. They need to be big enough to push the pom-poms through. Cut out 3-4 larger green circles, they need to be big enough to cover the holes in the box. Cut an "X" into the green circles and then glue them over the box holes. Create a little caterpillar face with the remaining construction paper and glue it to the body on the box. Once dry, show the children how they can now push pom-poms through the caterpillar! [The Very Hungry Caterpillar Activities for Toddlers and Preschoolers](#)



This creator used felt pieces to make theirs! This is a great option for a longer lasting version.



My own, very basic, caterpillar. Tried and tested by my 17-month-old! Once she had it figured out, she was able to play with it completely independently.



Caterpillar



Butterfly



Apple



Pears



Plums



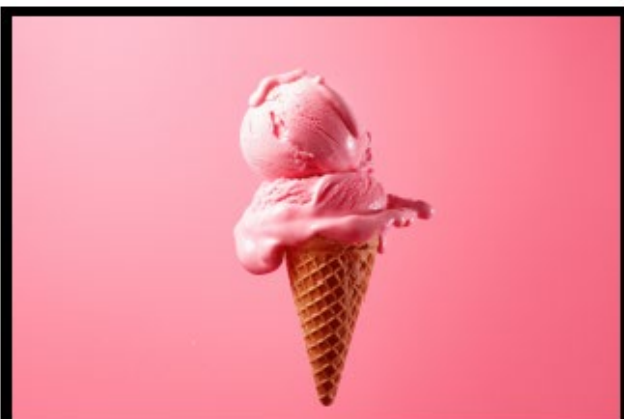
Strawberries



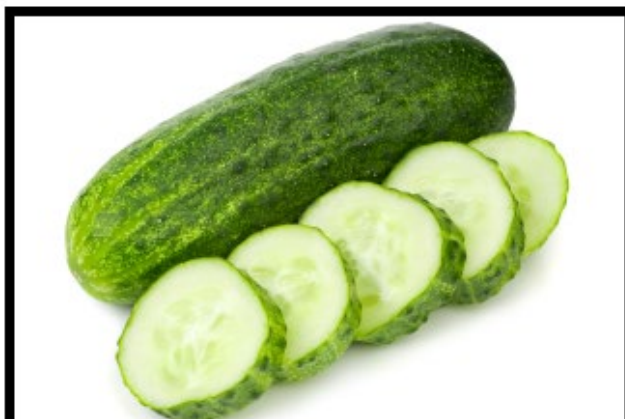
Oranges



Chocolate Cake



Ice-Cream Cone



Pickle



Swiss Cheese



Salami



Lollipop



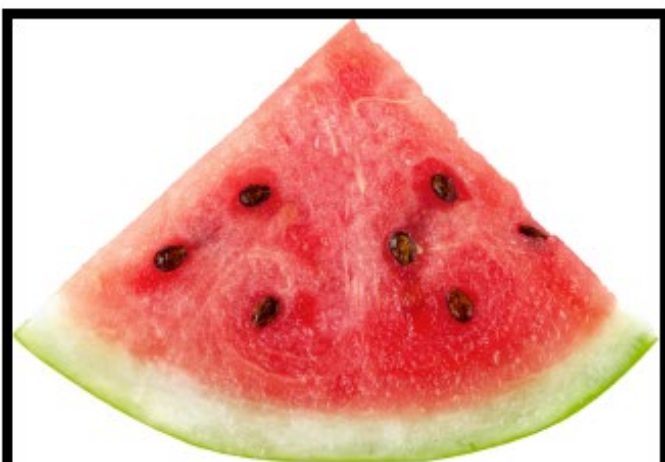
Cherry Pie



Sausage



Cupcake



Watermelon



Leaf



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