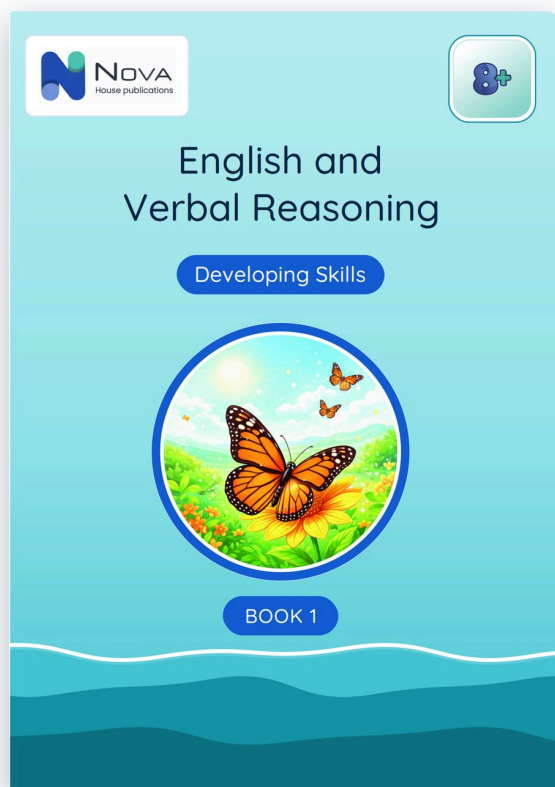


FREE SAMPLE PAGES

8+ English and Verbal Reasoning

Developing Skills · Book 1

Unit 2: The Journey of a Monarch Butterfly



Inside this sample

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1

Print

Print on A4 at home. Every page fits the sheet, so choose "Fit to page" if your printer asks.

2

Have a go

Let your child work through the pages at their own pace. Allow 40 to 50 minutes.

3

Check together

Use the answers on page 9 and talk through anything that went wrong.

About the book

A ten-unit workbook for children preparing for the 8+ entrance exam in Year 3. Each unit pairs a rich fiction or non-fiction passage with comprehension, creative writing, verbal reasoning and spelling and grammar practice.

Find out more about the full book at novaeducation.uk

Unit 2

The Journey of a Monarch Butterfly



Activity 1: A Dramatic Change

Study the picture sequence below and answer the questions which follow.



What is the most surprising thing about this transformation?

Why do you think the caterpillar needs to go through this stage inside the chrysalis? What might be happening inside?

If you could give a name to this process, what would you call it and why?

Activity 2: An Instinct to Travel

Imagine you are a bird or butterfly that must fly thousands of miles to a place you have never been. Complete the table below with the challenges and the amazing abilities you would need.

Challenges on the Journey	Amazing Abilities You Would Need
(e.g., finding enough food.)	(e.g., an internal sense of direction.)
(e.g., flying in bad weather.)	(e.g., great endurance to fly for days.)
Add your own challenge below	Add your own ability below

Section 1: Reading Comprehension

- i** Below is a reading passage about an amazing journey. Read the passage carefully and answer the questions which follow.

The Journey of a Monarch Butterfly

Upon a leaf of a common milkweed plant, a tiny, ridged egg, no larger than a pinhead, awaits its destiny. From this minuscule beginning emerges a caterpillar, its body striped in vivid bands of black, yellow, and white. This larval stage is a continuous feast; the caterpillar devours milkweed leaves with an insatiable appetite, growing so rapidly that it outgrows and sheds its skin five times.

Then, a profound change begins. The caterpillar finds a safe twig and suspends itself, hooking its rear legs into a silken pad. It hangs in a distinctive 'J' shape before shedding its skin one final, miraculous time. Underneath is not another caterpillar skin, but a hard, jewelled case called a chrysalis. This pupal stage appears tranquil, but it is a hive of hidden activity. Inside, the caterpillar's body is being completely broken down and rebuilt. Imaginal cells, which have been present all along, use the soupy nutrients to craft wings, compound eyes, and long, delicate legs.

After approximately two weeks, the chrysalis becomes transparent, revealing the magnificent black and orange wings within. The butterfly emerges, its wings crumpled and damp. It pumps fluid into its wing veins, allowing them to expand and harden in the sun. Soon, it is ready for its first, tentative flight.

But the journey is far from over. The Monarch butterfly is famous for its epic migration. Unlike birds, these butterflies have never made the journey before; they follow a map written in their genes. They travel thousands of miles, navigating using the sun's position, to specific, sheltered forests where they will spend the winter clustered on trees in breathtaking numbers. This incredible instinct ensures their survival, completing one of the most extraordinary life cycles in the natural world.

Activity 3: Comprehension Questions

1 What is the first stage of a Monarch butterfly's life, and where is it found?

2 What does the word "devours" suggest about how the caterpillar eats?

- A) It eats slowly and carefully. ☐
- B) It eats hungrily and in large amounts. ☐
- C) It only eats at night. ☐
- D) It is a fussy eater. ☐

3 How is the chrysalis stage different from how it appears? Use evidence from the text.

4 What are "imaginal cells" and what is their crucial role?

5 Number these stages from 1 to 4 to show the correct sequence in the life cycle.

- ☐ The adult butterfly emerges.
- ☐ The caterpillar forms a chrysalis.
- ☐ An egg is laid on a milkweed leaf.
- ☐ The caterpillar eats and grows rapidly.

6 Why does the author describe the migration as "epic"?

7 Find and copy the phrase that explains how Monarch butterflies know where to migrate.

8 What is the main purpose of the migration, according to the passage?

- 9 Based on the passage, what do you think might be the biggest threat to a Monarch butterfly during its migration? Give a reason for your answer.

- 10 The author calls the life cycle "one of the most extraordinary." Do you agree? Explain why, using one detail from the text.

Activity 4: Reflection and Discussion

- The text says the butterfly has "a map written in its genes." What do you think this means? Can you think of any other instincts that animals or even humans are born with?

- The transformation inside the chrysalis involves the caterpillar's body being completely broken down. Does this idea amaze you or unsettle you? Why?

Section 2: Creative Writing

Activity 5: The First Flight

You are the butterfly, having just emerged from your chrysalis. Describe the experience of your first flight. Use your new senses; your compound eyes, your delicate legs, the feeling of the air on your wings.



Writing Guide

Use any of the following sentence starters to help you write your story.

- The world was a dizzying kaleidoscope of colour and light through my new eyes...
- I could feel the morning sun warming my wings, coaxing them to unfurl and strengthen...
- With a deep breath of air, I pushed off from the safety of the twig, my wings beating tentatively...
- The garden below unfolded beneath me like a...

Use any of the words in the word bank in your story.

Kaleidoscope

(a constantly changing pattern of shapes and colours)

Unfurling

(to open or spread out from a rolled-up state)

Tentatively

(in a hesitant or unsure manner)

Vastness

(a very great area or size)

Instinctively

(done without conscious thought, driven by natural impulse)

Section 3: Verbal Reasoning

Activity 7: Reasoning and Logic

- 1 Circle the word that doesn't belong and explain why.

migration

transformation

journey

travel

crossing

- 2 Write 'S' if the words are Synonyms or 'A' for Antonyms.

	S	A
A) profound : deep		
B) fragile : delicate		
C) vast : tiny		
D) instinct : learned behaviour		

Answers

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For the adult checking this work. Talk through any wrong answer before showing the answer below. Open questions have no single right answer: look for a sensible answer backed by the text.

Question	Answer and guidance
Activities 1 and 2 Warm-up questions	Discussion: any thoughtful answer. These questions get your child thinking about change and migration before reading.
Q1 First stage of the life cycle, and where it is found	An egg, on a leaf of a milkweed plant. Both parts are needed.
Q2 What does “devours” suggest?	B) It eats hungrily and in large amounts
Q3 How is the chrysalis different from how it appears?	It looks calm (“tranquil”) outside, but inside it is “a hive of hidden activity”: the caterpillar’s body is broken down and rebuilt. Look for evidence from the text.
Q4 What are imaginal cells?	Special cells, there all along, that use the broken-down nutrients to build the butterfly’s wings, compound eyes and legs.
Q5 Number the stages 1 to 4	4, 3, 1, 2 (in the order printed) 1 egg laid · 2 caterpillar eats and grows · 3 chrysalis forms · 4 adult emerges.
Q6 Why “epic”?	The migration is a long, extraordinary journey of thousands of miles, made by butterflies that have never done it before.
Q7 Phrase explaining how they know where to go	“They follow a map written in their genes.” This is a metaphor: the knowledge is an instinct they are born with.
Q8 Main purpose of the migration	To survive the winter in sheltered forests. The passage says the instinct “ensures their survival”.

Answers (continued)

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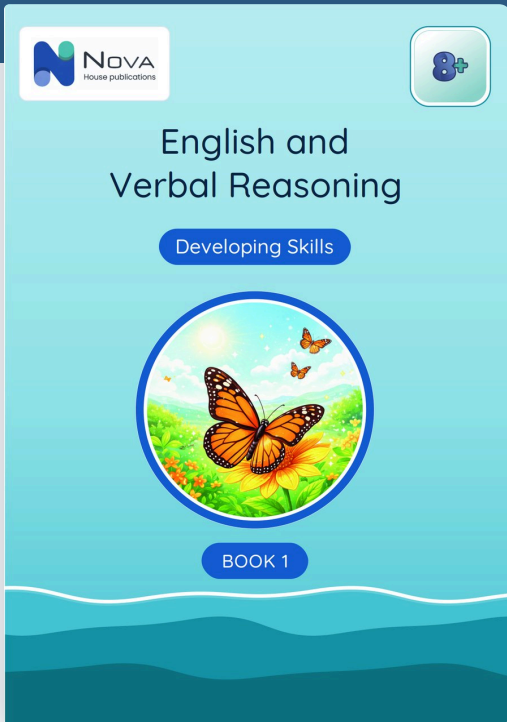
Question	Answer and guidance
Q9 Biggest threat during migration	Any sensible threat with a reason. For example: bad weather or strong winds, predators, or running out of food on the way.
Q10 Is the life cycle “one of the most extraordinary”?	Any well-reasoned view with one detail from the text. For example: the body completely breaks down and is rebuilt, or the butterflies find a place they have never been.
Activity 4 Reflection and discussion	Discussion: any thoughtful answer.
Activity 5 The First Flight (writing)	Open writing task. Look for: first person (“I”); the senses (what the butterfly sees and feels); words from the word bank used correctly; a clear beginning, middle and end.
Activity 7, Q1 Odd one out: migration, transformation, journey, travel, crossing	transformation The others are all about moving from place to place; transformation means a complete change of form.
Activity 7, Q2 Synonyms or antonyms?	A) S B) S C) A D) A profound : deep and fragile : delicate mean the same; vast : tiny and instinct : learned behaviour are opposites.

Want to go further?

The Teacher's Guide has discussion prompts, model answers and support and stretch ideas for every activity, including the spelling and grammar questions that follow in this unit.

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