Queen of Spain butterflies arrive in Britain

LEVEL A2/B1


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I. WARM-UP

1. What butterflies can you see in your country?
2. Do you like watching insects? Why or why not?
3. How can gardens help wildlife?

II. KEY VOCABULARY

butterfly
an insect with large colourful wings that flies in the daytime

native
living and growing naturally in a place

expert
a person who knows a lot about a subject

migrant
an animal or person that moves from one place to another

breed
to have babies or produce young

caterpillar
the long, soft young form of a butterfly or moth

plant
a living thing that grows in soil, such as a flower or tree

pansy
a small garden flower; here, food for the caterpillar

III. READING

Thousands of Queen of Spain butterflies, a golden-coloured species, have arrived in Britain. Sightings stretch from the south coast to East Anglia. Many likely came from France and Spain, and other migrants flew from the Netherlands. The insects have bred, and British-born young appeared in autumn.

An expert, Neil Hulme, said this looks like a strong push to settle. If it succeeds, the butterfly could become Britain's 61st native species. Even if it fails, so many arrivals mean people may see the species again next spring. Hundreds were reported at East Tilbury and Linford beside the Thames in Essex.

To help, butterfly-lovers can plant wild and field pansies, which are the caterpillar's food plants. Gardens and parks with these plants could give this visitor a better chance to stay.

Reading text adapted from reporting by **The Guardian***: "Queen of Spain butterfly invades Britain...". Original article linked at theenglishwire.com.*

IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Where in Britain have many of the butterflies been seen?
2. From which countries did some migrants come?
3. What has already happened with the insects in Britain this year?
4. Why might people see the species again next spring?
5. What plants can people grow to help the caterpillars?

V. DISCUSSION

1. Should Britain try to help this butterfly settle? Why or why not?
2. How do parks and gardens in your area support insects?
3. What simple steps can people take to protect wildlife?
4. Which wildlife visitor would you like to see in your town?

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

How questions

Use How to ask about ways or methods. Form: How + do/does/did + person/thing + base verb? Use do/does for now; did for the past.

*"How **did so many butterflies arrive**?"*
*"How **do gardeners help** the species?"*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Circle the correct option in each question.

1. How (caterpillars do / do caterpillars) find their food? _____
2. How (does the butterfly / the butterfly does) become native? _____
3. How (did experts / experts did) describe the push? _____
4. How (people do / do people) see them in spring? _____
5. How (did the insects / the insects did) spread to East Anglia? _____

Teacher's Notes

TEACHERS ONLY

These notes are designed to help you get the most out of this lesson. Please do not share this page with students.


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I. LESSON GUIDE

- Timing: 8–10 minutes warm-up, 8 minutes vocabulary, 10–12 minutes reading, 8–10 minutes comprehension, 10 minutes grammar, 10 minutes discussion.
- Pre-teach place names on a map (south coast, East Anglia, Essex) and model saying Queen of Spain butterfly, pansy, caterpillar.
- Run a first reading for gist, then a second for detail. Pair students to check answers before whole-class feedback. There is no sensitive content expected; keep discussion focused on wildlife and local actions.
- Differentiation: stronger students research one place named in the text and share one fact; others underline verbs showing change (arrived, bred) and summarise the story in three sentences.

II. DISCUSSION FACILITATION TIPS

1. Take a quick show of hands for yes/no, then pair students with different views to exchange two reasons each, using ideas like planting pansies or becoming native.
2. Ask students to name one specific place (a park, garden, balcony) and one concrete feature (flowers, no pesticides). Push for an example, not a list.
3. Elicit three actions from the text and life (plant pansies, leave wild corners, avoid chemicals). Put ideas on the board and have pairs choose their top two.
4. Give 30 seconds to think, then have students name one animal or insect and one reason (colour, helping nature). Encourage follow-up questions in pairs.

III. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Writing: In pairs, write a 60-word poster for a park explaining how to help this butterfly (mention pansies).

Role-play: Student A is a gardener; Student B is an expert. Ask and answer how to help the species, then agree two actions (5 minutes).

IV. ANSWER KEY OVERVIEW

Comprehension questions: short factual answers from the text.

Grammar exercise: How questions

Discussion: open-ended. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

Answer Key

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IV. COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Where in Britain have many of the butterflies been seen?
   From the south coast to East Anglia.
2. From which countries did some migrants come?
   France and Spain, and also the Netherlands.
3. What has already happened with the insects in Britain this year?
   They have bred and British-born young have appeared.
4. Why might people see the species again next spring?
   Because so many arrived that some may be seen next spring.
5. What plants can people grow to help the caterpillars?
   Wild and field pansies.

V. DISCUSSION

Open answers. Accept any reasonable ideas supported by examples and reasoning.

VI. GRAMMAR FOCUS

Key point: Use How to ask about ways or methods. Form: How + do/does/did + person/thing + base verb? Use do/does for now; did for the past. (Examples constructed.)

"How **did so many butterflies arrive***?"*
"How **do gardeners help** *the species?"*

VII. GRAMMAR EXERCISE

Circle the correct option in each question.

1. How (caterpillars do / do caterpillars) find their food? **do caterpillars**
2. How (does the butterfly / the butterfly does) become native? **does the butterfly**
3. How (did experts / experts did) describe the push? **did experts**
4. How (people do / do people) see them in spring? **do people**
5. How (did the insects / the insects did) spread to East Anglia? **did the insects**