

THE MYSTERY OF THE MONARCHS

How Kids, Teachers, and Butterfly Fans Helped
Fred and Norah Urquhart Track the Great Monarch Migration

by Barb Rosenstock; illustrated by Erika Meza

About the Book

Young Fred Urquhart was fascinated by insects, especially his favorite, the monarch butterfly. He grew up in Canada watching monarch butterflies in the summer, and he wondered where monarchs spent the winter, but no one knew. After years of school and studying, he became an entomologist (bug scientist). Fred worked with his wife, Norah, to tag and track hundreds of butterflies, hoping to solve the mystery of where the monarchs spend their winter. But they soon discovered that they couldn't do it alone. They needed help.

Fred and Norah started a “butterfly family,” a community of children, teachers, and nature enthusiasts from three countries—Canada, the United States, and Mexico—to answer the question: **Where do the monarchs go?**

Materials in the back of the book include:

- Maps of monarch migration
- Diagram of the life cycle of the butterfly
- Information about the cultural relevance of monarch butterflies in Mexico
- Information about monarch conservation

Pre-Reading

Before reading *The Mystery of the Monarchs*, build background knowledge about migration.

- What is animal migration?
- What causes animals to migrate?

Ask students to make predictions about this picture book based on the title and book cover.

Find out what students know about butterflies.

- What are some of their distinct physical traits?
- In what kind of environment do they thrive?

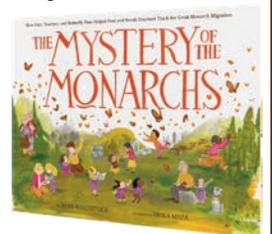
During Reading

Discuss these questions with students as you read together.

- Who is Fred Urquhart? What do we know about him?
- What emotion does Fred Urquhart feel when he discovers that no one knows where the monarchs go? How do you know?
- Define *perseverance*. How does Fred Urquhart show perseverance throughout the story?
- Define *wonder* and *awe*. As you read, point out moments of wonder and awe. Discuss how these emotions are helpful to Fred. How could they be helpful to us?
- How does Fred solve the mystery?



Classroom Activity Guide



Extension Activities

1. Finger Paint!

Supplies needed: paper plate, washable paint in colors of your choice

Instructions:

- Fold the paper plate in half, creating a crease down the center.
- On one side of the fold, draw the outline of a monarch butterfly wing, and paint with colors of your choice.
- Fold the paper plate in half again, holding tightly together for at least 10 seconds so that the paint transfers from one side to the other, creating a mirror image.
- Open the paper plate to let dry, and voilà! You have a butterfly!
- Celebrate your students' artwork by displaying these pieces for all to enjoy!

2. Get Outside!

Lead students in a nature walk or a nature sit. Invite students to wonder and ask questions about the world around them. Students should record their questions in a journal. Once back in the classroom, have students work in groups. Ask each group member to read their questions aloud. Have the group help brainstorm how to find the answers to their questions. Have them either work as a group or individually to answer questions.

3. Learn More!

Do research about the symbolic meaning of the butterfly in different countries and cultures. As students have learned, the monarch butterfly migrates through and inhabits different countries throughout its lifetime. How do people in different countries view the monarch? Consider sharing [this video](#) to show what butterflies symbolize in different cultures.



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