

Talking About Stories

The Very Hungry Caterpillar

by Eric Carle

In this fun, colorful book, a little caterpillar eats and eats and eats, then changes into a beautiful butterfly. When you read this book with your child, you'll also learn about counting, the days of the week, and good nutrition.

Here are some activities you can try with your child before, during, and after reading *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* together. Don't try to do all the activities the first time you read the book. But don't worry! Young children love to hear stories read aloud over and over again, which helps them build important literacy skills, like vocabulary, making predictions, and understanding the structure of stories. If your child likes this story, you'll have plenty of opportunities to read it again and try out all of the activities.

So, let's get started!

Before you read the story, read the title of the book out loud—*The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. What does your child think the hungry caterpillar might do in this book? Do you know what caterpillars like to eat? Can you guess what this caterpillar is going to eat? Talk about some of your favorite foods, and some of your child's favorite foods. Do you think this caterpillar likes ice cream? You might be surprised!

As you read the book together, take time to look at and talk about the pictures. This book has a unique way of showing how the caterpillar "eats through" his food. Together, count all the things the caterpillar eats, pointing at the pictures as he "eats through" them. Before you turn the last page, guess if the caterpillar will be the same or different when he comes out of the cocoon.

Some new words your child might learn as you read this book are *caterpillar*, *plums*, *pickle*, *salami*, *cocoon*, and *stomachache*. Be sure to talk about these and any other new words when you come to them.

After you've read the story together, tell your child about changes you've noticed over the years. Look back at baby pictures or clothes that no longer fit your child. Talk about how your child's likes and dislikes have changed: "You used to hate to eat green beans, but now you love them." Talk about other things that change around you, like the weather or the seasons, or new buildings you've seen in your community.

If your child likes *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, you might look in your library for some of these other books by Eric Carle: *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*; *The Very Busy Spider*; and *A House for Hermit Crab*.



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