

## Lesson Title

Symmetrical Butterfly Drawing with Crayons & Black Marker

## Grade Levels

Grades 3–5

## Lesson Objective

Students will **draw a butterfly using bilateral symmetry**, then **layer crayon colors** to create **bold patterns** and a simple “**shadow**” effect for extra depth.

## NCAS Visual Arts Standards

(Condensed across 3–5 where they repeat)

- **VA:Cr1.1.3/4/5a:** *Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work*
- **VA:Cr2.1.3/4/5a:** *Organize and develop artistic ideas and work*
- **VA:Cr2.2.3/4/5a:** *Demonstrate/experiment with materials and techniques*
- **VA:Re7.2.3/4/5a:** *Perceive and analyze artistic work (interpret meaning; notice details)*
- **VA:Cn10.1.3/4/5a:** *Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art (nature connection)*

## Lesson Description

This is the kind of lesson that makes you look like you “totally had time to plan this” (even if you didn’t). Students practice **symmetry** by building one wing and repeating it on the other side. Then they level it up with **crayon layering** to add a shadow—instant glow-up, no paint cups required.

### Teaching notes:

- Best done on **white drawing paper** (8.5x11 or 9x12).
- Symmetry works best when students **start with a center body line** and build out from it.

## Vocabulary

- **Symmetry:** When both sides of something match or mirror each other.

- **Bilateral Symmetry:** One line down the middle creates two matching halves (like most animals and insects). ([Encyclopedia Britannica](#))
- **Axis (Line of Symmetry):** The imaginary line where the image can be “folded” into matching halves.
- **Pattern:** Repeating shapes, lines, or colors.
- **Layering:** Coloring over a color to change how it looks (darker, richer, or blended).
- **Shadow:** A darker value that makes an area look like it has depth.

## Materials

- White drawing paper (8.5x11 or 9x12)
- **Black markers** (fine or regular tip)
- **Crayons** (include black, plus warm colors like red/orange/yellow)
- Pencils + erasers (optional, but helpful for planners)

### Prep (2 minutes):

- If you want to really set them up for success, lightly pre-draw a **vertical center guideline** on papers (or teach students to fold and crease their paper to find center).

### Affiliate disclaimer (include in your materials list):

“Some links in this materials list are affiliate links—meaning I may earn a small commission at no extra cost to you, and I only share the exact stuff I’d use in my own art room because your sanity (and your supply budget) matters.”

## Lesson Sequence

### Option A: 45-minute class

#### 1) Introduction (5 min)

- Quick chat: “Where do we see symmetry in nature?” (butterflies, leaves, faces, some flowers).
- Show 1–2 examples and point out the **line of symmetry**.

#### 2) Guided practice / demo (10 min)

- Model the steps (see Section 10) and narrate your thinking: “I’m building one side, then copying it.”

#### 3) Independent practice (22 min)

- Students draw + outline with marker + color + add shadow.

#### 4) Clean up (5 min)

- Crayons sorted, markers capped, scraps/trash cleared.

#### 5) Closure (3 min)

- Quick gallery glance: “Point to ONE place where you nailed symmetry.”
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### Option B: 60-minute class

#### 1) Introduction (7 min)

Add a tiny science moment: butterflies have **bilateral symmetry** and patterned wings. ([Encyclopedia Britannica](#))

#### 2) Guided practice / demo (12 min)

Model drawing + pattern planning + shadow layering.

#### 3) Independent practice (32 min)

More time for careful coloring, blending, and bolder patterns.

#### 4) Clean up (6 min)

#### 5) Closure (3 min)

Pair-share: “What did you do to make your wings match?”

## Student Art Examples

Show a **range** (simple to complex) so kids don't think there's only one “right” butterfly. Some can be bold block patterns; others can be tiny shapes. Variety = permission to be original.

Little teacher script you can steal:

- “Same idea, different butterflies—because you're not a photocopier.”
- “Symmetry doesn't mean identical coloring choices... it means the *shapes* match.”

## [PDF Lesson Download](#)

## [Short Overview Video \(1–2 minutes\)](#)

## [Long Overview Video \(5 minutes\)](#)

## [Google Slides](#)

### Cross-Curricular & Extension Resources

1. **Science (Life Cycle Connection):** Have students write 3–4 factual sentences on the butterfly life cycle, then add a tiny “fun fact” box next to their art. ([National Geographic](#))
  - o URL: <https://www.natgeokids.com/nz/discover/animals/insects/butterfly-life-cycle/>
2. **Math (Symmetry in Nature):** Use a short clip/resource to connect symmetry to real plants/animals, then students “symmetry-spot” before drawing. ([pbslearningmedia.org](#))
  - o URL: <https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/wnet08.math.algebra.pat.wnetsymm1/cyberchase-patterns-in-nature/>

### Differentiation Strategies

1. **Fold-to-find-center support:** Let students fold paper in half “hamburger style” and crease to make the line of symmetry—less guesswork, more success.
2. **Two-level pattern choices:**
  - o Level 1: 3 big matching shapes per wing
  - o Level 2: More sections + tiny repeated shapes (dots/teardrops)
3. **Pacing plan for mixed speeds:**
  - o Students who need more time: finish wings first, then patterns, then color.
  - o Early finishers: add a **habitat background** (milkweed, flowers, sky gradient) OR design a “second species” butterfly with new patterns.

### Assessment & Reflection

#### Simple rubric (4-point)

Criteria	4 Exceeds	3 Meets	2 Developing	1 Beginning
Symmetry	Wings + interior shapes mirror accurately	Wings mostly match; minor differences	Symmetry attempted; several mismatches	Minimal symmetry shown

<b>Craftsmanship</b>	Clean marker lines; careful coloring	Mostly neat lines + color	Some rushed/uneven coloring	Very messy or unfinished
<b>Layering/Shadow</b>	Clear layered color + shadow creates depth	Some layering or shadow visible	Tried, but effect is faint/inconsistent	No attempt yet
<b>Creativity/Pattern</b>	Original patterns; strong visual impact	Patterns included and clear	Patterns are basic or incomplete	Little/no pattern

## Two assessment options

### Option A: Quick self-reflection (2 minutes)

Students circle one:

- “My symmetry is: ★ / / / ★”  
Then finish the sentence: “One part I’m proud of is \_\_\_\_\_.”

### Option B: Partner “Mirror Check” (3–5 minutes)

Partners quietly point to:

- 1 place symmetry is strong
- 1 place that could be adjusted next time  
(Keep it kind, keep it specific.)

### Reflection questions (choose 1):

- “What did you do when your two sides didn’t match?”
- “How did layering change your colors?”

## Call to Action

If you try this lesson, I’d *love* to see it in action—snap a few photos of students drawing their wings (the symmetry moment!) and a few finished butterflies. Send them in so I can feature your class and inspire other teachers.