

# **BUTTERFLIES, BEARS, AND OTHER POEMS FOR CHILDREN**



**COURSE PACK & LITERARY GUIDE FOR  
BUTTERFLIES, BEARS, AND OTHER POEMS FOR CHILDREN**

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY

**PATRICIA HERBER**

## **Briefing Document: "Butterflies, Bears, and Other Poems for Children" by Patricia Herber**

**Source:** "Butterflies, Bears, and Other Poems for Children" (Copyright © 2020 Patricia Herber)

**Date:** October 26, 2023

### **Overview:**

This document summarizes key themes and ideas present in the provided excerpts from Patricia Herber's children's poetry book, "Butterflies, Bears, and Other Poems for Children." The collection encompasses a wide range of topics relevant to a young audience, from animals and nature to holidays and everyday experiences. The poems are characterized by simple language, rhyme, and a focus on positive and engaging themes.

### **Main Themes and Ideas:**

- **Animals and Nature:** A significant portion of the poems centres on animals and nature, often presented in a whimsical and endearing light. The poems explore the characteristics and behaviours of various animals.
- Examples: "Bear Cubs," "Teddy Bears," "Butterflies," "Elephant Parts," "Puppy," "Babies," "Naming the Animals," "D i n o s a u r s," "Barnyard Morning," "Monarch Queen," "Johnny Appleseed," "Groundhog Day."
- Quote (from "Bear Cubs"): "Bear cubs – I like them. Because they're cute. Because they're soft and cuddly. Because they have paws and climb trees."
- Quote (from "Elephant Parts"): "I think elephants have big floppy ears that they use to fan themselves dry / Because... They don't have any towels!"
- Quote (from "D i n o s a u r s"): "In school I learned about T-Rex, who was a tyrant king. / He killed other dinosaurs, and was the meanest thing."
- **Everyday Experiences and Activities:** The poems also reflect the everyday lives and activities of children, such as reading, going to school, playing, and celebrating holidays.
- Examples: "Reading a Book," "First Day of School," "What Did You Learn Today?", "Halloween Party," "Ready for Christmas," "Snowy Day Friend," "Coloring Easter Eggs," "Circus."
- Quote (from "Reading a Book"): "Some people don't like to read books. Why, I cannot say. 'Cause since I learned how to read, I'm reading every day."

- Quote (from "First Day of School"): "Now get on the bus and take your seat / 'Cause I think school is gonna be neat."
- **Rhyme and Language Play:** Many poems emphasize the fun of language and wordplay, encouraging children to explore and learn about rhymes.
- Example: "Rhymes".
- Quote (from "Rhymes"): "I learned about rhymes / And rhymes are lots of fun. / You can make about eight new words / That started out as one."
- **Social Interaction and Preferences:** Some poems explore social dynamics, likes and dislikes, and gendered preferences through lists and simple observations.
- Examples: "Some Girls Like...", "Some Boys Like..."
- Quote (from "Some Girls Like..."): "Cheerleading, basketball / Books and DVDs / Ice skating, volleyball / Soccer and CDs"
- Quote (from "Some Boys Like..."): "Soccer and football / Cars, trucks, and trains / Wrestling and basketball / Dinosaurs, airplanes"
- **Holidays and Celebrations:** Several poems are dedicated to specific holidays, evoking the atmosphere and traditions associated with them.
- Examples: "Halloween Party," "Poor Tom Turkey," "Ready for Christmas," "Groundhog Day," "Secret Valentine," "Coloring Easter Eggs."
- Quote (from "Ready for Christmas"): "The month of December brings an end to the year, / The magic of Christmas, love, and good cheer."
- Quote (from "Poor Tom Turkey"): "The turkey's in the oven. It smells really good. / From Thanksgivings past, I knew that it would."
- **Imagination and Pretend Play:** Several poems are dedicated to the fun of imagination.
- Examples: "Monkey," "Mixed-up Mother Goose," "Big Barney."
- Quote (from "Monkey"): "I'd like to be a monkey / Swinging from a tree, / Yelling to my brother, / "You can't catch me!""
- **Moral and Social Values:** The poems often subtly promote positive values such as kindness, bravery, friendship, and learning.
- Examples: "Fireman," "Snowy Day Friend," "Secret Valentine."

- Quote (from "Fireman"): "Although he may look scary / When he wears the breathing mask, / A fireman is your special friend / 'Cause he does a special task."

**Key Observations:**

- The poems are intended for a young audience and use age-appropriate language and themes.
- The use of rhyme and rhythm makes the poems engaging and memorable.
- The collection offers a diverse range of topics, catering to different interests.
- The author dedicates the poems to her grandchildren and expresses gratitude to her family for their support, highlighting the personal significance of the project.

**Use:**

This collection could be used in educational settings to introduce children to poetry, expand their vocabulary, and stimulate their imagination. The themes addressed are relevant to early childhood development and can be used to promote discussion and learning.

## Frequently Asked Questions: *Butterflies, Bears, and Other Poems for Children*

- **What is the main focus of *Butterflies, Bears, and Other Poems for Children*?**
  - The book primarily aims to entertain and educate children through a variety of poems covering different aspects of life, nature, animals, holidays and more, often using simple language and rhyme schemes. Many of the poems focus on subjects of interest to children, including animals (bears, monkeys, puppies), holidays (Halloween, Christmas), and everyday activities (reading, going to school).
- **What age group is *Butterflies, Bears, and Other Poems for Children* intended for?**
  - While the book does not specifically state an age range, the content and style of the poems suggest they are aimed at young children, likely in the pre-school to early primary school age range. The simplicity of the language, the relatable subject matter, and the inclusion of illustrations (implied) all point to a younger audience.
- **What are some of the recurring themes in the poems?**
  - Several key themes emerge throughout the book, including the love of animals, the joy of learning, the importance of imagination, the celebration of holidays, and the appreciation of nature. The poems also touch on themes of friendship, family, and everyday experiences from a child's perspective.
- **Are all the poems in the book original, or are some based on traditional rhymes and stories?**
  - While most of the poems appear to be original works, there is one poem titled "Mixed-Up Mother Goose" which appears to be playing on traditional Mother Goose rhymes. It mixes together elements from different classic nursery rhymes.
- **Does the book teach any specific lessons or convey any particular values?**
  - Yes, the book subtly promotes several positive values. The poems encourage children to be kind to animals, appreciate the beauty of nature, embrace learning, and value friendship. Poems such as "Fireman" and "Johnny Appleseed" implicitly celebrate community helpers and people who make a positive impact.
- **What poetic devices are commonly used in the collection?**
  - The poems frequently use rhyme, repetition, and simple language to create a rhythm that is appealing to young children. There are some instances of imagery, especially when describing animals, nature and seasons.

- **Does the author draw on personal experiences or relationships in the creation of the poems?**
- The author's dedication suggests that the poems are influenced by her family, especially her grandchildren. Dedicating the book to her grandchildren, and thanking her daughter, son and husband suggests a personal connection and inspiration behind the writing.
- **Are there elements of humor or lightheartedness in the book?**
- Yes, there are moments of humour throughout the collection. For example, poems like "Mixed-up Mother Goose" which plays with familiar rhymes in unexpected ways, and "Naming the Animals", and "Elephant Parts" have an element of fun and silliness that would appeal to young readers.

## Timeline of Events

- Johnny Appleseed travels the country, planting apple seeds.
- Friends of President Teddy Roosevelt catch a bear cub and tie it to a tree. President Roosevelt orders the cub to be freed.
- **(Recurring Annually - February 2nd):** Groundhog Day: A groundhog emerges from its burrow to predict the weather. If it sees its shadow, there will be six more weeks of winter; if not, spring is on the way.
- **(Recurring Annually - Thanksgiving):** A family celebrates Thanksgiving, including a turkey dinner.
- **(Recurring Annually - Christmas):** A family decorates for Christmas, including untangling lights, decorating a tree, baking cookies, and sending Christmas cards.
- **(During the School Year):** A class learns about the metamorphosis of a caterpillar into a butterfly.
- **(During the School Year):** A student learns about Roy G. Biv to recall the colours of the rainbow.
- **(Various Times):** A child describes various animals and their babies.
- **(Various Times):** Children enjoy activities like reading books, playing with teddy bears, going to Halloween parties, and colouring Easter eggs.
- **(Publication - June 24, 2020):** "Butterflies, Bears, and Other Poems for Children" is published.

## Cast of Characters

- **Patricia Herber:** The author and illustrator of the book. A grandmother who dedicates her poems to her grandchildren and thanks her family for their support.
- **Bre and Bentley, Yardley, Alyssa May, and Jasmine:** Patricia Herber's grandchildren, to whom the book is dedicated.
- **Amy and Ryan:** Patricia Herber's children.
- **Larry:** Patricia Herber's husband.
- **Teddy Roosevelt:** Mentioned in connection with the origin of the teddy bear. 26th President of the United States. Known for his conservation efforts.
- **Johnny Appleseed:** A travelling folk hero who planted apple seeds across America.

- **Roy G. Biv:** Not a person, but a mnemonic device used to remember the colours of the rainbow (Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet).
- **Cinderella:** A character from a popular fairytale about a mistreated girl who becomes a princess.
- **Pinocchio:** A puppet from a popular fairytale who becomes a real boy.
- **Gepetto:** Pinocchio's father
- **Goldilocks:** The protagonist of the story Goldilocks and the Three Bears.
- **Georgie Porgie:** A character from a nursery rhyme
- **Bo-Peep:** A character from a nursery rhyme
- **Little Boy Blue:** A character from a nursery rhyme
- **Jack and Jill:** Characters from a nursery rhyme
- **Humpty Dumpty:** A character from a nursery rhyme
- **Peter Pumpkin:** A character from a nursery rhyme
- **The Gingerbread Boy:** A character from a popular fairytale
- **Rex Rooster:** A rooster featured in the Barnyard Morning poem.
- **Hattie Hen:** A hen featured in the Barnyard Morning poem.
- **Barney Bull:** A bull featured in the Barnyard Morning poem.
- **Clara Cow:** A cow featured in the Barnyard Morning poem.
- **Nanny Goat:** A goat featured in the Barnyard Morning poem.
- **Bill:** A goat featured in the Barnyard Morning poem.
- **Sally Sow:** A sow featured in the Barnyard Morning poem.
- **Ben the Boar:** A boar featured in the Barnyard Morning poem.
- **Doris Duck:** A duck featured in the Barnyard Morning poem.
- **Donald Drake:** A drake featured in the Barnyard Morning poem.
- **Big Barney:** A clown character.
- **T-Rex:** A Tyrannosaurus Rex, a type of dinosaur.
- **Brontosaurus:** A type of dinosaur.
- **Stegosaurus:** A type of dinosaur.



- **Lucky Leprechaun:** A small elf from Irish folklore, usually associated with good fortune and a pot of gold.
- **Tom Turkey:** A turkey that is eaten at Thanksgiving dinner.
- **Taffy:** A Cocker Spaniel puppy.

## **Butterflies, Bears, and Other Poems for Children: A Study Guide**

### **Quiz**

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. In "Teddy Bears," what event in President Teddy Roosevelt's life inspired the creation of the teddy bear?
2. In "Some Girls Like..." and "Some Boys Like...", what is one similarity and one difference between the interests listed for each gender?
3. In "Rhymes," what is the process the poem uses to teach about how words rhyme?
4. According to "Reading a Book," what are some of the benefits of reading?
5. In "Elephant Parts," what human object does the speaker compare an elephant's tail to?
6. In "Mixed-up Mother Goose," what is the plot of this poem?
7. In "First Day of School," what emotions is the speaker feeling?
8. In "Monarch Queen," describe the transformation of a caterpillar to a butterfly that is described in the poem.
9. In "Poor Tom Turkey," why is the speaker conflicted about Thanksgiving?
10. What is the main idea of the poem, "Snowy Day Friend?"

### **Quiz Answer Key**

1. President Teddy Roosevelt refused to shoot a bear cub that his friends had tied to a tree, leading to the creation of toy bears named after him. The poem explains how Roosevelt's kind act inspired the name of the toy.
2. Both "Some Girls Like..." and "Some Boys Like..." include a list of activities and hobbies. A similarity between the interests listed is that both girls and boys like to socialise with friends. A difference is that the activities preferred are often gendered, for example, girls enjoy dressing up and perfume while boys like cars and trains.
3. The poem "Rhymes" shows how changing a single letter in a word can create a new word that rhymes with the original, such as 'bat', 'cat', 'fat', and 'hat'. This demonstrates how changing the initial consonant can produce rhyming words.
4. According to the poem, reading allows you to travel to far away places, solve mysteries, learn about different people, and have adventures at sea. Reading opens up a world of imagination and learning.

5. In "Elephant Parts," the speaker says that elephants have tails that "look like those tassels that hang from caps when people graduate." This shows that elephant's tails are skinny and have a fluffy end.
6. In "Mixed-up Mother Goose," well-known nursery rhymes are jumbled together to create a humorous and nonsensical narrative. The poem is a playful twist on familiar tales for children.
7. In "First Day of School," the speaker expresses excitement and eagerness to go to school. Despite the mother's sadness, the child is brave, ready to meet their teacher, read books, and play.
8. In "Monarch Queen," a caterpillar transforms into a butterfly through several stages. First, a tiny egg hatches into a caterpillar that eats milkweed leaves, grows, and hangs in a J shape. Then it forms a chrysalis where it undergoes big change, emerging a week later as a butterfly.
9. In "Poor Tom Turkey," the speaker feels sorry for the turkey being prepared for Thanksgiving dinner. Despite enjoying the holiday, the speaker is conflicted because they saw the turkey alive and well beforehand.
10. "Snowy Day Friend" focuses on loneliness and how making a snowman can be a fun way to befriend someone. The poem conveys how creativity and play can combat loneliness during winter.

### **Essay Questions**

1. Discuss the use of personification in Patricia Herber's poems, providing examples of how animals or objects are given human qualities.
2. Explore the themes of childhood innocence and imagination as they are presented in the collection. How do the poems reflect a child's perspective on the world?
3. Analyze the various poetry tools (e.g., rhyme, rhythm, imagery) used in the poems. How do these devices contribute to the overall meaning and impact of the work?
4. Compare and contrast the poems "Some Girls Like..." and "Some Boys Like...", examining how they reinforce or challenge gender stereotypes.
5. Describe the ways in which nature and the seasons are used as sources of inspiration and imagery in the "Butterflies, Bears, and Other Poems for Children" collection.

## **Glossary of Key Terms**

- Alliteration: The repetition of the same consonant sound at the beginning of adjacent or closely connected words (e.g., "Sally Sow").
- Chrysalis: The protective shell-like pupa stage of a butterfly's development, as described in "Monarch Queen."
- Figurative Language: Language that uses figures of speech such as metaphors, similes, and personification to create a non-literal meaning.
- Imagery: Visually descriptive or special words that make writing more interesting, especially in a literary work.
- Metamorphosis: A complete change of form or substance, as exemplified by the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly in "Monarch Queen."
- Personification: The attribution of human characteristics or behaviour to a non-human entity, such as an animal or object.
- Rhyme: The correspondence of sound between words or the endings of words, especially when these are used at the ends of lines of poetry.
- Rhythm: A strong, regular, repeated pattern of movement or sound.
- Theme: The central topic or idea explored in a literary work.
- Verse: Writing arranged with a metrical rhythm, typically having a rhyme.

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- **Theme:** The central topic or idea explored in a literary work.
- **Verse:** Writing arranged with a metrical rhythm, typically having a rhyme.

## Your Personal Reading Adventure! 📖 ✨

This is your special space to think about what you've read, write down your thoughts, and have fun with what you've learned! There are no right or wrong answers—just your own creative ideas! 🎨 📝

### What Did You Love the Most? ❤️

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What was your favorite poem in this book? Why did you like it?

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Did any poem remind you of something fun in your own life?

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## Imagine Yourself in the Poems! 🌞

If you could jump into one of the poems and become part of the story, which one would you choose? What would you do?

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Which character from the book would you want as your best friend? What fun adventures would you have together?

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## Write Your Own Fun Poem! 🖋️

Try making up your own short poem about something you love! It can be about animals, nature, school, or anything fun!

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## My Poetry Goals! 🚀

Do you want to write more poems? What kinds of things would you like to write about?

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Who would you like to read your poems to? A friend? A teacher? Your family?

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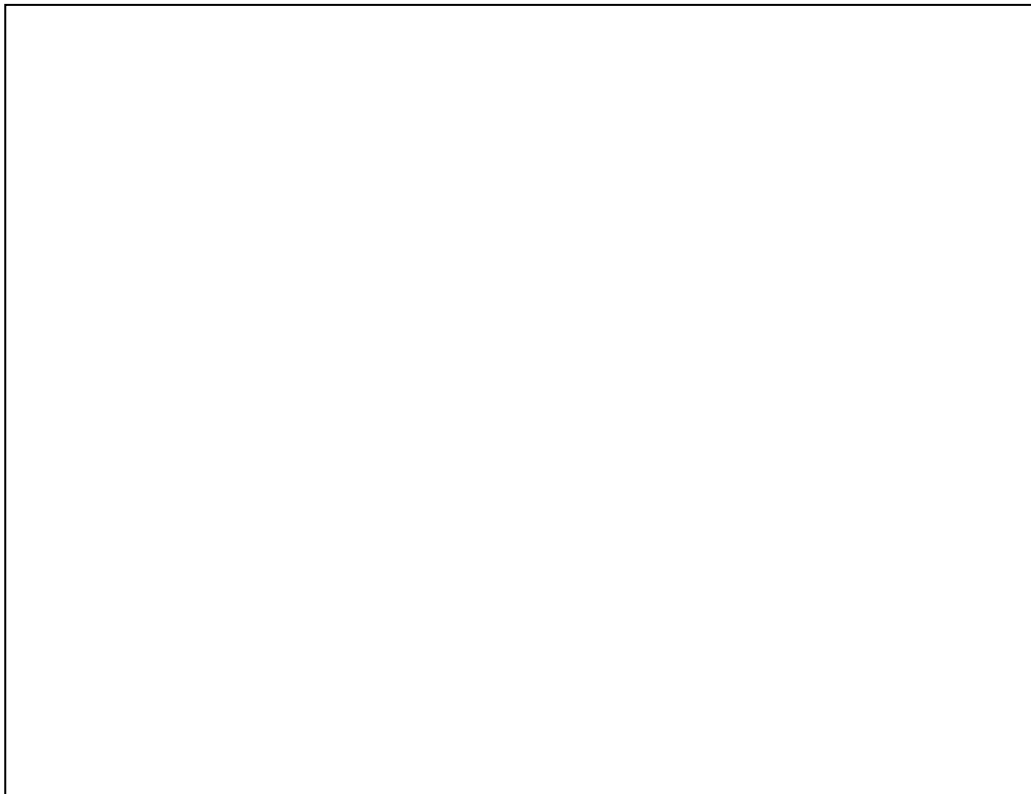
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## Extra Space for Your Thoughts! 📄

Use this space to draw, doodle, or write anything else that comes to mind! Maybe even sketch a picture to go with one of the poems! 🎨



## Patricia Herber's Book of Rhymes

Let's have some fun with rhyming words! Below are three sets of rhyming words from Patricia Herber's poems. Your challenge is to create a 4-line rhyme using one of the sets!

### Activity 1:

Rhyming Words: \*see, bee, tree\*

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### Activity 2:

Rhyming Words: \*bright, light, night\*

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### Activity 3:

Rhyming Words: \*cat, hat, sat\*

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**Activity 4:**

Rhyming Words: \*play, day, say\*

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**Activity 5:**

Rhyming Words: \*fun, run, sun\*

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**Create Your Own Rhyme!**

**Now, try creating a 4-line rhyme on your own! Here are three words to get you started:**

book, look, took

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## Explore Your Imagination

**Let's think creatively! Answer the following fun questions with your best ideas.**

1. If Teddy Bear could go grocery shopping, what would he buy?

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2. What would happen if a butterfly could talk?

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3. If you had to invent a new holiday, what would it be called and what would people do?

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4. Imagine you found a magical book—what kind of adventure would it take you on?

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5. If you could turn into any animal for a day, which one would you be and why?

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6. If a monkey from the book could go on vacation, where would it go?

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8. If the turkey from 'Poor Tom Turkey' could talk, what would he say about Thanksgiving?

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9. What would a snowman do in the summer?

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10. Imagine you are a poet—what would you write a poem about?

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🎨 **It's colouring time!** Bring your imagination to the page! Colour in your favourite friends from **Butterflies, Bears, and Other Poems For Children.**

**Benny The Bear**



Milo the Monkey

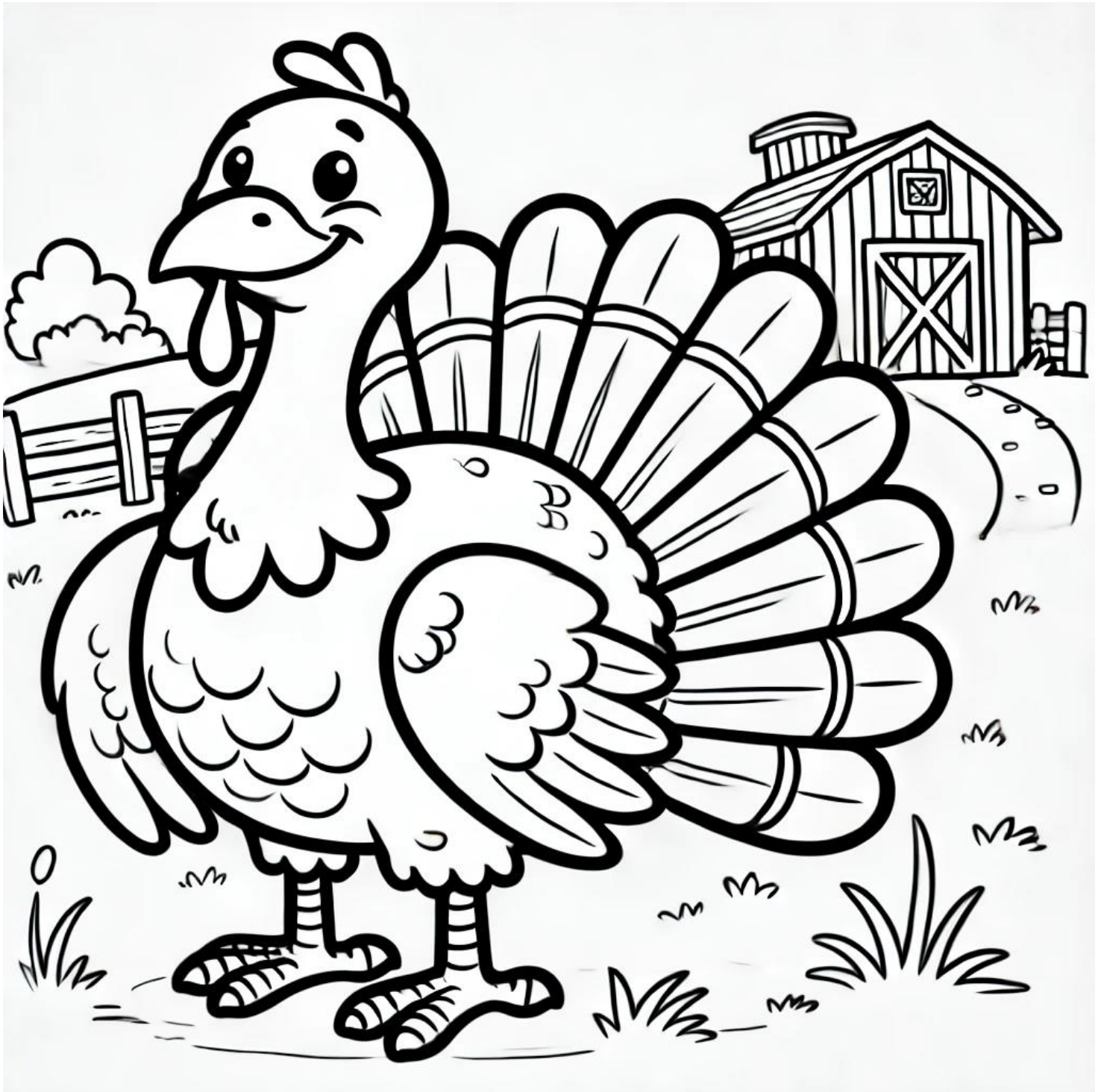




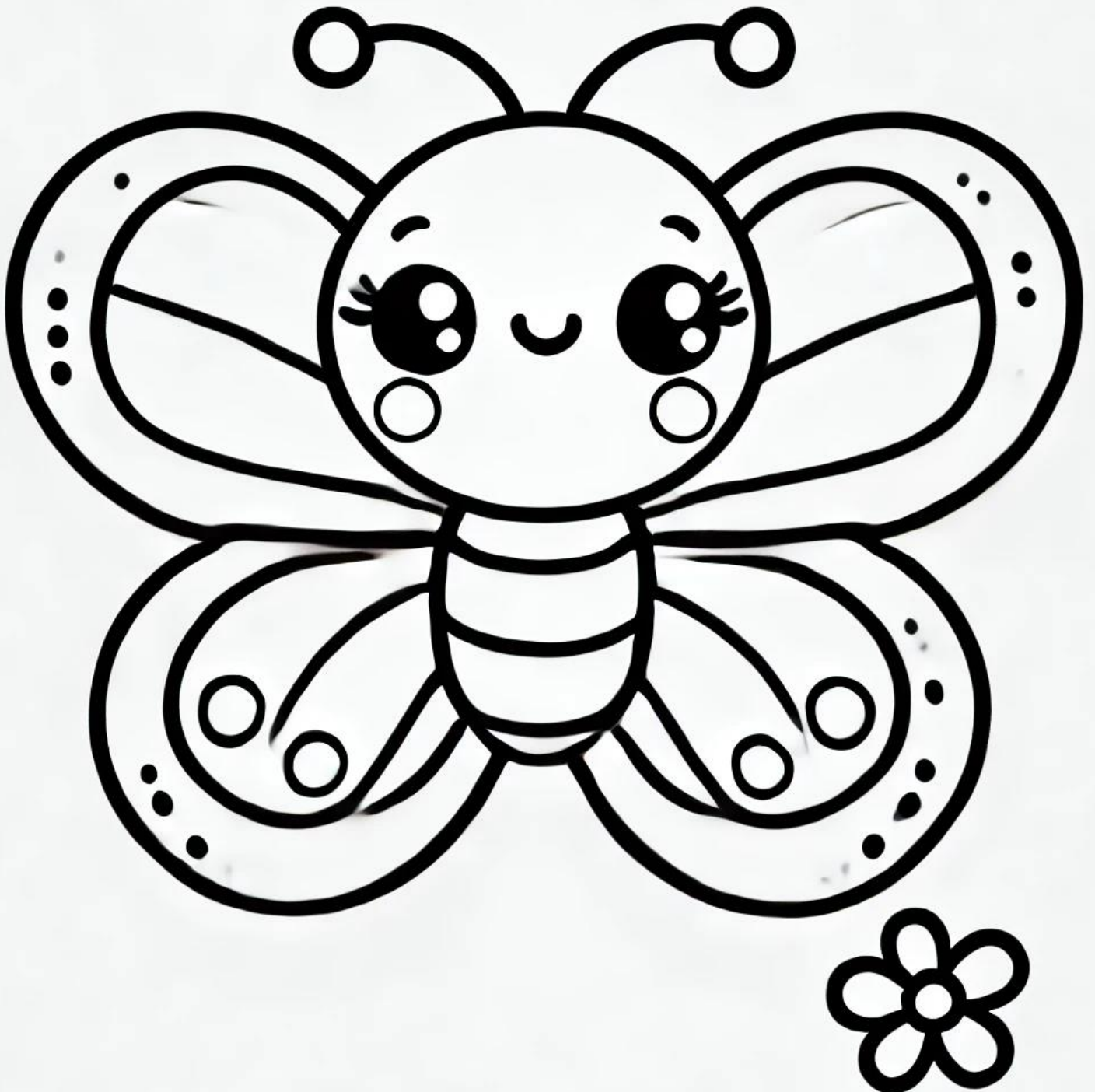
Ellie the Elephant



Tommy the Turkey



Bella the Butterfly



## ***Congratulations! You Did It!*** 🎉

Wow! You made it through the fun activities! Now take a moment to think about all the cool things you've learned. 🏆

- ✓ What was your favorite poem? Why did you like it?
- ✓ Did any poem remind you of something fun in your own life?
- ✓ How do poems help us think in creative and fun ways?
- ✓ If you wrote your own poem, what would it be about?

**Keep exploring, questioning, and applying your knowledge!**

**You're now an expert in rhyming and using your imagination! Keep reading, writing, and having fun with words!** 📄 ✨