

# INSECT METAMORPHOSIS

All changes of form from hatching to maturity of an insect are collectively termed **metamorphosis** (pl. metamorphoses). All insects during their postembryonic development go on shedding or moulting their skin. This process is called **ecdysis**. The moulted skin is termed **exuvium** (pl. exuvia) or **exuviae** (pl. exuviae). The particular form or shape of an insect between two moultings is known as **instar**. Thus for example, the first instar is between hatching and first moulting, the second instar between the first and the second moultings, the third instar between the second and the third moultings and so on. The period between two moultings is called **stadium** (pl. stadia). The adult of an insect is called **imago** (pl. imagoes or imagines).

## TYPES OF METAMORPHOSIS

According to the degree of change in form, the insects are divided into the following groups.

1. **Ametabola** (without metamorphosis) (Fig. 8A): Insects in which the young ones pass through no or slight changes to become adults are said to be without metamorphosis, e.g., **silverfish, telsontails, springtails**, etc. Although slight changes occur (e.g. absence of abdominal scales and styli in early instars of silverfish and addition of abdominal and antennal segments in telsontails and springtails respectively), but they do not change the appearance of the young. As these insects are considered to be **primitively wingless**, they are called **Apterygota**. The young one is called nymph which is similar in appearance to the adult, but smaller in size. These insects have three life stages, viz., egg, nymph and adult.

**Note:** Anamorphosis is an increase in the number of segments during the postembryonic development of an insect. For example, the nymphs of telsontails have eight abdominal segments and a telson at the time of hatching. But three more segments are added between the last segment and the telson during the development. Thus making a total of eleven abdominal segments and a telson in the adult. As this increase or anamorphosis does not change the appearance of the young, it is included in the ametabola.

2. **Hemimetabola** (simple, direct or incomplete metamorphosis) (Fig. 8B): Insects in which the young ones pass through simple or gradual changes to become adults and have no pupal stage are said to be with simple metamorphosis, e.g., **grasshoppers, crickets, cockroaches, termites, bugs**, etc. These insects are either winged or secondarily wingless. The winged insects develop their wings externally (i.e. outside the body of the young) and are thus known as **Exopterygota**. The young one is called nymph which is similar to the adult, but smaller in size and with incompletely developed wings.

The nymphs of **mayflies** (Fig. 9C), **stoneflies** and **dragonflies**, in addition to the above differences, are aquatic and with gills, while the adults are aerial and without gills. Such nymphs which have a different mode of life from the adults are called **naiads**. Their aquatic life and possession of gills are of temporary and adaptive nature. Hence, these insects also come under hemimetabola.

They have three life stages, viz., egg, nymph (naiad) and adult.



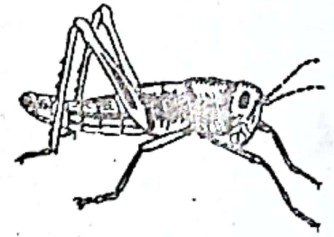
EGG



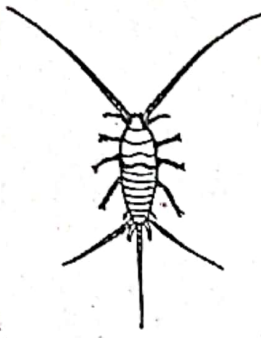
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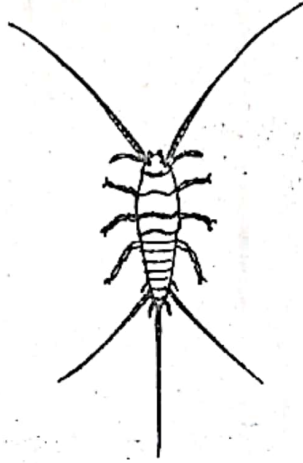
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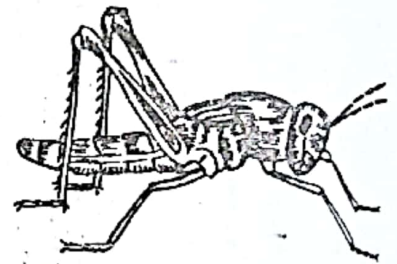
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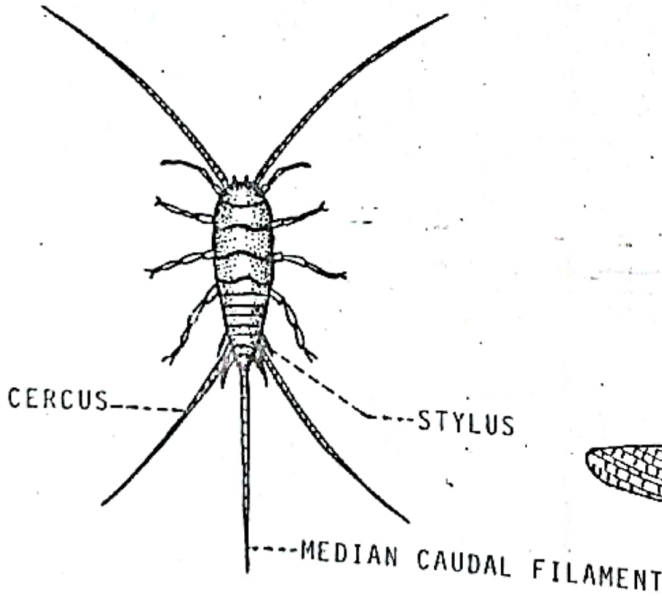
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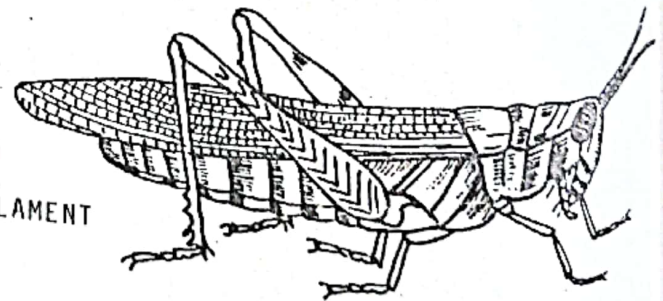
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ADULT



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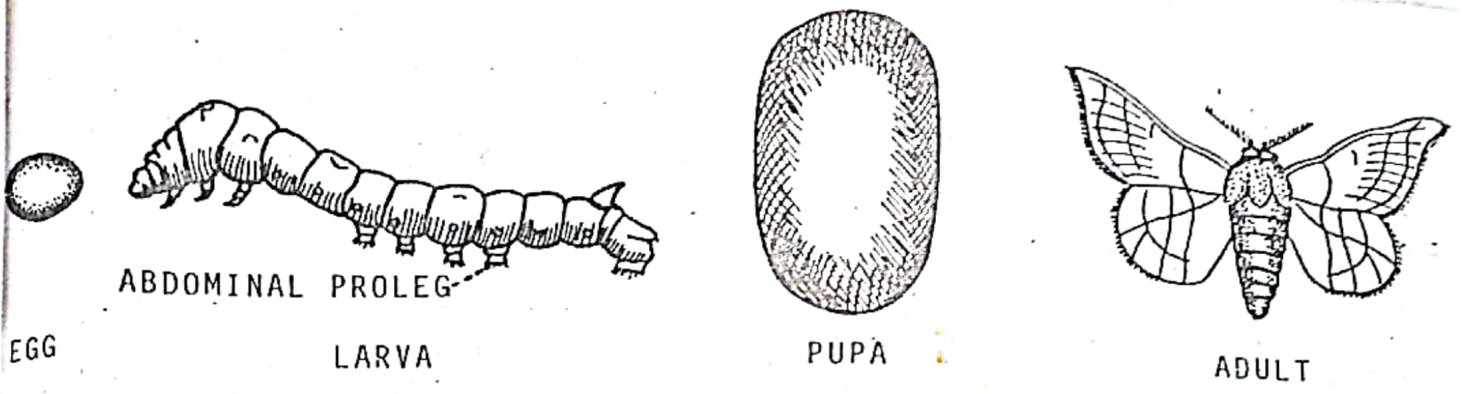


ADULT

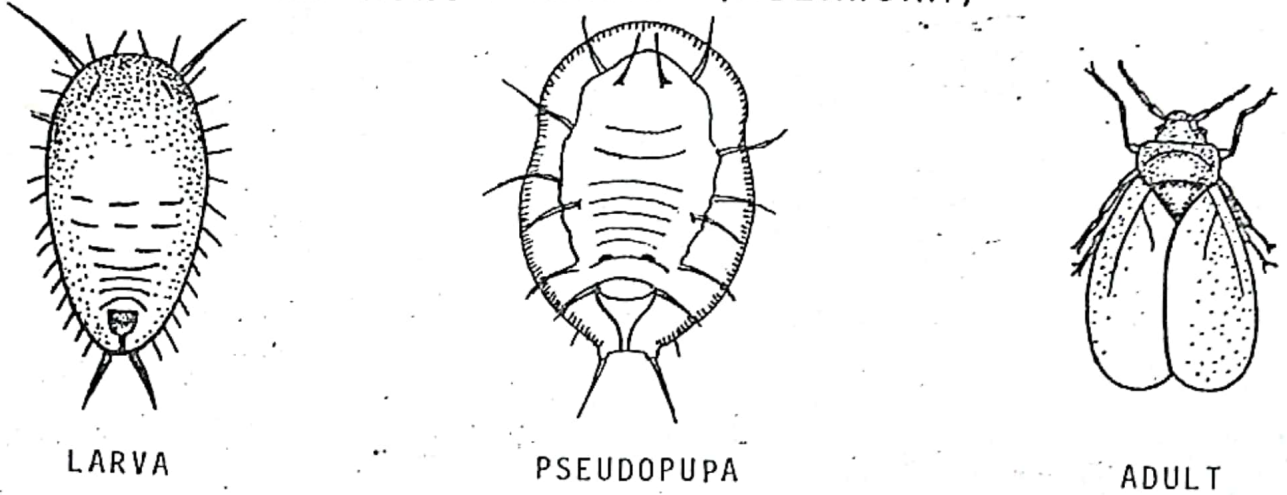
A. AMETABOLA (SILVERFISH)

B. HEMIMETABOLA (GRASSHOPPER)

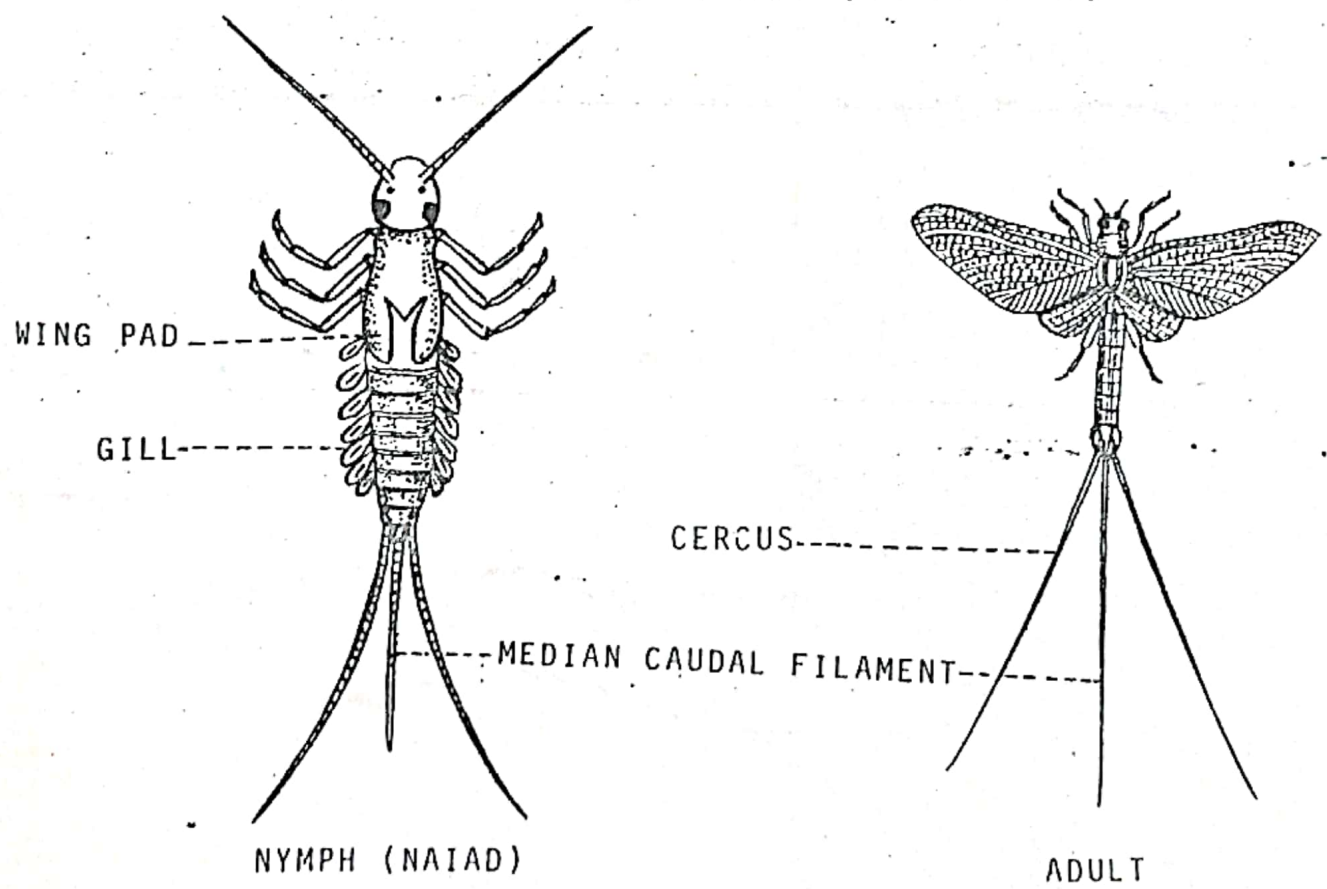
FIG. 8. INSECT METAMORPHOSIS



A. HOLOMETABOLA (SILKWORM)



B. HEMIMETABOLA (WHITEFLY)



C. HEMIMETABOLA (MAYFLY)

FIG. 9. INSECT METAMORPHOSIS

† Note: Some insects like whiteflies (Fig. 9B), male scales and thrips are included in this type of metamorphosis, but actually they neither fit into hemimetabola nor into holometabola. The early instars of their young are without wings and called larvae. The later instars are with rudimentary wings and resemble with nymphs. The final instar is pupa-like and known as pseudopupa.

3. **Holometabola (complex, indirect or complete metamorphosis)** (Fig. 9A): Insects in which the young ones pass through complex or marked changes to become adults and have a pupal stage are said to be with complex metamorphosis, e.g., **moths, butterflies, beetles, flies, bees, wasps**, etc. These insects are either winged or secondarily wingless. The winged insects develop their wings **internally** (i.e. within the body of the young) and are thus known as **Endopterygota**. The young one is called larva which is entirely different from the adult. There are four stages in their life, viz., **egg, larva, pupa and adult**.

† Note: **Hypermetamorphosis** is a type of complex metamorphosis in which all **larval instars are not similar**. That is, the shape of larva either goes on changing in all the instars, e.g., **blister beetle** (Fig. 12) or the first instar is only different from the remaining instars which are similar, e.g., hymenopterous parasites. It may be mentioned here that in case of complex metamorphosis all larval instars are usually similar.

## † TYPES OF EGGS

Some common types of eggs are as follows:

1. **Spherical** (Fig. 10A): These are rounded eggs, e.g., lemon butterfly, citrus leaf miner, hawk moth, gram cutworm and red cotton bug.
2. **Oval** (Fig. 10B): These are egg-like in shape, e.g., bean aphid, silverfish, rice bug, mango mealybug, maize borer, red pumpkin beetle and rice weevil.
3. **Conical** (Fig. 10C): These are conical in shape and with longitudinal ridges, e.g., beet armyworm.
4. **Elongate** (Fig. 10D): These are elongate, e.g., house fly, grasshopper, cotton jassid, fig borer, sand fly and bot fly.
5. **Stalked** (Fig. 10E, F): These are with a pedicel or stalk, which may be short or long, e.g., whiteflies, green lacewing, parasitic wasps and citrus psylla.
6. **With appendages** (Fig. 10G, H): These are with thread-like processes or appendages which come out from the upper side. Their number varies in different insects, e.g., water scorpions (*Ranatra* and *Nepa*) and stink bugs.
7. **Sculptured** (Fig. 10I, J): These are with various designs or sculpturing, e.g., malarial mosquito, spotted boll-worm, cabbage butterfly, gram caterpillar and pink gramineous borer.