



L2/25-254

TITLE: Proposal for Emoji Monarch Butterfly

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1. Identification :

a. **Keywords:** monarch, butterfly, nature, insect, pollinator, migration, endangered, caterpillar, milkweed, butterfly life cycle, conservation, save the butterfly, transformation, hope, change, rebirth

b. **Category:** Animals & Nature

2. Images :

a. Color and Black & White Example Images:



72 x 72 pixels



18 x 18 pixels

b. **License :** Sample artwork was generated by the submitter using AI-assisted tools (OpenAI's ChatGPT), with full rights and original input by the proposer.

3. Factors for Inclusion :

3a. Expresses Multiple Concepts: For example, archetype, metaphorical use, and symbolism may be supplied.

i. Monarch butterfly is not only the insect itself, but also used to represent transformation, change, and personal growth, as seen in spiritual and psychological contexts.

ii. 🦋🌍💀 Monarch butterfly may be used to evoke migration, endurance, and resilience, particularly in relation to Day of the Dead, where it symbolizes the return of departed souls.

3a. Expresses Multiple Concepts (Con't):

- iii. 🦋🌟🌀 Monarch butterfly is also used to symbolize the soul, rebirth, and spiritual guidance, especially in grief counseling, memorial tattoos, and healing literature.
- iv. 🌿🔥🗣️ Monarch butterfly represents biodiversity, climate awareness, and conservation advocacy, and is frequently used in environmental movements and campaigns.
- v. 🌟🦋 Monarch butterflies hold deep spiritual and cultural significance, often seen as messengers of ancestors, symbols of resilience, and embodiments of cyclical renewal. In Mexican traditions, they are believed to carry the souls of loved ones returning during Día de los Muertos, while in broader spiritual contexts they represent guidance, endurance, and connection to the natural and spiritual world [*Paradise Monarchs*, 2023].

Morpho vs. Monarch Symbolism

While morpho butterflies are often linked to personal healing, wishes, and a general sense of lightness and beauty [see: “Blue Morpho Butterfly Symbolism”, *Symbolic Meaning Journal*], monarch butterflies carry deeper societal and cultural significance. Monarchs symbolize ancestral connections, resilience in the face of adversity, and cyclical migration that directly mirrors human cultural traditions.

In particular, in Mexico’s Día de los Muertos, monarchs are believed to embody the returning souls of ancestors [see: *Paradise Monarchs – Symbolism and Spiritual Significance of the Monarch Butterfly*]. Conservation literature also highlights monarchs as symbols of endurance and fragility in the era of climate change, frequently used as a flagship species in environmental activism [see: *Xerces Society, Monarch Conservation Reports*].

Citation Sources:

- *Paradise Monarchs – “Unravelling the Symbolism and Spiritual Significance of the Monarch Butterfly”*
- *Symbolic Meaning Journal – “Blue Morpho Butterfly Symbolism”*
- *Xerces Society – Monarch Conservation Reports*

3b. Use in Sequences

Could pair with:

- 🌻🌼🐝 for pollinator garden content
- ❤️🦋 to represent transformation or memorial posts
- 🚗🌍 to illustrate migration
- 🎨🦋 for art projects or creative posts
- 🦋🎓 to symbolize personal growth, transformation, or graduation milestones

Unique monarch – only sequences include:

- 🦋🚫 for monarch conservation awareness and endangered species advocacy
- 🦋🇲🇽 for migration and cultural symbolism in Mexico (Día de los Muertos, ancestral return)
- 🦋🗺️ for monarch migration routes, the only butterfly with a multi-generational North American migration
- 🦋💀 for ancestral return during Día de los Muertos
- 🦋🌾 for pollinator habitat in agriculture and rural landscapes (monarchs depend on milkweed in cornfields)
- 🦋📖 for education and science contexts, where monarchs are the most widely taught butterfly species, regularly appearing in children's books, public science campaigns, and school curricula as the standard example of insect metamorphosis (*National Wildlife Federation, 2023; Monarch Watch, 2023*).
- 🦋📄 for memorial tattoos and remembrance, uniquely associated with monarch imagery
- 🦋📖 for folklore, storytelling, and children's books, where monarchs overwhelmingly symbolize change and hope
- 🦋🌍 for climate change and global migration awareness campaigns

Citations:

National Wildlife Federation, 2023; Monarch Watch, 2023

3c. Breaking New Ground

This would be the first emoji representing a specific butterfly species, and it highlights biodiversity and conservation in a visually distinctive way. The monarch butterfly is instantly recognizable and widely understood across cultures, making it an ideal candidate to represent butterflies at a species level.

Importantly, the addition of a monarch butterfly emoji is less about introducing novelty and more about correcting a longstanding inconsistency in emoji design. The current  butterfly emoji is rendered differently depending on the platform: some vendors show a monarch-like design, others a morpho butterfly, and some a generic or abstract version. This variation undermines the purpose of emoji as a universal visual language by creating semantic confusion – a user sending a butterfly to symbolize migration, Día de los Muertos, or conservation may have their meaning altered or lost depending on the recipient's device.

By encoding the monarch butterfly as its own emoji, Unicode would:

1. Reconcile platform inconsistencies — ensuring that users have a reliable way to depict the monarch specifically, rather than relying on a generic emoji that looks different across systems.
2. Reflect cultural and ecological reality — The monarch is widely recognized as the most referenced butterfly species across art, education, memorials, and environmental campaigns. For example, monarchs are the dominant butterfly used in tattoo memorials and Día de los Muertos altars (*Smithsonian Latino Center, 2021*), serve as the model species for teaching insect life cycles in schools (*National Wildlife Federation, 2023*), and are central to global conservation campaigns such as Monarch Watch and WWF initiatives (*World Wildlife Fund, 2024; Monarch Watch, 2023*).

3c. (con't)

In short, the monarch butterfly emoji would not merely “break new ground” but would fix a gap in the visual system, ensuring that one of the world’s most iconic and culturally significant butterflies is properly and consistently represented across platforms.

Citation:

- *Houston Chronicle – Monarch Butterfly Proposal*
- *Beaumont Enterprise – Artist Explores Theme of Hope with Monarch Butterfly*
- *Smithsonian Latino Center (2021) – Día de los Muertos: Monarch Butterflies and Ancestors*
- *National Wildlife Federation (2023) – Monarch Butterfly Education Resources*
- *Monarch Watch (2023) – Monarch Watch Tagging Program*
- *World Wildlife Fund (2024) – Monarch Butterfly Conservation Campaign*

3d. Legible and Visually Distinctive

The monarch butterfly is a visually iconic species, instantly recognizable by its bold orange-and-black wing pattern, black-bordered wings, and symmetrical shape. These distinct features ensure legibility even at emoji scale (18×18 pixels).

As an emoji, the monarch would function as a paradigm – representing not only the monarch butterfly itself, but butterflies in general, and broader concepts like transformation, freedom, and natural beauty, much like 🐘 represents all elephants or 🍺 represents all beer.

3d. Legible and Visually Distinctive (con't)

a. Emoji images serve as paradigms representing broader categories or symbolic ideas. For example, 🐘 elephant represents elephants in general, while 🍺 beer mug represents all beer, not just a single vessel. The monarch butterfly emoji would likewise serve as a paradigm for:

- i. Monarch butterflies specifically, and butterflies in general 🦋
- ii. Transformation, growth, and metamorphosis, symbolized by the monarch's lifecycle—from caterpillar to chrysalis to butterfly
- iii. Environmental symbolism such as climate awareness 🌍, biodiversity 🌿, and conservation 🔥
- iv. Cultural symbolism, especially in Mexico during Día de los Muertos 💀, where monarchs are believed to carry the souls of the departed 🕊

b. The monarch's high-contrast coloring and distinctive silhouette help differentiate it from other insect emojis, such as 🐝 bee, 🐞 ladybug, or 🐛 caterpillar. The monarch's wing structure is uniquely symmetrical and elegant, unlike the rounded shape of the existing 🦋 butterfly emoji, which lacks specific reference to any known species.

c. The monarch butterfly is frequently depicted in memorial tattoos, children's books, educational materials, and spiritual illustrations, lending it both symbolic and semantic weight. Its visual traits, combined with cross-cultural recognition, make it both a concrete object and a powerful emotional symbol—similar in dual function to emojis like 🕯 candle (grief + light) and 🕊 dove (peace + remembrance).

e. In summary, the monarch butterfly emoji would be:

- Distinct in appearance
- Recognizable at small sizes
- Rich in semantic meaning
- Visually and symbolically differentiated from the existing 🦋 butterfly emoji

Citation: <https://www.whatsthatbug.com/monarch-butterfly-spiritual-meaning-unlocking-the-mysteries-behind-its-beauty/>

3e. Has a High Usage Level

i. Frequency

Monarch butterflies are one of the most recognizable insects in North America and are heavily featured in: nature photography and children's books, environmental science and educational curricula, gardening and pollinator advocacy, and Day of the Dead (Día de los Muertos) symbolism.

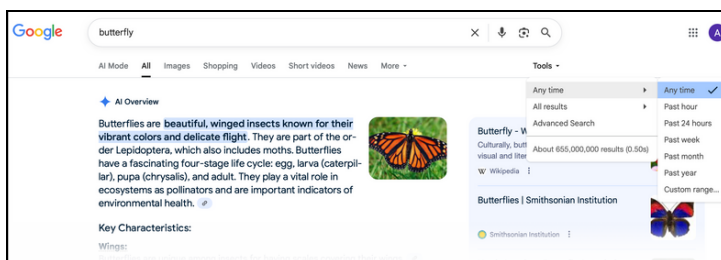
Unicode frequency data confirms high demand for butterfly emoji usage. According to the Unicode Emoji Frequency Report, 🦋 Butterfly is the most common Animal emoji (within the Animal-Bug subcategory), widely used to represent transformation, change, beauty, and nature. This demonstrates that butterfly imagery already has an established, sustained role in digital communication. (<https://home.unicode.org/emoji/emoji-frequency/>)

Further, Google Trends data shows that both “butterfly” and “butterfly migration” maintain consistently high global interest, with spikes in North America during the monarch migration season. This indicates that monarch-specific usage would naturally build upon strong existing digital patterns of butterfly-related communication.

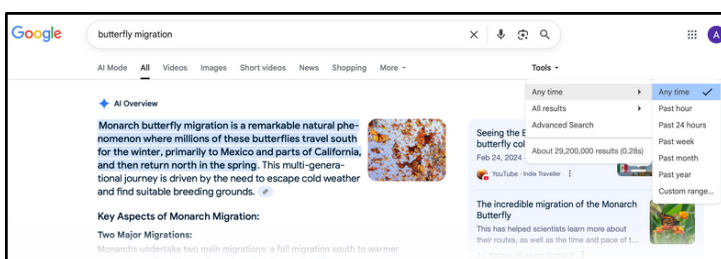
Together, these statistics demonstrate that a monarch butterfly emoji would not only fill a symbolic and cultural gap but would also align with existing high-usage patterns already established in the Unicode Standard, ensuring immediate adoption and widespread use.

A. Google Search

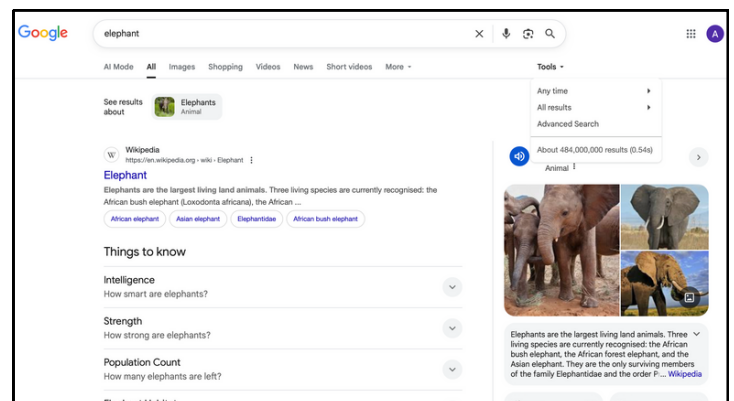
butterfly



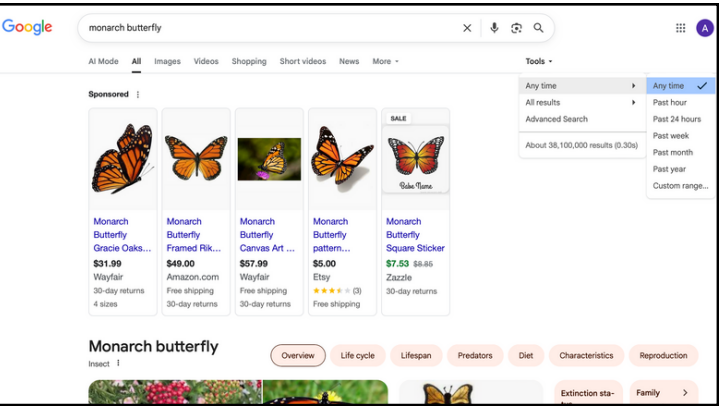
butterfly migration



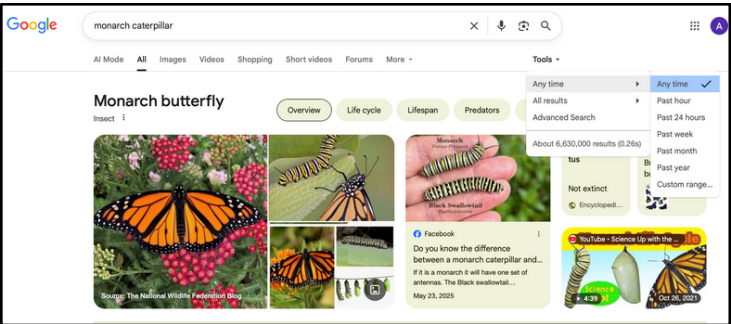
elephant



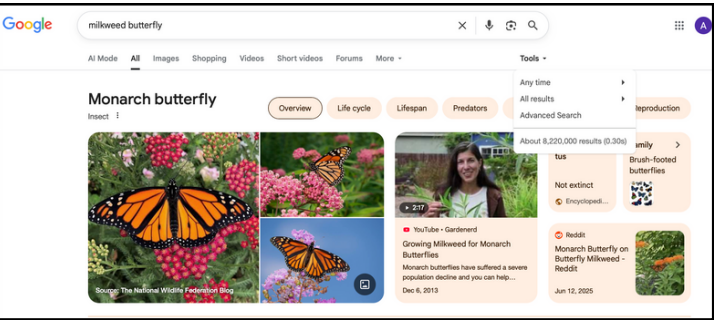
monarch butterfly



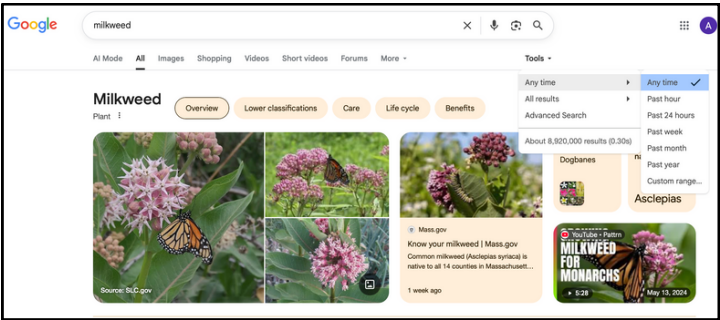
monarch caterpillar



milkweed butterfly

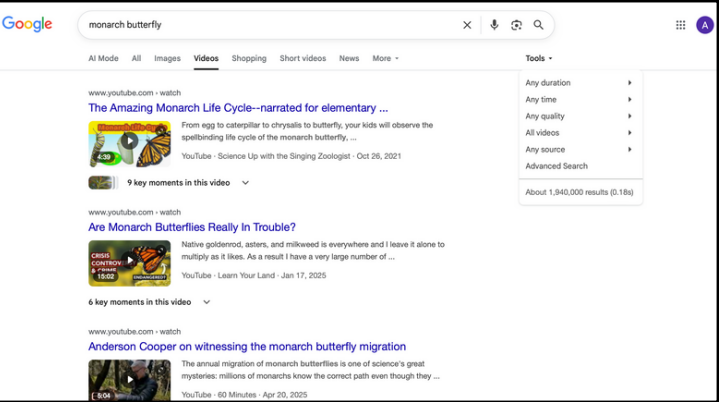


milkweed

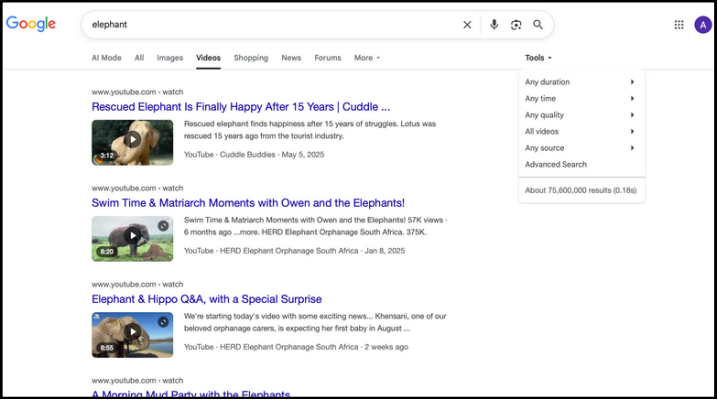


B. Google Video Search

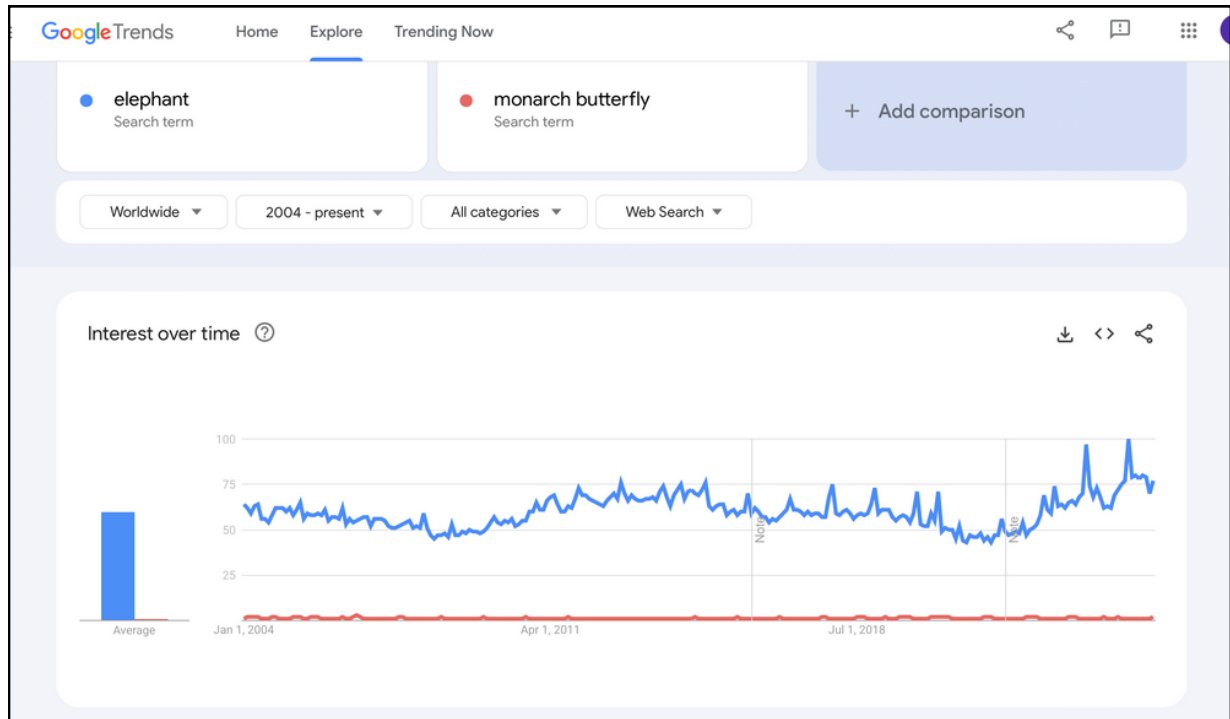
monarch butterfly



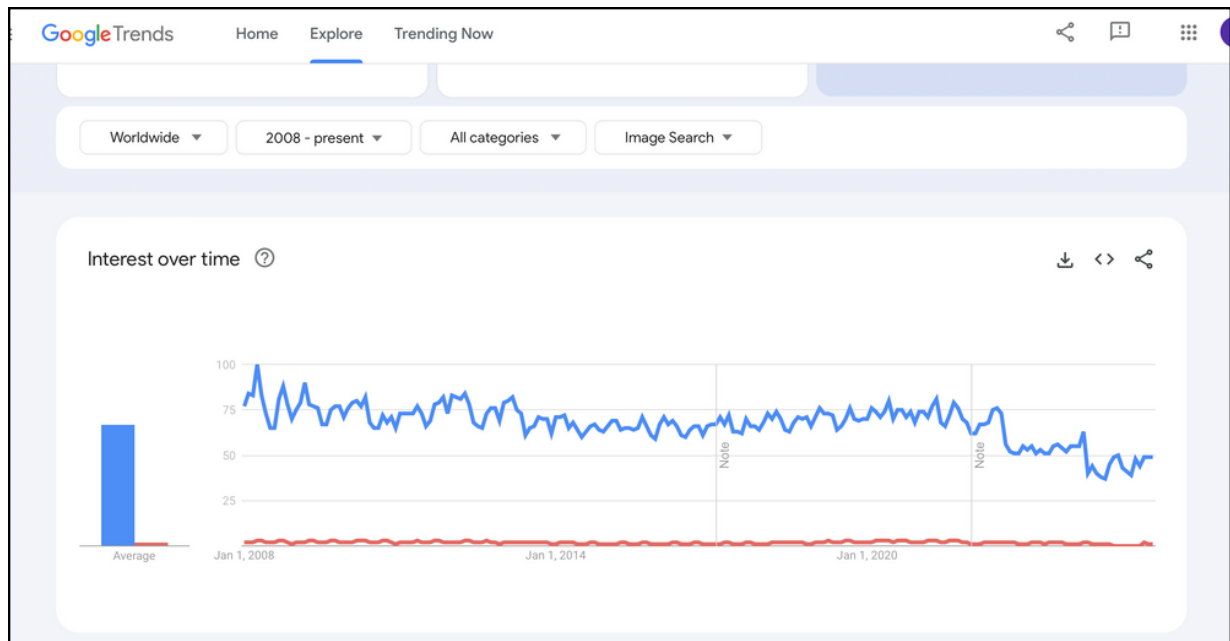
elephant



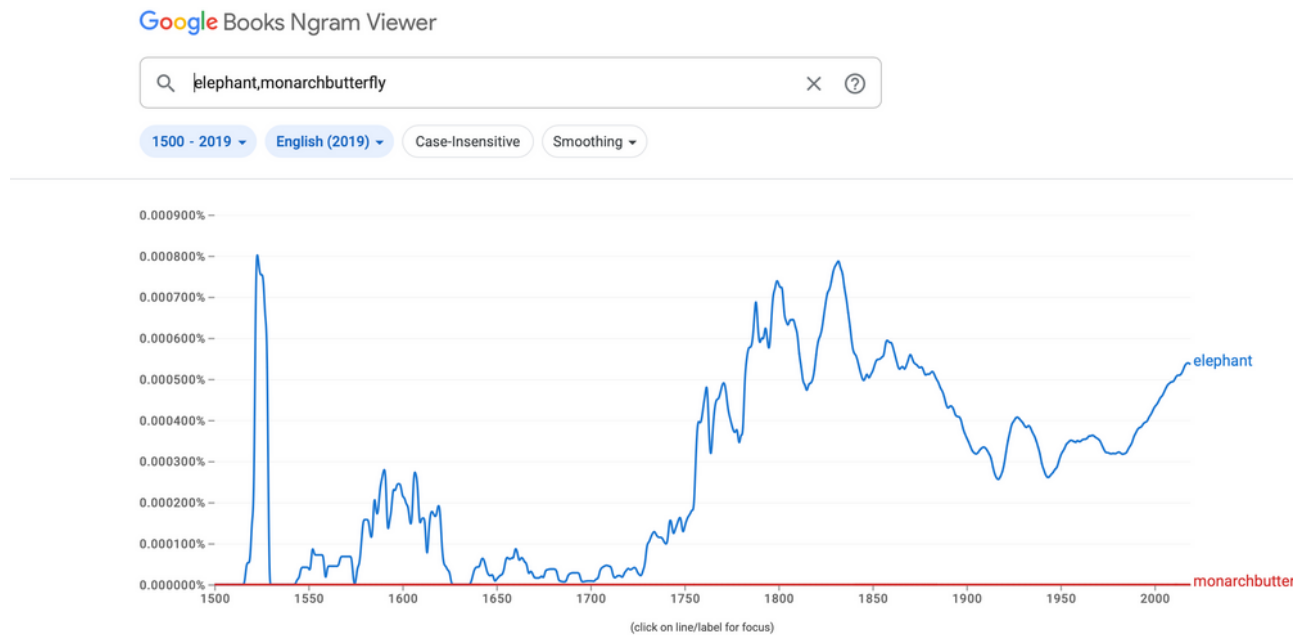
C. Google Trends: Web Search



D. Google Trends: Image Search



E. Google Books Ngram Viewer



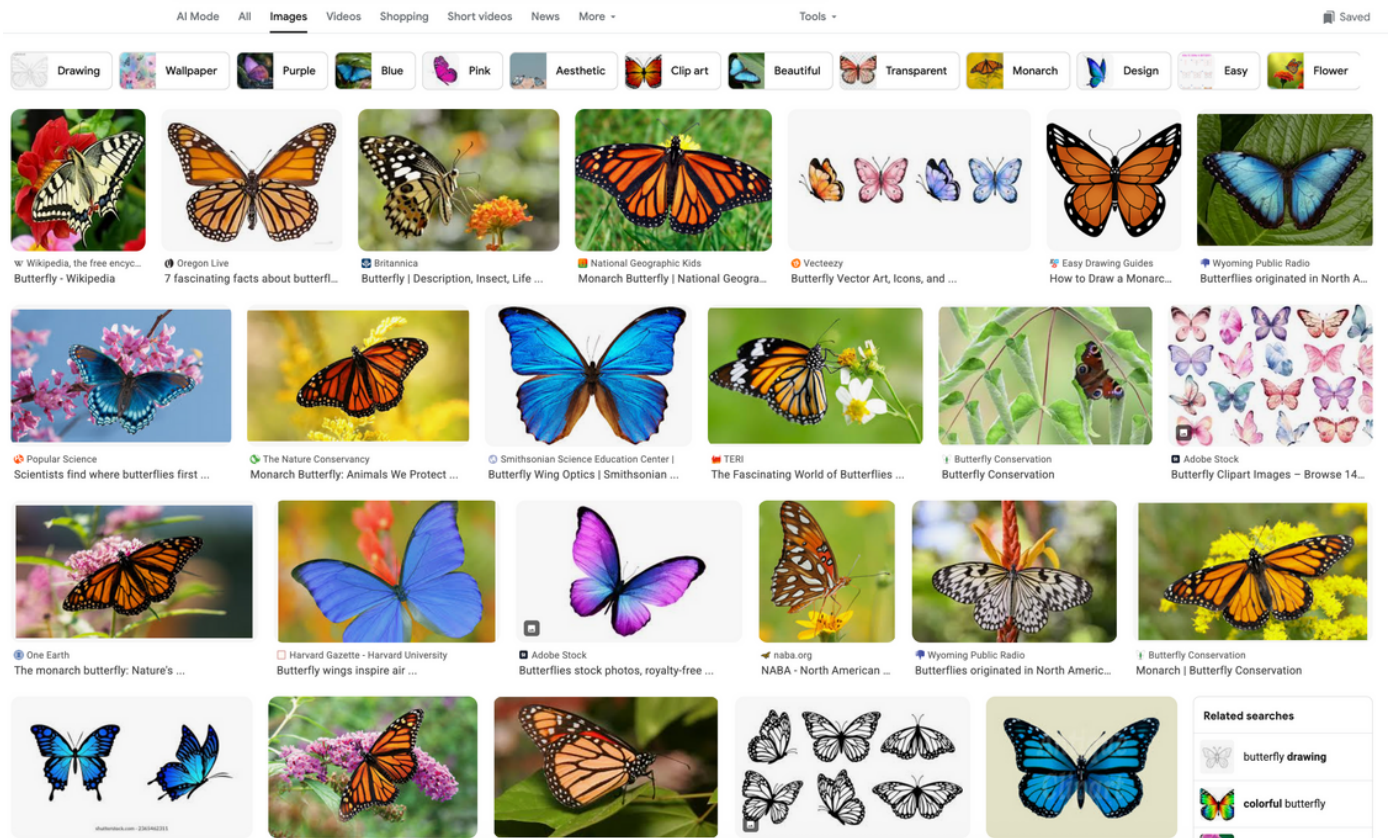
3f. Completes an Incomplete Category

The monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) is the most iconic butterfly in the world. Its distinctive orange-and-black coloration, widespread cultural symbolism (e.g., transformation, hope, remembrance), and environmental relevance (as a climate and conservation symbol) make it uniquely qualified to represent the butterfly category with greater specificity.

When considering completeness, it is important to note that emoji additions do not open the door to endless variants. In fact, a simple Google Images search for “butterfly” shows that nearly all depictions fall into just two categories: the Blue Morpho and the Monarch (see attached screenshot on next page). These two species dominate art, conservation materials, tattoos, children’s books, and educational resources. Other butterfly species appear rarely, if at all, and do not carry comparable symbolic or cultural significance.

3f. Completes an Incomplete Category (con't)

Google Images Search for “butterfly” shows that nearly all depictions fall into just two categories: the Blue Morpho and the Monarch



3g. Is needed for Compatibility with Popular Existing Systems

The monarch butterfly emoji is needed for compatibility with popular existing visual systems and communication styles, particularly across social media, digital stickers, educational content, and branding platforms where specific butterfly imagery – especially monarchs – is already in frequent use.

Currently, the generic 🦋 emoji is inconsistently rendered across major platforms.

- Some depict it as a monarch (Facebook, WhatsApp, Google).
- Others render it as a morpho butterfly (Apple, Samsung, Twitter).
- Still others opt for a stylized, abstract butterfly (Microsoft).

This inconsistency creates semantic confusion in communication. A user intending to reference the monarch's cultural significance – migration, transformation, remembrance – may instead be shown as a morpho or abstract design. This undermines the communicative precision that emoji are meant to provide.

Figure 1 (below) illustrates these cross-platform inconsistencies.



Adding a dedicated monarch butterfly emoji would:

1. Resolve cross-platform inconsistencies by giving users a specific, universal way to reference monarchs.
2. Meet user expectations – most people assume 🦋 refers to a monarch, but the renders vary widely.

Monarch butterflies are already heavily featured in emoji sticker sets, digital illustrations, Bitmoji collections, educational apps, and memorial/migration apps, where they symbolize transformation, remembrance, and environmental awareness. However, no native emoji currently offers a way to specify “monarch” in universally accessible text communication.

A monarch butterfly emoji would align Unicode with popular visual language conventions, reconcile platform inconsistencies, and complete a semantic gap that digital systems currently fill through unofficial or brand-specific artwork. Adding it would enhance consistency across platforms and meet user expectations for recognition in messaging systems that already feature this culturally meaningful image.

4. Factors for Exclusion

The Morpho butterfly is an example of a species that is overly specific and does not adequately represent butterflies as a whole. While the Morpho is admired for its beauty and striking blue color, its symbolism is limited — generally tied to lightness, wishes, or aesthetic appeal. It does not carry broad cultural, ecological, or symbolic significance.

The Monarch butterfly, on the other hand, is iconic and universally recognizable. Its orange-and-black wings have made it the most culturally referenced butterfly worldwide – appearing in art, education, conservation campaigns, and traditions such as Día de los Muertos. Beyond being a single species, the monarch has become a stand-in for butterflies in general, embodying transformation, migration, resilience, and remembrance.

Because of its widespread cultural and symbolic weight, the Monarch is uniquely suited to represent all butterflies as a category. In contrast, the Morpho is too specific and lacks the universal resonance necessary for a dedicated emoji.

4. Factors for Exclusion (*con't*)

4b. Overly Specific

The monarch butterfly is not overly specific, but rather the most universally recognized and symbolically significant butterfly species worldwide. While 🦋 currently represents a generic butterfly, it lacks the specificity needed to capture the monarch's unique cultural, ecological, and visual identity.

Unlike requesting multiple variants of sushi or owl species, the monarch butterfly is not one of many indistinguishable options – it is the singular butterfly species most often referenced in art, science, education, memorials, migration awareness, and symbolism of transformation.

This is not theoretical: monarch butterflies are uniquely the species most often depicted across multiple domains. For example:

- Art and Memorials: Monarchs are the dominant butterfly in tattoo memorials, Día de los Muertos altars, and commemorative artwork, symbolizing the return of ancestors and the endurance of memory (*Smithsonian Latino Center, 2021*).
- Science and Education: Monarchs appear in children's books, biology curricula, and public science campaigns as the model species for teaching insect life cycles, migration, and conservation (*National Wildlife Federation, 2023*).
- Cultural and Environmental Awareness: Monarchs are featured in international migration awareness efforts, such as the annual Monarch Watch tagging program and World Wildlife Fund campaigns, as emblems of resilience and biodiversity.
- Symbolism of Transformation: Monarchs are specifically cited in spiritual and cultural texts as symbols of rebirth and perseverance, in contrast to morpho butterflies, which are rarely referenced outside art photography (*Paradise Monarchs, 2023*).

Because monarch butterflies consistently appear in these broad, mainstream contexts – far beyond niche or localized use – they are not overly specific but instead serve as the primary cultural and symbolic representation of butterflies worldwide.

4. Factors for Exclusion (4b con't)

Its distinctiveness makes it a breakthrough character, not a redundant variant:

- Visually unique (orange-and-black wings)
- Culturally embedded (e.g., Día de los Muertos, climate migration, metamorphosis)
- Frequently requested and depicted in visual systems beyond Unicode

Therefore, the monarch butterfly emoji would add meaningful diversity to the emoji set rather than introduce unnecessary granularity.

Citations:

- Smithsonian Latino Center. (2021). *Día de los Muertos: Monarch Butterflies and Ancestors*. Smithsonian Institution.
- National Wildlife Federation. (2023). *Monarch Butterfly Education Resources*.
- Monarch Watch. (2023). *Monarch Migration and Tagging Program*. University of Kansas.
- World Wildlife Fund. (2024). *Monarch Butterfly Conservation Campaign*.
- Paradise Monarchs. (2023). *Unravelling the Symbolism and Spiritual Significance of the Monarch*

4c. Open-ended

The addition of the monarch butterfly emoji would not set a precedent for an endless proliferation of butterfly species. The case for the monarch is unique and limited, standing alongside the morpho butterfly as one of only two species with global cultural, symbolic, and ecological significance.

- **Cultural & Symbolic Uniqueness:** Monarch butterflies are singular in their role across North America and Mexico, symbolizing ancestral return during Día de los Muertos, resilience in adversity, and transformation through migration. These associations are unmatched by any other butterfly species (Smithsonian Latino Center, 2021).
- **Global Awareness:** Monarchs are the focus of widespread international conservation campaigns, including Monarch Watch and World Wildlife Fund initiatives, which have made them globally recognizable symbols of biodiversity and environmental stewardship.

4. Factors for Exclusion (4c con't)

- Consistency Gap: The current 🦋 emoji is inconsistently depicted across platforms — sometimes morpho-like, sometimes monarch-like. A dedicated monarch butterfly emoji resolves this inconsistency while preserving the morpho as a distinct symbolic counterpart.
- Clear Limitation: The morpho and monarch together capture the two dominant symbolic roles butterflies occupy in global culture:
 - Morpho: Beauty, wishes, and lightness.
 - Monarch: Resilience, migration, transformation, and ancestral connection.

No other butterfly species carries comparable symbolic weight across art, culture, education, and conservation to justify inclusion. Therefore, adding the monarch would close an existing gap rather than create an open-ended precedent for further butterfly emojis.

Citations:

- Smithsonian Latino Center. (2021). *Día de los Muertos: Monarch Butterflies and Ancestors*. Smithsonian Institution.
- Monarch Watch. (2023). *Monarch Migration and Tagging Program*. University of Kansas.
- World Wildlife Fund. (2024). *Monarch Butterfly Conservation Campaign*.

4. Factors for Exclusion (*con't*)

4d. Transient

The monarch butterfly is not a transient or faddish symbol – it is a longstanding icon with enduring cultural, ecological, and educational relevance. Its use spans generations and is expected to remain meaningful well into the future.

Key reasons for lasting usage:

- **Cultural Significance:** The monarch is deeply tied to Día de los Muertos traditions in Mexico and across the Americas, where it symbolizes the return of loved ones' souls. This connection is rooted in centuries of belief and annual practice—not trend.
- **Symbol of Transformation:** Monarch butterflies are widely used to symbolize personal growth, hope, rebirth, and resilience, making them relevant across mental health awareness, grief support, and spiritual contexts –timeless themes that transcend trends.
- **Environmental Icon:** The monarch is a flagship species for climate and conservation efforts. With its population decline making global headlines and school curricula, its presence in public dialogue is expected to increase, not fade.
- **Educational Value:** Monarchs are one of the few insect species consistently taught in classrooms worldwide, with their migration and life cycle included in elementary through university-level curricula, making them an enduring part of science education (*National Wildlife Federation, 2023; Monarch Watch, 2023*).

In short, the monarch butterfly is a permanent symbol with multigenerational relevance, not a passing fad.

Citations:

- Monarch Watch. (2023). Monarch Migration and Tagging Program. University of Kansas.

4e. Faulty Comparison

This proposal is not based on the existence of a generic butterfly emoji () or on the idea that “if one animal exists, we should add another.” The case for the monarch butterfly stands on its own merit, rooted in its cultural, ecological, and symbolic uniqueness, not simply its similarity to existing emoji.

Unlike faulty comparisons – such as proposing “OLD” to balance , or requesting Eiffel Tower because Tokyo Tower exists – the monarch butterfly:

- Fulfills a clear and distinct communicative need not served by any existing emoji
- Represents a globally recognized symbol used in education, remembrance, mental health, and environmental activism
- Is not simply a variant or aesthetic alternative, but a semantically and visually distinct entity

This is not a request to add “another butterfly” for the sake of symmetry or completeness – it is a proposal to encode a culturally significant symbol that cannot be accurately or intuitively conveyed using current emoji.

While the existing  emoji is sometimes depicted with monarch-like features, it is inconsistently rendered across platforms – some use morpho-inspired designs, others lean toward monarch traits. This inconsistency prevents reliable communication of the monarch’s unique cultural, symbolic, and biological significance.

The monarch butterfly represents much more than a generic butterfly image:

- Ancestral Connections: In Mexico and Latin America, monarchs symbolize the return of loved ones’ souls during Día de los Muertos (*Smithsonian Latino Center, 2021*).
- Resilience in the Face of Challenges: The monarch’s epic migration across North America has made it a universal emblem of endurance and survival, frequently appearing in memorials, art, and literature (*WWF, 2024*).
- Environmental Awareness: Monarchs serve as the flagship species for biodiversity and pollinator conservation, anchoring education and global advocacy campaigns (*Monarch Watch, 2023*).

Thus, the proposal avoids the flawed logic of “it’s like something that already exists” and instead emphasizes that the monarch butterfly emoji would resolve design inconsistency while encoding a culturally unique, universally recognized symbol.



Thank you again for considering my proposal.

Have a wonderful day!