

# Spiders

A Reading A-Z Level M Leveled Book  
Word Count: 529

## Connections

### Writing

Write a persuasive essay to a classmate explaining your opinion about spiders. Use information from the text to support your opinion.

### Science

Choose a kind of spider and a kind of insect. Make a Venn diagram to compare the spider and the insect. Discuss your findings with the class.

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# Spiders



Written by Emily Schlesinger

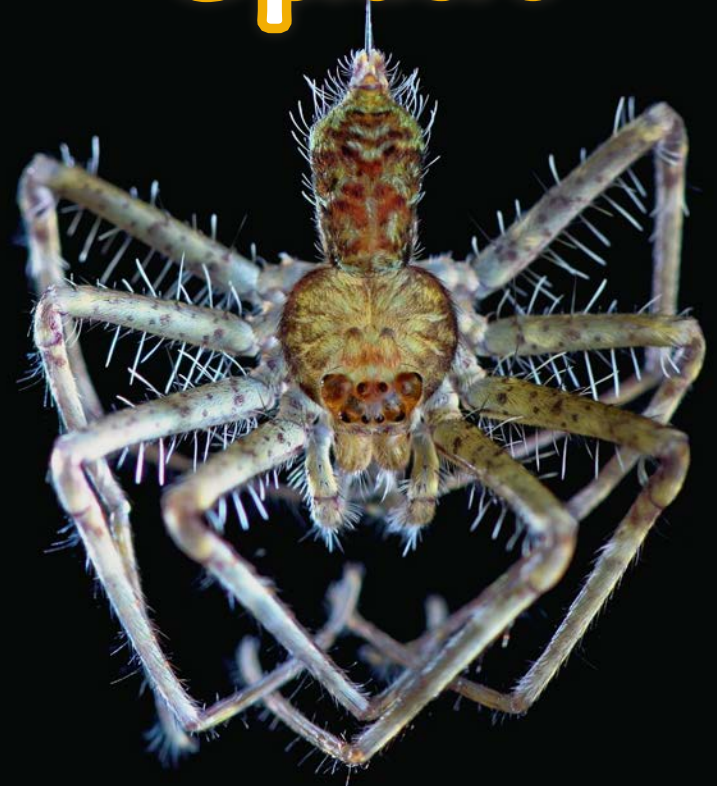
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## Glossary

- hatch** (*v.*) to come out of an egg or something else that holds an animal inside as it grows (p. 6)
- inject** (*v.*) to force something in to a human or other animal's body with a needle or fangs (p. 7)
- parachute** (*n.*) a device that resembles a canopy and allows something attached to it to move slowly through the air (p. 11)
- poisonous** (*adj.*) containing a poison that is harmful when swallowed, breathed, or touched (p. 7)
- prey** (*n.*) an animal that is hunted and eaten by a predator (p. 7)
- silk** (*n.*) strong threads made by a spider or silkworm (p. 8)

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## Focus Question

What are some traits of spiders, and what role do spiders play in nature?



## Words to Know

hatch	poisonous
inject	prey
parachute	silk

Cover: A common garden spider found in the United States and Canada. Females are much brighter and up to four times larger than males.

Title page: One of the more than 1,200 species of Huntsman spiders.

Page 3: A coastal peacock spider dances to find a mate.

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### Correlation

LEVEL M	
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Spiders are unusual animals. They build beautiful webs, have powerful venom, and can sail through the air on silk. We depend on spiders to keep harmful insects under control. These skillful creatures have an important place in our natural world.



Peacock spider






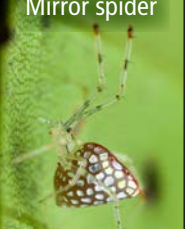


Spiny spider



Wasp spider



Golden silk orb-weaver spider

Other Cool Spiders			
Name	Body Length	Home	Unusual Traits
 <p>Goldenrod crab spider</p>	4–8 millimeters (0.16–0.3 in.)	North America, Europe, Northern Asia	The goldenrod crab spider hides in flowers to attack bees. It can change color to match the flower it is in.
 <p>Red-rump tarantula</p>	5.0–7.5 centimeters (2–3 in.)	North America	The red-rump tarantula defends itself by shooting out sharp hairs with hooks at the ends, which can cause an itchy rash.
 <p>Water spider</p>	8–15 millimeters (0.3–0.6 in.)	Europe, Northern Asia	The water spider fills an underwater web with air bubbles so it can breathe.
 <p>Mirror spider</p>	2.5–4 millimeters (0.1–0.16 in.)	Southeast Asia, Australia	The mirror spider may look like a disco ball! Shiny patches on its body scatter light to help it hide from enemies.
 <p>Bird dropping crab spider</p>	2.5–12 millimeters (0.1–0.5 in.)	Southeast Asia	The bird dropping crab spider attracts insects by looking and smelling like a pile of bird poop.
 <p>Ladybug mimic spider</p>	10 millimeters (0.4 in.)	Asia	The ladybug mimic spider keeps safe from enemies by looking just like a ladybug, which has a bad taste.



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The giant huntsman spider can grow up to 30 centimeters (12 in.) with legs spread out. That's the size of a dinner plate!

## Introduction

Do you jump when a spider crosses your path? Spiders may make some people nervous, yet they are mostly harmless to humans.

More than forty thousand kinds of spiders live all over the world. They range in size from the head of a pin to a large dinner plate. The smallest may be lighter than a feather, while the heaviest can weigh as much as a softball.



A trapdoor spider peeks up out of its hole in the ground.

The spider springs out of its hole, surprising its prey.

The trapdoor spider digs a hole in the ground and covers it with silk. This spider springs up out of the trapdoor when an insect walks by.

Tarantulas also spring out of holes in the ground to catch insects. Some tarantulas catch even bigger meals, such as birds and lizards.



When a spitting spider sees prey, it touches it, then steps back and shoots a zigzag of sticky spit.

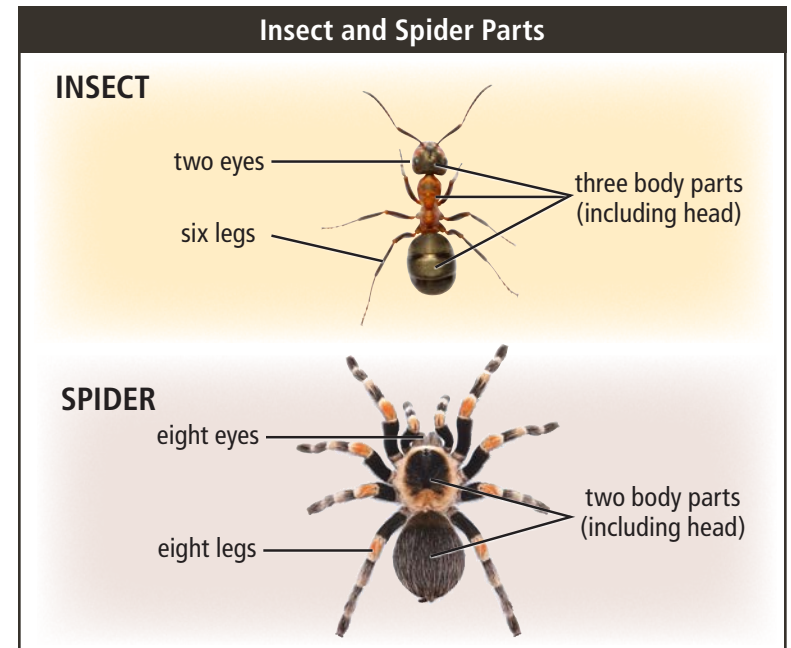
## Some Cool Spiders

Many spiders do not spin webs to catch prey. The spitting spider, for example, spits sticky liquid onto its prey. This liquid becomes hard and traps the insect, like a net.

The jumping spider can jump from far away to surprise and attack its prey.

## Traits

Although spiders look like insects, they are different in many ways. Spiders have eight legs. Insects have only six. Spiders have two body parts including the head. Insects have three body parts including the head. Most spiders have eight eyes, and most insects have only two. Spiders do not have wings. Most insects do.







A wolf spider mother carries her babies on her back.

## Life Cycle

A female spider can lay thousands of eggs. After they **hatch**, the babies often stay near the mother until they can live on their own.

Many spiders only live for a couple of years. Some, such as female tarantulas, can live up to thirty years.

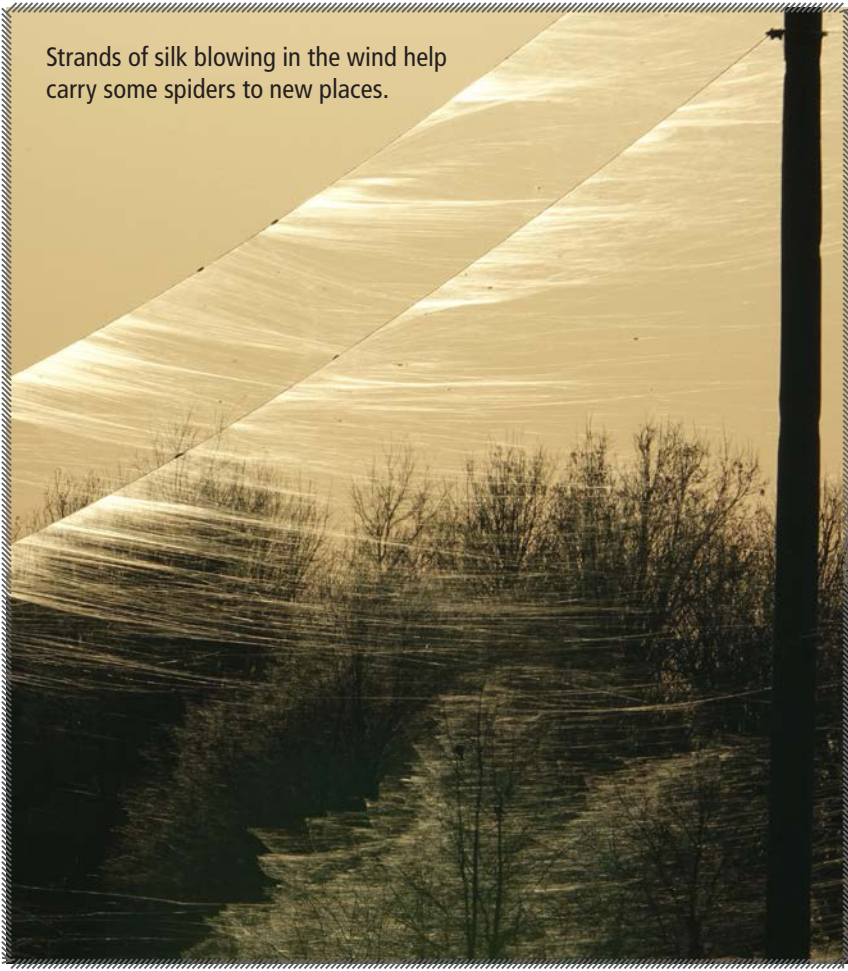
Some baby spiders make a silk **parachute** to travel. The wind carries the piece of silk and lifts the spider with it. A parachute can carry a baby spider from just a short distance to over 100 kilometers (62 mi.).



A spider releases a silk parachute.



Strands of silk blowing in the wind help carry some spiders to new places.



Some spiders also use their silk as a way to travel. Wind can blow the silk across a space, and it sticks to the other side. Spiders use the silk thread to walk from one twig or leaf to another.

## Diet

Spiders eat about half a billion tons of insects each



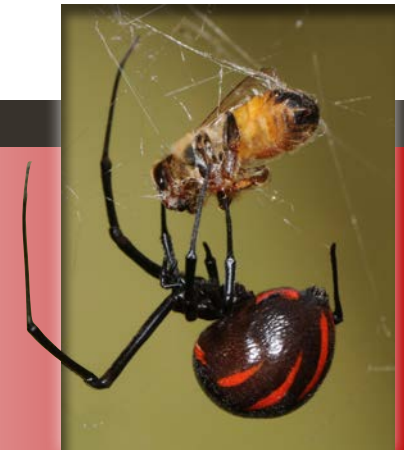
Spiders eat about 400 to 800 million tons of insects and other pests every year.

year. Without spiders, insects would destroy much of our food crops. Spiders also keep the number of pests such as mosquitos under control.

Most spiders use their fangs to bite **prey** and **inject** venom—a **poisonous** liquid. Fangs work like a needle.

### Black Widow

Female black widow spiders are among the most poisonous in North America. Female black widows are nearly double the size of males, and their venom is three times more powerful.



A black widow spider eats a honey bee.



Some spiders build webs high above the ground to trap flying insects.

## Webs and Silk

Some spiders make webs, which come in many beautiful shapes. These spiders use special body parts to make **silk** for their webs. The webs trap insects for them to eat.

Many spiders add a sticky glue to the web. This makes it hard for insects to escape. Once an insect is caught, the spider wraps it tightly in silk.

Spider silk is stronger than steel. You can easily break a web because the threads are so thin. If the threads were as thick as a rope, the web would be strong enough to lift a jet airplane!



This spider uses its silk to lower itself from a high place.