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# Activity Guide

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## Spiders

### ABOUT THE STORY

A spider can be as small as a speck of dust, or as big as a dinner plate. It can catch its prey with a trap door or build a web so sticky that any insect will be caught in it. This book describes how spiders spin their webs, lay eggs, and eat. It tells which spiders are dangerous – and which just look that way.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

Gail Gibbons has written over eighty books for children on topics that range from animals to knights to farming. She is the winner of the Washington Post Children's Book Guild Award for her overall contribution to children's nonfiction. She lives in Vermont and Maine.

### INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask children if they have ever seen a spider web sparkling in the sun. Did they think it was pretty? Discuss their feelings about spiders. Tell children who think spiders are scary that this book will help change their minds.

### READING ACTIVITIES

#### **Comprehension/Thinking Skills**

- "When did the first spiders live?"
- "Why are spiders called arachnids?"
- "How often do most spiders molt?"
- "What is a web used for?"
- "Name three ways a spider is different from an insect." (*Compare and contrast*)
- "Should people be afraid of spiders? Explain your answer." (*Draw conclusions.*)

### Vocabulary

Write these vocabulary words and definitions on the chalkboard. Ask children to match the words to the correct body part. Then have volunteers draw a diagram of a spider and an insect on the board and label the diagrams with the words.

cephalothorax  
abdomen  
pedipalps  
spinnerets  
antenna  
thorax

large body part of a spider  
organs for smelling and touching  
head-chest  
large body part of an insect  
organs for feeling  
organs for spinning silk

### CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

#### **Science: One Kind of Spider**

Ask children to work with a partner to find out about one kind of spider. Children can find five facts about the spider and can draw a picture to go with the facts. Put the facts and pictures together into a class book about spiders.

#### **Health: Spider Bite!**

Have children create a poster to show what to do in case of a spider bite. Remind them that some spiders are poisonous, and their bites need immediate medical attention. Children can draw pictures of poisonous spiders for the poster to help in identification.

#### **Language Arts: Spider Poems**

Help children find a poem about spiders, such as "The Itsy Bitsy Spider" or "Little Miss Muffet." Alternately, children can write their own spider poems. Collect the poems in a Spider Poetry book.

#### **Art: Draw a Spider Web**

Children may enjoy drawing the elaborate designs of a spider web. They can use the webs in the book as a guide, or draw from memory. If they want, have them use glitter to outline the webs so they look as if the sun is shining on them. Encourage them to include a spider – and maybe it's prey! – in the web.

### INTERNET ACTIVITIES

Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to be sure the sites are suitable.

Children can use the search words common spiders to search for websites that feature different types of household spiders. Have them use these sites to help identify the spiders they find around their own houses or around the school.