

## 38 Spiders

A spider is a small, eight-legged animal. Spiders are best known for the silk they spin. They use this silk to catch insects. Even large animals cannot escape from the sticky silk. Many spiders make webs. They use these webs as traps. If you look at a web, you can see the pretty patterns made by the spider.

But some spiders do not make webs. One kind of spider jumps onto an insect. Another spider uses its silk like a fishing line. It swings the line until it catches a bug. Then it reels up the line to eat its catch.

Spiders look like many of the insects they eat. But they are not insects. Spiders belong to a group called arachnids. All these animals have eight legs. None of them have feelers. Mites and ticks belong in this family.

Spiders lay eggs. Some large spiders lay 2,000 eggs at a time. One small spider lays just one egg. Many spiders die after they lay their eggs. The babies must learn to take care of themselves.

A lot of people are afraid of spiders, but only a few spiders can hurt humans. In fact, spiders are very helpful. They get rid of many harmful pests.

A tarantula is a kind of spider. It is large and hairy. You can find tarantulas in many warm climates. People in the South often see them. Once people thought that a tarantula's bite could give you a terrible disease. The person bitten by the tarantula might jump into the air. He or she might make strange noises. But this story is not true. Tarantulas in our country are quiet. This spider cannot hurt you any more than a bee can.

Some spiders really are very dangerous. The black widow is one of these spiders. Its bite is extremely painful. The bite can make you sick for a long time. Only the female black widow can hurt you. She has a shiny black body. It is about the size of a pea. Her long legs are very thin. If you turn her over, you can see a red or yellow mark on her body. But don't try to turn this spider over!

You can find black widows in almost every state. She often makes her webs in dark corners. This spider will not attack you. She will only bite if you bother her.

### Recalling Facts

1. A spider has
  - a. six legs.
  - b. eight legs.
  - c. no legs.
2. Spiders belong to a family called
  - a. arachnids.
  - b. insects.
  - c. mites.
3. You can find a tarantula in
  - a. warm climates.
  - b. Canada.
  - c. the ocean.
4. One spider that can hurt you is a
  - a. tarantula.
  - b. black widow.
  - c. fishing spider.
5. The black widow is about the size of a
  - a. radish.
  - b. tarantula.
  - c. pea.

### Understanding the Passage

6. All insects have
  - a. eight legs.
  - b. silk.
  - c. feelers.
7. Every spider uses its silk for
  - a. making webs.
  - b. catching insects.
  - c. climbing trees.
8. A tarantula
  - a. can give you a disease.
  - b. makes strange noises.
  - c. is not harmful.
9. If you see a black widow, you should
  - a. leave her alone.
  - b. turn her over.
  - c. bring her home to study.
10. Baby spiders are
  - a. poisonous.
  - b. dependent on their mothers.
  - c. able to take care of themselves.