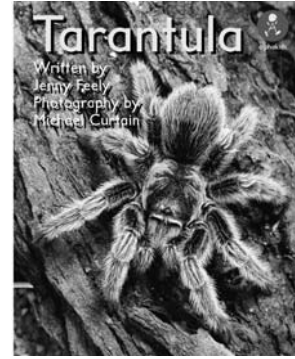# Tarantula

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Photography by Michael Curtain

Getting ready for reading

Ask: *What do you know about tarantulas?* List all children's responses in a data chart on the blackboard. Then ask: *What would you like to know about tarantulas?* List these questions also.

Talking through the book

You might say: *This book is called 'Tarantula'. What type of book do you think it will be?* (fiction, poetry, non-fiction?) *Why do you think this?* Turn through the book. You might say: *Tarantulas are very big spiders. They are very hairy too. The tarantula is the same colour as the bark. That makes it hard to see. Here is a tarantula's skin. The spider has gotten too big for its skin. It eats insects. Look at the tarantula's fangs. They have poison in them. Tarantulas live in different places in the world.*

Reading the book

Children read the book independently while the teacher observes the children's reading behaviours.

Teaching opportunities

Select the most appropriate teaching focus for the learning needs of the group.

Being a meaning maker

Discuss these questions. Encourage children to support their responses with evidence from the book.
What did we learn about tarantulas from this book?
Why does a tarantula shed its skin?
How do tarantulas catch their food?
Could a tarantula eat a person? Why?
Would we find tarantulas in our neighborhood?

Being a code breaker

Vocabulary
- High-frequency words: *a, is, the, in, can, it, be, have, on, they, and, to, look, like, not, of, it, out, for, don't, make, by, some, with*
- Word families: *feed – bleed, deed, greed, need, reed, seed, weed*
  bark – dark, lark, mark, park, shark, stark

Sounds and letters
- Hearing words: Children clap for each syllable in a word: *tarantula, paralyses, spider, biggest, insects, webs*
- Hearing sounds: /ar/ – *bark, hard, parts*; /er/ – *spider, bigger*; /all/ – *tall, crawl, small*: short /a/ – *man, hand, can, and, tarantula, catch, paralyses, fangs*

Writing conventions
- Punctuation: capital letters, full stops
- Grammar: comparative words – *biggest, bigger*

Being a text user

Return to the list of things children thought they knew about tarantulas and the things they wanted to know before reading the text. Discuss information that was confirmed from reading the text and questions that were answered.

Ask: *Was this a useful book for answering our questions?*
Did it have enough information?
How was the information presented?
How is an index used?

Being a text critic

Discuss:
What research would the author have done before writing this book?
What information has the author of 'Tarantula' left out?

Literacy learning centres

✍ *Writing centre*

Children research a local spider and write a book about it, modelled on *Tarantula*.

☺ *Word centre*

Children list as many words as they can think of to describe spiders, and then classify these words into categories such as: words that describe what spiders look like, words that tell how you feel about spiders, words that tell what spiders can do. They could then use these words to write a poem about a spider.

📖 *Book browsing centre.*

Provide books and interactive media for children to learn more about spiders. Information gained can be added to the group data chart. Some useful resources: *Aranea* by Jenny Wagner (book), *Dangerous Creatures* (CD-ROM – Microsoft), *Webs of Intrigue* by Densey Clyne (video), *The Very Busy Spider* by Eric Carle (book).

Keeping track

Observing children as they compare the information that a book contains with the questions they hoped to answer by reading it can provide information about how effectively children are able to operate as text users.