



Name _____

Date _____

TARANTULAS

There are at least 800 species of tarantulas. The most common types of tarantulas are found in the southwestern United States and Mexico. The legs of the tarantula get as long as three to four inches. The body gets to be about two inches long.

Tarantulas are the biggest known spiders. There are some species of tarantulas that can span 10 inches. They weigh from one to three ounces. The tarantula lives from 25 to 40 years. Most tarantulas are black and brown, but some species come in very striking colors, such as bright red and blue. Tarantulas can be trained as pets and are harmless to humans. They do not spin webs but rather hunt for their prey.

The tarantula has eight hairy legs and a hairy body. There is a bald spot on the abdomen. When being pursued by an enemy, the tarantula will rub its legs on the abdomen brushing hairs off in the direction of the enemy. These hairs are irritating to the enemy. The tarantula can make a hissing sound by rubbing its jaws or front legs together. This spider has eight eyes, as well as two large fangs.

The typical diet of a tarantula is insects. It feeds specifically on grasshoppers, crickets, beetles, sow bugs, other spiders, and even small lizards. It is a nocturnal animal that lives in small burrows. The tarantula lines this hole with silk webbing to prevent the dust from getting inside.

STORY QUESTIONS

1. Where would you read to determine the color of the tarantula?
 - a. first paragraph
 - b. second paragraph
 - c. third paragraph
 - d. the title
2. What does the tarantula throw at its predators for protection?
 - a. claw-like arms
 - b. poison
 - c. hair
 - d. strong scent
3. The author probably wrote this passage to . . .
 - a. warn humans of the tarantula.
 - b. enlighten scientists to the benefits of the tarantula.
 - c. to determine the genealogy of the tarantula.
 - d. inform the reader about the tarantula.