

The Origin of Spider-Man

In Spider-Man's debut issue¹, the other kids in Peter Parker's high school class in Queens, New York call our hero "puny"² Parker. He is frail and shy, a pampered orphan who lives with his elderly Aunt May and Uncle Ben.

Peter visits a science exhibit on experiments in radio-activity. While there he is bitten by a spider that has accidentally absorbed "a fantastic amount of radio-activity". Feeling strange, the teenager steps aside. He is so focused, his entire body charged with some sort of fantastic energy, that he fails to see a car speeding toward him. Peter leaps out of the way and that's how he discovers he now possesses incredible strength and can climb walls.

He realizes that the spider in some miraculous way has transferred its own power to him! Peter tests his new found abilities for prize money on the wrestling³ ring. When he is successful he decides to create a costumed alter ego for himself and go into show business to help support his family.

The masked Spider-Man is a hit⁴. However, during his first public appearance, he fails to see an escaping thief. This act will come back to haunt him for the man he let escape turns out to be the burglar who later murders his beloved Uncle Ben.

"My fault, all my fault!" laments Peter. "If only I had stopped him when I could have! But I didn't and now Uncle Ben is dead." As Peter walks off into the night, he knows, at last, "that in this world, with great power there must also come great responsibility!"

Paul Kupperberg, *The Creation of Spider-Man* [2007]

1. first time Spider-Man appeared in a comic book, in 1962
2. small, weak, not very impressive
3. a sport in which two people fight by holding each other and trying to force the other one to the ground
4. a success



1. Find characteristics about Spider-Man's alter ego :

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

2. Find 3 superpowers of Spider-Man :

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

3. Describe Spider-Man's costume :

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

Complete the timeline :
