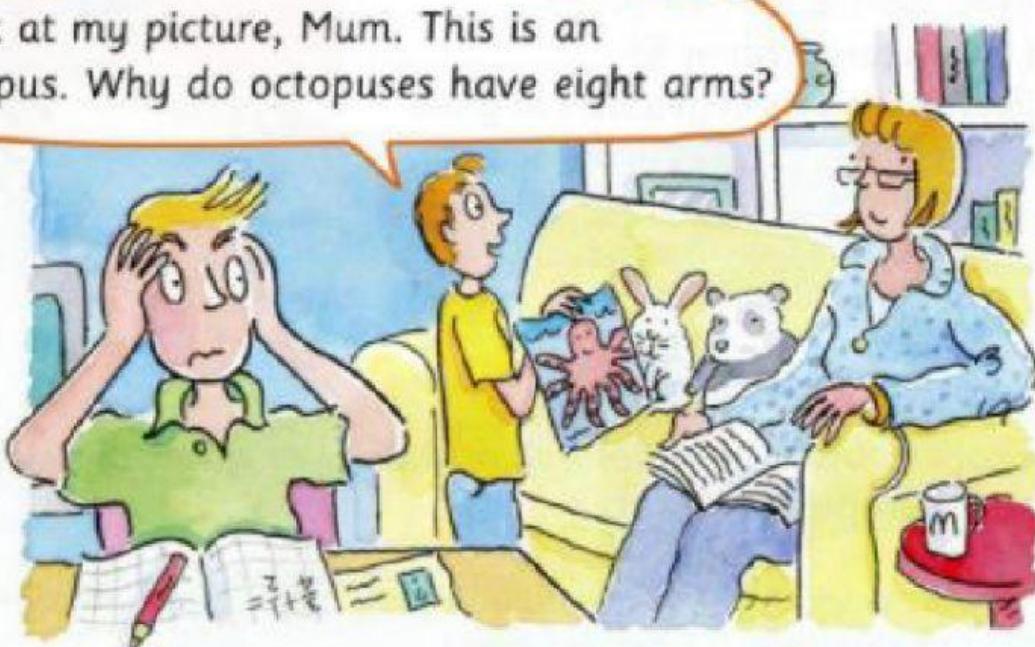


# Do whales have stomach-ache?

My younger brother is called Fred. Fred's very interested in animals. He talks and asks questions about animals *all* the time. Fred's really interested in parrots, pandas, polar bears and penguins and lions and leopards and rabbits. But Fred's favourite animals live in the sea. He has posters of jellyfish, whales, dolphins, sharks and octopuses on all the walls of his bedroom.

Look at my picture, Mum. This is an octopus. Why do octopuses have eight arms?



Or are they legs?  
Why are there little cups on their arms?

Fred doesn't stop talking when I'm doing my homework or when Mum's trying to read quietly.



'Ssssssssshhh, Fred!  
we have to say sometimes.'

Last Saturday, Fred wanted to go to the library in town to get a book called *The Most Dangerous Animals in the World*. He wanted to get a DVD called *Leopard's Spots*, too.

But Mum said, 'No, Fred. You don't look well. I want Aunt Jane to come and see you. You've got lots of little red spots on your face.'

Aunt Jane is a doctor. She knows all about red spots!

Fred looked in the mirror. 'But I'm not ill and my spots aren't scary and they don't hurt,' he said.



**Do you know**, Mum, leopards have spots, and there's a kind of dog called a Dalmatian that has hundreds of spots too?

'Yes, I know!' Mum said.

When Aunt Jane saw Fred, she asked 'Have you got any spots on your body? On your back, your shoulders or arms?'



'No,' Fred said. 'Octopuses have got eight arms. Did you know that, Aunt Jane? They've got three hearts too!'

'Have they?' Aunt Jane said. 'Can I look in your ears now?'

Aunt Jane opened a bottle of green medicine and put some on a spoon. Fred didn't like medicine.

He stopped talking because he didn't want to open his mouth.



'You must open your mouth now, please, Fred,' Aunt Jane said.

But Fred didn't open his mouth.

Aunt Jane had a clever idea.

'Do you think whales have stomach-ache sometimes, Fred?' she asked.



Fred started to say, 'I—'

When Fred did that, Aunt Jane quickly put the medicine into his open mouth!

'That's horrible!' Fred said, but then he smiled. 'Hey! I like this medicine a lot. It's the nicest medicine in the world. Can I have some more?'

Aunt Jane laughed. 'No!' she said.

'You can have a glass of orange juice,' Mum said.

But then Fred started talking again. 'Whales don't drink orange juice, but they do have stomach-ache, I think. They have *very* big stomachs. Do you know they eat—'

'Ssssssssssshhh, Fred!' I said.

'Ssssssssssshhh, Fred!' Mum said and  
'Ssssssssssshhh, Fred!' Aunt Jane said.

