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Activity Guide

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Diary of a Spider

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ABOUT THE STORY

What is a spider's life like? In *Diary of a Spider*, a young spider tells readers his fears, likes, and dislikes. He describes his friends and family, talks about what he learns at school, and explains why people should not be afraid of spiders.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Doreen Cronin grew up in Queens, New York, and became an attorney. She gave up law to become a children's book writer whose picture books have won many awards. She is also the author of *Diary of a Worm*, another Live Oak Readalong. She lives in New York City.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Harry Bliss is a cartoonist and artist. He has illustrated several other children's books, including *Diary of a Worm*, *A Fine Fine School*, and *Countdown to Kindergarten*, all Live Oak Readalongs. He lives in Burlington, Vermont, with his family.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask children what they know about spiders, and write their responses on the chalkboard. Then tell them that the book they will read is full of information about spiders – some real, and some made up.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- "What did the spider learn in gym class?"
- "Why don't spiders like vacuums?"
- "What happens when a spider molts?"
- "How are spiders and insects different?" (*Compare and Contrast*)
- "Do you think people should be afraid of spiders? Why or why not?" (*Make Judgments*)

Vocabulary

Write these words and sentences on the chalkboard. Have children write the word that best fits each description.

practice vacuum molted reunion judge

- If you have an opinion about whether something is good or bad, you do this. _____
- An insect that has shed its skin has done this. _____
- To clean a carpet, you could use this. _____
- To get better at something, you have to do this. _____
- When family members who haven't seen each other in a long time get together, they have this. _____

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Art: Make a Scrapbook

Spider's diary includes a scrapbook at the beginning and end, with illustrations. Have children make their own scrapbooks, with illustrations and photos from home showing family members, friends, favorite books, baby pictures, and school events. Collect children's scrapbooks to make a class scrapbook.

Language Arts: Diary Entry

Have children imagine they are an insect of their choice. They can write a diary entry describing a day in the life of the insect, as the spider does. Volunteers can read their entries aloud to the class when they are finished.

Science: Spider Facts

Have children work in small groups to research and collect facts about spiders from reference books or encyclopedias. Encourage each group to find five facts that are not in *Diary of a Spider*. Children can read their facts aloud to the class.

Language Arts: Scary List

Spider lists the three things that scare him the most: Daddy Long-legs, vacuums, and people with big feet. Have children make their own lists of three real or funny fears. Volunteers can read their lists to the class.

INTERNET ACTIVITY

Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to be sure the sites are suitable.

Poisonous Spiders

Have children use the keywords *poisonous spiders* to learn about one of these spiders: brown recluse spider, black widow spider, funnelweb spider, or redback spider. Working in groups, children can prepare a brief report on the spider they have chosen. If they can print out a picture of the spider, they can include that in the report.