

Name: _____

Scorpions

By Guy Belleranti

If you've ever seen a scorpion, I doubt you would consider it a "cute and cuddly" creature. With its big, claw-like pincers and its long, curled tail and venomous stinger, a scorpion is definitely a scary sight. However, only around 30 of the nearly 2,000 species of scorpions have venom considered dangerous to humans.



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prehistoric, scorpion-like creatures grew up to several feet in length. Wow! Luckily, today's scorpions are a lot smaller. Most are less than three inches. You might be surprised to learn that the smallest scorpions are often the most dangerous. Some examples of deadly scorpions are the Indian red scorpion, the Deathstalker of Africa and the Middle East, and the Arizona bark scorpion. Most large species, including the eight-inch African emperor scorpion, are much less dangerous.

Scorpions don't have a good sense of sight. But they do have sensory hair-like structures on their legs and bodies. These structures are capable of feeling vibrations from nearby predators, including tarantulas, centipedes, lizards, owls, bats, shrews, and mice. They can also feel vibrations from their prey, which include a variety of insects, centipedes, spiders, and sometimes, even other

scorpions. Some larger species of scorpions eat small lizards and mice. Most scorpions hide and wait for their prey to come closer. Then – crunch! They grab the unsuspecting prey with their pincers. Sometimes a scorpion will use its stinger to overcome its prey. All species of scorpions have digestive juices that help soften the scorpion's food, allowing for easy consumption.

You might be wondering where scorpions get enough water to drink, especially those species that live in arid climates. Surprisingly, scorpions get most of their water from prey. Their waxy exoskeleton keeps moisture in their bodies.

Unlike other arachnids, scorpions don't lay eggs. Instead, the babies are born live. They crawl onto their mother's back and remain there until after their first molt. What is molting? It's growing out of an old exoskeleton. Scorpions molt



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1. How does a scorpion get enough water to drink, especially in desert climates?

2. Which of the following does a scorpion rely on to catch its prey?



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- c. More than half of all scorpion species are deadly to humans.
d. In general, the smaller the species of scorpion, the more deadly it is.

4. How can a scorpion's venom help people?

5. Identify three of the world's deadliest scorpions that were mentioned in the article.

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Match each vocabulary word from the article with the correct definition.

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. _____ venomous | a. toxic; poisonous |
| 2. _____ fascinating | b. unaware of the presence of danger |



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- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 6. _____ exoskeleton | f. an extremely dry climate |
| 7. _____ consumption | g. a classification of animals that includes spiders and scorpions |
| 8. _____ arid | h. animals that get eaten by other animals |
| 9. _____ predators | i. dating back to a time before humans kept written records |
| 10. _____ prey | j. highly interesting |

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In the article, "Scorpions," you learned that there are almost 2,000 different species of scorpions that live on every continent on Earth except Antarctica. Some of these species are more venomous than others.

Choose one species of scorpion to research. You can use the internet with your teacher or parent's permission. On the lines below, describe the scorpion species you chose. What does it look like and where does it live? What is the most interesting thing you learned about this scorpion?



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Indian red scorpion; Deathstalker of Africa and the Middle

East; Arizona bark scorpion

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9. e. predators

i. dating back to a time before humans kept written records

10. h. prey

j. highly interesting