



SCIENCE



25.10.19

How do spiders know when it's dinner time?

Spiders make great use of their sense of touch. Tiny hairs which cover their bodies and legs help a lot with this. We made a string spider's web in the hall during assembly. Closing their eyes, our volunteer 'spider' was touching the string and could feel the vibrations when an 'insect' hit the web.

Spiders are quite clever. They know if their web has been hit with a leaf or the wind instead of some dinner. They can sense different types of vibrations. When you next see a spider's web, see if you can gently touch the web and trick the spider into thinking it's an insect ready to gobble up for lunch!



Are babies scared of spiders?

Many people have a fear of spiders. Why is this? Some scientists think we learn this from seeing other people being scared as we grow up. Some think our brains are born with a fear of spiders.



Scientists tried to answer this question by experimenting with babies. They showed them photos of flowers and photos of spiders. The babies couldn't say if they were scared because you can't talk when you're 6 months old! If you get scared of something, your heart might beat faster, you might feel hot or you might feel like your legs are wobbly. Another thing that happens is that your pupils dilate (get bigger) a tiny, tiny bit (less than 1mm!). So scientists used a special machine to measure the size of the babies pupils as they looked at the pictures. When they saw the flowers the eyes stayed the same. When they saw the spiders, their pupils did get a tiny bit bigger.



Does this mean we have a fear already in our brain before we see other people being scared? Scientists will have to repeat the experiment and make sure it is a very fair test to be more sure, but it looks like that could be true.

Web links and videos:

[The spider with 3 super powers!](#)

[Spider silk is sometimes said to be stronger than steel. Is it true?](#)

Halloween STEM boxes.

Many of you bought some of the STEM Halloween boxes this week. A big thank you to Lesley Jay, Sam Bates and everyone who helped prepare them. I hope you have a great time with them over half term. It would be great to see some photos - send them in!