

# The True Story of Little Miss Muffet

## Year 2

### Learning for Life

Our perception of events depends on the part we had to play in them and this can influence our retelling of them. (interpreting)

Reading fiction can sometimes lead to researching facts. (locating)

I can get information from a variety of sources and some are better than others at meeting my needs at the time. (selecting)

Non fiction has cues and clues to help me locate the information I want.(selecting)

I can create information for others to use. (presenting)

### Focus Questions

How does the place you have in an event change your experience of it?

How does it affect the author's purpose for writing?

What is the purpose of dictionaries and encyclopaedias?

How do I use them?

How can I create information for others to use?

### Recommended Resources

Enlarged illustrated copy of the nursery rhyme

Class set of dictionaries and thesauri suitable for this age group

Encyclopedia (print or digital) suitable for this age group

Access to a website showing video or animation of a spider spinning a web such as

How Stuff Works

<http://animals.howstuffworks.com/arachnids/spider5.htm>

How a Spider –Arachnid- makes a web

<http://www.haworth-village.org.uk/nature/how/spider-web.asp>

or

The Very Busy Spider

Eric Carle (Hamish Hamilton, 1985)

Wool, cotton or fishing line to make a spider web

Instructions for making a variety of spiders

Materials to make these

Template - Spiders

### Activities

Share the rhyme with the students and then use both the words and the pictures to reconstruct as prose.

*What sort of day was it?*

*Why was Little Miss Muffet eating outside?*

*Can you use the clues to work out what a 'tuffet' might be?*

*What was she eating?*

*Why wasn't she having cereal or toast like we do?*

*What did the spider look like?*

*Why was Little Miss Muffet so frightened of it?*

*What did she think it was going to do to her?*

*What did she do when she ran away?*

*What did the spider do?  
How did the spider feel?  
What would you have done if you were Little Miss Muffet?*

### **Dear Diary**

People who have had interesting lives often share their experiences by writing their autobiography or memoirs. These are usually constructed using diary entries recording significant events.

Explain the purpose of a diary and have the students retell this rhyme as though they were Little Miss Muffet writing the entry in a diary. Expand the rhyme to include thoughts and feelings that only Little Miss Muffet would know.

*Why did she take her breakfast outside?  
What did the spider look like?  
What was it that made her so frightened?  
What did she do after she ran away?  
What did she think happened to the spider?*

Then have them retell the rhyme from the spider's perspective.

*How would it be different from Little Miss Muffet's experiences?*

Retell the story once more as a journalist reporting the events having interviewed both Little Miss Muffet and the spider.

*What headline would you give your story?*

Compare and contrast the three versions of the story.

*Why is each so different?*

Have the children act out the rhyme with a partner, as you read the rhyme to all. Discuss the experiences of all the Little Miss Muffets and then all the spiders.

*Retelling from a variety of perspectives introduces the children to the concepts of opinion and bias, essential elements of critical literacy.*

### **Dictionary Deal**

Explain the concept of a dictionary, its purpose and how it is arranged. Show students how they can open it at the approximate place using their knowledge of alphabetical order. Play some simple games, including words that require them to look at the second and third letters for clarification.

Have them find the meaning of tuffet, curds, whey and any other unfamiliar words from the rhyme.

Explain the concept of glossary and how it differs from a dictionary. Develop a glossary to accompany the rhyme as well as the subsequent investigation of spiders.

*If Little Miss Muffet suffered from arachnophobia, what does this mean?*

Also introduce them to a thesaurus and its purpose and arrangement. Search for synonyms for words such as frightened, nice, screamed, ran and so forth and create a word wall so they can write their recounts with more interesting vocabulary.

## Spider Speak

Why was Little Miss Muffet (like so many other people) frightened of spiders?

Brainstorm and record all the students know about spiders using *I know*, *I think*, *I wonder*.



Introduce them to the concept of an encyclopaedia, its purpose and how it is arranged. Explain that it is different from a non fiction text because it provides a little bit of information about a lot of things, while the non fiction text gives a lot of information about a few things.

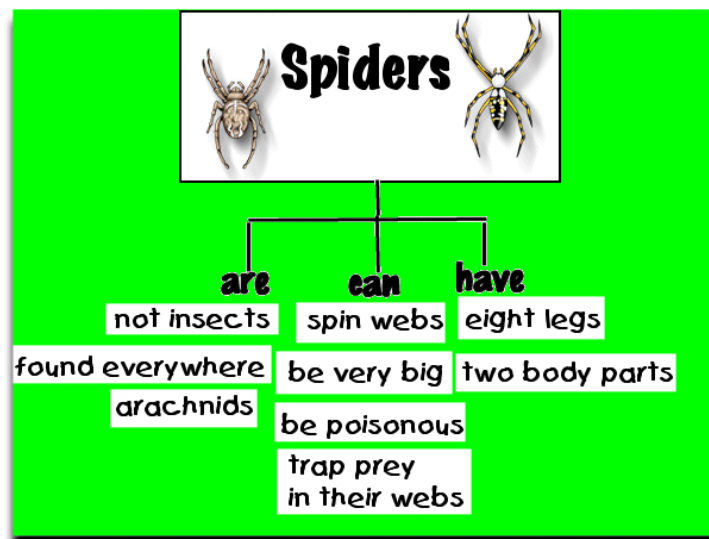
Help them navigate their way to the entry on spiders.

*Which things did we already know have been confirmed?*

*What new things did we learn?*

*Which words can we add to our glossary?*

Summarise what has been discovered.



Use the students "I wonder" statements to generate a bank of questions that require answers. Show them how to find the non fiction resources about spiders. Select one and point out the features and purpose of a non fiction text including

- contents
- page numbers
- headings
- index

Allocate partners a question to research and record their answer. Delegate one couple to create a large diagram of the spider, labelling its body parts.

### **A Web of Spiders**

View the animations or videos of a spider spinning a web at the suggested sites. Examine a real spider's web and compare its construction and shape to that of the animation.

Use what they have learned to construct a spider's web. Use this to form the basis of a display using their research about spiders.

If you have access to Scratch <http://scratch.mit.edu/> , or similar software, students might like to make their own animation such as that at

Web-Spinning Spider

<http://scratch.mit.edu/projects/Mayhem/18456>

### **Make a Spider**

Give groups of students different sets of instructions for making a spider. ([Pinterest](#) is a good source of ideas.) Have a common supply of all the materials they need to do this. Remind them of the necessity to follow instructions carefully, including starting with gathering their materials together. Have them identify what they need and select these from the common supply.

Make the spiders. When they are complete have a representative from each group explain to the rest how they went about it.

### **Show and Share**

Construct a display with the web, the spiders, the information they gathered from their research and the glossary they have developed. Also, have them locate entries about spiders in any encyclopaedias or other reference materials you might have, and add these to the display. Show them how to use the OPAC to locate fiction and non fiction titles about spiders and display these as well.

To make the display interactive, have them pose questions for other children to answer using the materials on display. They might also invite other students to add interesting facts that they know.

Pose questions about spiders for students to answer using the elements of the display.

Adapted from

Braxton, B. (2009) *All You Need to Teach Information Literacy* Melbourne: Macmillan Education