

Rapid Reading

Read the article. Then complete 1 through 10 on a sheet of paper.

A Desert Dweller
By David H. Wright

Imagine you are in Egypt, tramping through the desert. Out of the corner of your eye, you see a giant, long-haired spider. It's about as long as your hand—not quite as big as it seems—but huge for a spider. Its jaws are big and scary. They're about one-third as long as the spider itself. You imagine how painful one of the spider's bites might be and get out of its way as quickly as you can.



What you are running from is not actually a spider. It's an arachnid, like other eight-legged creatures—spiders and scorpions. This creature is called a camel spider, wind scorpion, or wind spider. There are more than 1,000 species of camel spiders. They live on every continent except Australia and Antarctica. Most camel spiders live in warm, dry areas like deserts. They are hunters that eat insects and other small invertebrates. Unlike most true spiders, though, camel spiders don't have venom glands.

These long creatures are the subjects of some pretty wild stories. They can move pretty fast but not as fast as horses. Camel spiders have been known to hurt horses, but reports that they attack camels are just stories. Thin pictures of camel spiders have been taken that make them look like feet long. They aren't. The biggest camel spiders are about five inches long. There are even stories that camel spiders eat the hair of people who are sleeping. They don't.

So, if you hear the camel spider story, it's most likely to leave you alone. But just think of the stories you can tell!

1. Was this article written to inform, persuade, or entertain? How do you know?

2. For which of the following report topics do you think this article would be most helpful? Explain.

Egypt • spiders • arachnids • deserts

3. Which of the stories about camel spiders in the third paragraph seems the most far-fetched? Why?

4. Which of the stories about camel spiders in the third paragraph seems the most believable? Why?

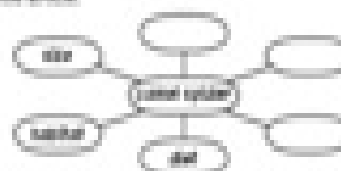
5. Why do you think the author started the article by asking you to imagine you are in Egypt?

6. Would you recommend this article to a friend? Why or why not?

7. What does the word *tramping* in the first paragraph mean? Why do you think the author chose this word?

8. If you wanted to read more about the camel spider, where would you look?

9. Copy the organizer and then complete it with important details from the article.



10. Use your completed organizer to write a paragraph that summarizes the article.

Focus Do you think camel spiders are beneficial creatures? Why or why not?