**Which ones are spiders?**

**Levels:** 1-2 **NoS achievement aims:** Investigating in science, Communicating in sci  
**Topic:** Insects and Spiders **Contextual strands:** Living world

**Rationale**

Spiders have eight legs and two main body parts. Adult insects have six legs and three main body parts.

Asking children to group things encourages them to observe carefully and think about how things are the same or different. This provides opportunities to extend their experiences of the natural world, build their language and develop understandings of how the natural world can be represented.

**What you need**

* A range of pictures of insects and spiders and, if possible, some actual (dead or alive) examples.
* Spider activity sheet PDF

**Focus**

* What is the difference between spiders and insects? Is there a difference?
* How can we tell the difference between spiders and insects? If we look at examples of spiders and insects, will we be able to tell the difference between them?
* Do the bodies of all insects look the same? Do the bodies of all spiders look the same?
* Do all insects look the same at all stages of their life?
* Do all spiders look the same at all stages of their life?

**Exploration**

1. Discuss the characteristics of a spider with the students.
2. Show them the pictures/examples and get them to sort the items into three groups: spiders, insects, and not sure.
3. Encourage them to share the reasons for the choices they are making.
4. When they have sorted the items, as a class look at each group and help the students to formulate an answer to the question, “What do all the things in this group have in common?”
5. Invite an expert to discuss with the class the items that are in the not sure group, and help them to sort those items into spiders and insects.

**Reflection**

* How did you make your decision about which group to put things in?
* Which parts of the animal are you comparing?
* Was it easy to see what you wanted to see? (For example, legs, mouth parts, eyes.)
* Do you have any animals that you didn’t put in a group? Why couldn’t you group them?

**Activity resources**

(1998). *What is a Spider?* Sunshine Nature Library. Auckland: Wendy Pye Publishing Ltd.  
Dr Pollard, S. (2001). *I am a Spider*. Auckland: Reed Ltd  
Dr Pollard, S. (2003). *I am an Insect*. Auckland: Reed Ltd