

What is an arthropod?

You live with them almost everyday, even in the very cold winter months! They are everywhere and are the largest animal phylum -- about 85% of all known animals in the world are part of this class.

There are far more species of arthropods than there are species in all the other phylums(phyla) combined.

Arthropods are:

They are spiders, insects, centipedes, mites, ticks, lobsters, crabs, shrimp, crayfish, krill, barnacles, scorpions and many, many others.

Arthropods have:

1) A segmented body.

This means that they will have a body made up of more than one part. Spiders have two segments and flies have three segments.



Can you see two segments?

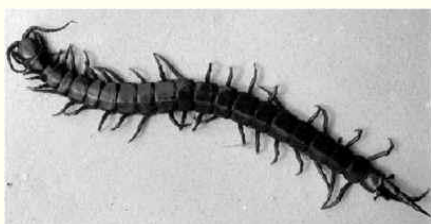


Can you see three segments?

Arthropods have:

2) Many jointed legs or limbs.

Spiders have 8 legs, millipedes can have... Hundreds!



Arthropods have:

3) An exoskeleton.

This is an external skeleton. Like armour, it protects the arthropods body. When arthropods are born the exoskeleton is soft but hardens quickly and it can be shed as the creature grows. Arthropods are invertebrates; which means that they do not have a backbone.



Arthropods are:

4) Cold blooded

Arthropods are cold blooded -- which means, their body temperature depends on the temperature of the environment surrounding them.



Arthropods are some of the most interesting animals in the world!

They fly, they creep, and they crawl. They live on land, in ponds and in the ocean. From ants to bumblebees, crabs to crayfish, spiders to centipedes -- which are your favourites!?