

Arthropods: armoured animals

What are the main characteristics of arthropods?

* GLOSSARY

carry out: to complete, accomplish

spiny: covered with many sharp, pointed parts

More than three quarters of all known animal species are **arthropods** (from *arthro*, 'jointed' and *podos*, 'foot').

The main groups of arthropods are **arachnids**, **crustaceans**, **myriapods** and **insects**. They have **segmented bodies** divided into three parts: **head**, **thorax** and **abdomen**.

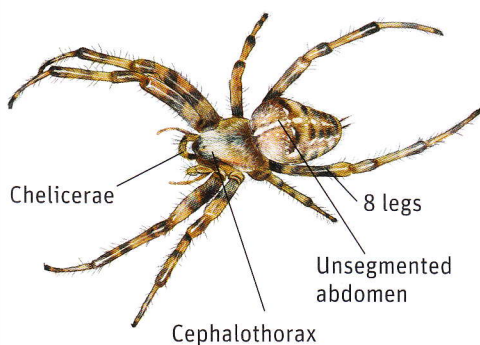
ARTHROPODS

Arachnids

The majority live in warm, dry places. They are carnivores; they trap their prey in webs and inject poison into them through special appendages, called **chelicerae**.

This group includes spiders, scorpions, ticks and mites.

SPIDER

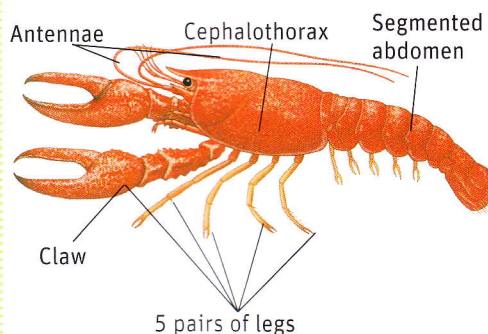


Crustaceans

Most are aquatic arthropods, marine or freshwater animals. Examples are prawns, lobsters, crayfish, and shrimps. **Calcium carbonate** makes their exoskeleton hard.

They can be carnivores, **scavengers**, **filter-feeders** or even **parasites**.

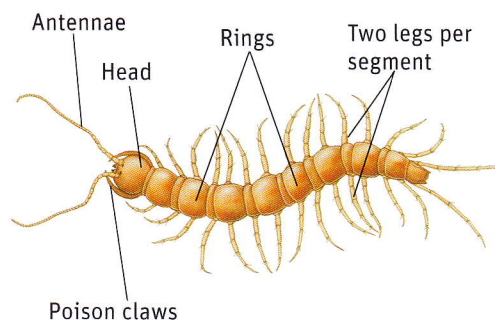
LOBSTER



Myriapods

They are **terrestrial**. Some are herbivores, like millipedes. Others like centipedes are carnivores and active **predators**. They use claws with poison glands to kill their prey.

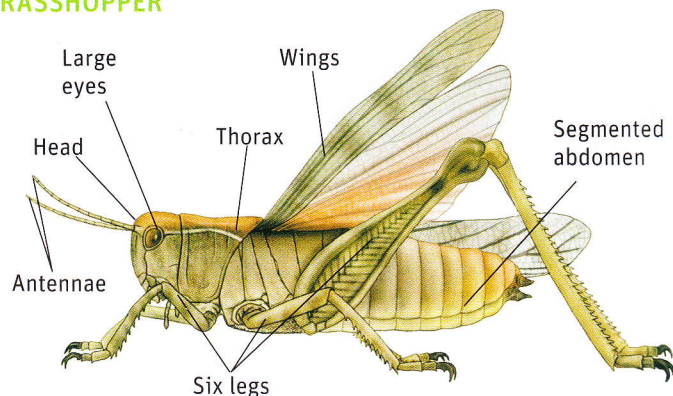
CENTIPEDE



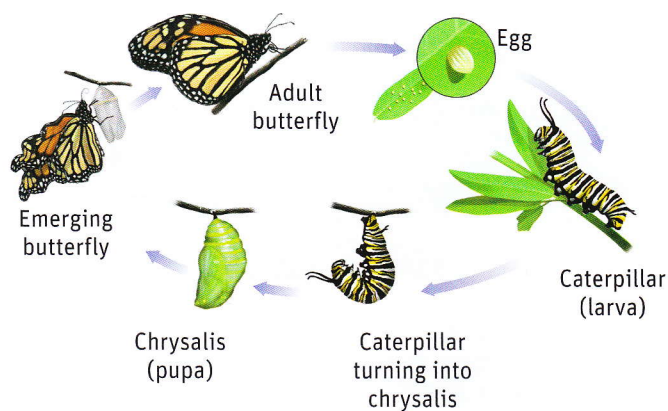
Insects

Insects, the largest and most diverse group of arthropods, are found in every habitat. They can be **herbivores**, like grasshoppers, **predators**, like the praying mantis, **scavengers**, like the dung beetle, **parasites**, like the flea or the louse, or **feed on plant juices**, like butterflies and aphids.

GRASSHOPPER



METAMORPHOSIS OF A MONARCH BUTTERFLY



Insects **lay eggs** from which a worm-like larva hatches. The larva grows, moults and makes a protective covering in which it encloses itself. During this stage, when it is a **pupa**, the larva is transformed into an **adult insect**.