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## INTRODUCTION

*How to recognise spiders*

The spiders can be distinguished from all other invertebrates by the following four characters:

1. Spiders have eight walking legs (a feature which they share with other members of the Class Arachnida – see Fig. 1).
2. They have no external segmentation on the abdomen.
3. Their fused head and thorax (the cephalothorax) is separated from the abdomen by a very narrow 'waist', the pedicel.
4. They have small appendages, the spinnerets, at the hind end of their abdomen.

Their eight walking legs distinguish spiders from insects (which only have six) but it is possible that they may be confused with their close relatives the harvestmen. Harvestmen have no constriction between their cephalothorax and abdomen, and closer examination reveals their abdomen to be clearly segmented. Fig. 1 shows a spider and its other British arachnid relatives (the scorpion illustrated is *Euscorpium flavicaudis* which is common in southern Europe and has established thriving colonies at a number of British localities, mainly sea ports. It is, however, very unlikely to be found).