



Party Like a Peacock Spider

Peacock spiders, while only about as big as a grain of rice, have brilliant colors and flappy extensions on their abdomens, which they can flash as part of an elaborate song and dance to attract a mate. In this activity, craft your own dazzling display and learn to boogie like one of nature's most flamboyant dancers.

Materials

- 1 paper plate
- 1 piece of paper
- Scissors
- Stapler
- Crayons, markers, colored pencils, or paints
- Optional: abdomen template (page 4)

Directions

1. **Cut** your paper plate into the shape for your spider's abdomen. Peacock spider abdomens (and the flaps attached to them) are a variety of different shapes—see the reference photos on page 3 for ideas. If you need help choosing a shape, print out and cut the template on page 4, trace the border onto your plate, and then cut it.



2. **Color** in your plate, either using your imagination or the reference photos for inspiration. Remember that this should be dazzling, so use bright colors and/or contrasting patterns. Think about other brightly colored animals you know. How might it help them to have bright colors? How could bright colors also be a drawback?



3. **Get ready** to attach the abdomen.

- a. **Cut** lengthwise, 2 thick strips from your scrap paper.
- b. **Staple** those pieces to the paper plate as pictured, attaching them to the blank side of the plate.
- c. **Fit** the headband around your head comfortably, and then remove it. **Staple** the paper strips together.



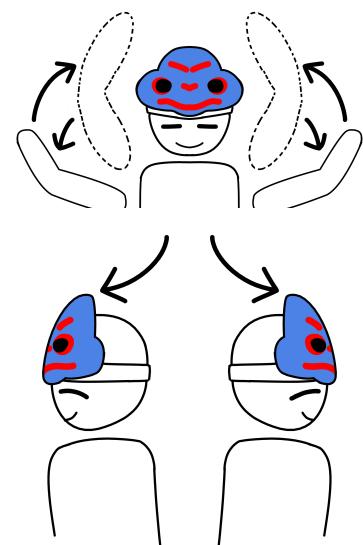
4. **Your abdomen is done!** Put your colorful creation on your head to represent the spider's abdomen, and get ready to dance!

Time to Party!

Male peacock spiders dance in order to attract their mate.

Different species do different dances, wiggling their body, flashing their abdomen, and shaking their extra-long third legs. In addition to the brilliant visuals, the spider will vibrate their bodies against the ground to produce special vibrations. However, it's not all fun and games: If a male peacock spider fails to impress a female, she might eat him! Even if he does impress her, he might end up a meal after mating. [Follow this link](#) to see a Youtube video of a peacock spider mating dance for yourself! **Choreograph** (plan in advance) or **improvise** (make it up as you go along) your dance. You can use the toolkit of dance moves below, but add in moves of your own for personal flair. Dance in a way that feels good in your body.

1. **Move your arms** like the hands of a clock to copy the up-and-down movements of the long third legs of the spider.
2. **Shake your head** gently to wiggle your beautiful "abdomen."
3. **Stomp your feet** carefully on the ground to create steady vibrations.



Of course, when you want to dance it helps to have music! You can dance to one of your favorite songs or [click here](#) and dance to an Academy tune.

Reference Photos:



Acknowledgement: All photos and videos of peacock spiders in this activity are Copyright by Jurgen Otto, who has been photographing and studying these spiders since 2005. Additional photos, videos, and information about his work is available at: <https://www.peacockspider.org>



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