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# Introduction

*Heroes* contains a captivating, whole language, interdisciplinary unit about a variety of unique men and women. This unit has 176 exciting pages that are filled with a wide variety of lesson ideas and reproducible pages designed for use with upper primary and junior high school students. The theme is connected to the curriculum with activities in reading, English, science, study of society and environment, maths, art, music, and life skills. Many of these activities encourage cooperative learning.

*Heroes* is divided into the following sections to allow for easy thematic planning: Superheroes, Ancient Greek Heroes, Medieval Heroes, Heroes of the Wild West, Wartime Heroes, Sports Heroes, Heroes of Science & Invention, Space Heroes, Medical Heroes, and Heroes of Social Causes. This unit focuses on some fictional superheroes and many real-life heroes. The fictional superheroes appear to be normal people but actually possess special powers that they use to fight world-wide problems, such as crime. The real-life heroes are the exceptional men and women found throughout history and in every culture. They have made unique contributions by struggling to overcome tremendous obstacles.

## *This interdisciplinary unit includes:*

- **Notice Board Ideas**—time-saving suggestions and plans for notice boards that are related to the specific groups of heroes
- **Planning Guides**—background information and suggestions for sequencing lessons for each section
- **Overview of Activities**—a brief description of the activities included in each section
- **Articles and Discussion Questions**—one-page articles about specific heroes for students to read and discuss
- **Quiz Cards**—opportunities to assess students' understanding of the articles in each section
- **Map Studies**—activities that reinforce a variety of map skills
- **Curriculum Connections**—relating the theme to English, maths, science, study of society and environment, art, music, and life skills
- **Suggested Literature**—summaries, vocabulary, and activities that allow literature to be easily connected to the theme
- **Writing Ideas**—writing suggestions and activities that cross the curriculum
- **Group Projects**—to foster cooperative learning
- **Hands-On Activities**—providing opportunities for students to be active learners
- **Research Topics**—listing a variety of topics that can be used to extend and enrich learning
- **Reading Lists**—suggesting additional literature related to each section
- **Culminating Activities**—which require students to synthesise their learning and participate in activities that can be shared with others.

# Spider-Man

Spider-Man's real identity is Peter Parker, the freelance photographer. As a child, he lived with his Aunt May and Uncle Ben in New York City because his parents had been killed in a plane crash. Peter was not born with any special powers or talents. However, when he was a teenager, he was accidentally bitten by a spider while attending a presentation about how nuclear energy is used safely. This was no ordinary spider because it had been exposed to huge amounts of radiation. As a result, Peter became strong and agile like a spider and was able to cling to any surface, including walls and ceilings.

Peter thought that there should be a way to profit from his unique powers. He made a red and blue uniform for himself and created a mechanism for shooting a web. He decided to call himself the 'Amazing Spider-Man,' making sure to keep his real identity a secret so he would not be an embarrassment to his aunt and uncle. Spider-Man was hired as the star of a national television show. However, after Spider-Man's uncle was killed by a burglar, he left his acting career and was determined to devote his life to fighting crime.

Spider-Man has two main powers that make him successful against criminals. The first is his spider-sense, or instinctive feeling of danger. This special sense is active at all times, and it is omnidirectional so Spider-Man can recognise danger coming from any direction. Spider-Man's other superpower is his ability to adhere to different types of surfaces. This allows him to climb up walls and across ceilings with ease as he pursues criminals.

Spider-Man has made several tools that he uses to find and apprehend the criminals. He wears a web-shooter around each wrist. These devices shoot out a super sticky web that hardens but dissolves after about an hour. This webbing can be used to trap criminals and to attach a swing-line to tall buildings so Spider-Man can get to high places. In addition to the web-shooters, Spider-Man has created several homing signals and a beacon. The homing signals are shaped like a small spider, and Spider-Man uses his spider-sense to detect the signals up to a mile away. Spider-Man wears a device hidden in his belt that projects a beacon with the symbol of a red spider. This beacon is used to startle criminals.

Spider-Man often photographs himself in action, using a camera that he wears in his belt. He does this so that his real identity, Peter Parker, can earn money by selling these photographs to a daily newspaper. Spider-Man gives this money to his Aunt May, who has no knowledge of his dual identity.

Over the years, other superheroes have come to recognise the important role Spider-Man plays in the fight against crime. As a result, Spider-Man has participated in a variety of cooperative adventures with many well-known superheroes.

## Discussion Questions

1. What do you think Peter's life would have been like if he had never been bitten by the spider?
2. What do you think it would be like to be Spider-Man?
3. Why do you think Spider-Man stories have remained popular for so many years?

Now use the Spider-Man Quiz Card to check your understanding of this article.