

# Ladybirds

Ladybirds are a kind of beetle. They have a hard shell which they can open up to let out their wings. Ladybirds' shells are normally red or orange with black spots. They have four wings altogether.



## How Do Ladybirds Defend Themselves?

Ladybirds have a couple of tricks to keep themselves safe.

- First of all, their bright colours let other animals know that they are not tasty and not worth eating.
- Ladybirds are able to do something pretty amazing. They can bleed from their knees. This liquid smells horrible and is poisonous to any animals that eat it.

## Did You Know?

Most people believe that you can tell a ladybird's age by how many spots it has. This isn't true. Their spots actually tell you what kind of ladybirds they are.

## Top Ladybird Facts

- Ladybirds don't smell with their noses but with their feet.
- Their jaws don't chew up and down but side to side.
- When ladybirds get older, their spots and their colours start to fade.

## A Final Fact

In many countries around the world, it is believed to be bad luck to kill a ladybird so be careful where you are walking!

# Questions About Ladybirds

Answer the questions below in full sentences.

1. Finish this sentence:

Ladybirds are a kind of \_\_\_\_\_

beetle

caterpillar

2. How many wings does a ladybird have?

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3. What do the number of spots on a ladybird tell us?

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4. What do ladybirds use to smell?

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5. What is it bad luck to do?

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6. What is your favourite fact about ladybirds?

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# Questions About Ladybirds

## Answers

1. Finish this sentence:

**Ladybirds are a kind of beetle.**

2. How many wings does a ladybird have?

**A ladybird has four wings.**

3. What do the number of spots on a ladybird tell us?

**The number of spots tell us what kind of ladybird it is.**

4. What do ladybirds use to smell?

**Ladybirds use their feet to smell.**

5. What is it bad luck to do?

**Some people believe it is bad luck to kill a ladybird.**

6. What is your favourite fact about ladybirds?

**Answers will vary.**

# Ladybirds

Ladybirds are a kind of beetle. They have a hard shell which they can open up to let out their wings. Ladybirds' shells are normally red or orange with black spots. They have four wings altogether. Their bodies are quite big compared to their wings so they have to beat them very quickly to fly. In fact, they beat their wings over 85 times a second. That is faster than a hummingbird!



## How Do Ladybirds Defend Themselves?

Ladybirds have a couple of tricks to keep them safe from predators. A predator is an animal that eats other animals. First of all, their bright colours let other animals know that they are not tasty and not worth eating. Other animals use bright colours to protect themselves such as bees, snakes and poison dart frogs. Ladybirds are also able to do something pretty amazing. They can bleed from their knees. This liquid smells horrible and is poisonous to any animals that eat it.

## Did You Know?

Most people believe that you can tell a ladybird's age by how many spots it has. This isn't true. The number of spots actually tells you what kind of ladybird it is.

## Top Ladybird Facts

- Ladybirds don't smell with their noses but with their feet.
- Their jaws don't chew up and down but side to side.
- When ladybirds get older, their spots and their colours start to fade.

Just as ladybirds are like bees and use colour to protect themselves, they are also like other animals too. When the weather starts to get cold, ladybirds find places to keep warm, like in old bark and leaves, and even inside people's houses. They also gather together in groups to keep warm. This means they hibernate, like bears, sleeping, waiting for the warm weather to come.

## A Final Fact

In many countries around the world, it is believed to be bad luck to kill a ladybird so be careful where you are walking!

# Questions About Ladybirds

Answer the questions below in full sentences.

1. How many wings does a ladybird have?

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2. How quickly do ladybirds beat their wings?

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3. What is a predator?

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4. Name another animal that uses bright colours to defend itself.

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5. What do ladybirds use to smell with?

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6. What do ladybirds do when the weather gets cold?

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7. Why do people believe you shouldn't kill ladybirds?

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8. What is your favourite fact about ladybirds?

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# Questions About Ladybirds

## Answers

1. How many wings does a ladybird have?

**A ladybird has four wings.**

2. How quickly do ladybirds beat their wings?

**Ladybirds beat their wings 85 times each second.**

3. What is a predator?

**A predator is an animal who eats other animals.**

4. Name another animal that uses bright colours to defend itself.

**Children to select another animal from the text, bees, snakes, dart frogs.**

5. What do ladybirds use to smell with?

**Ladybirds smell with their feet.**

6. What do ladybirds do when the weather gets cold?

**Ladybirds find somewhere warm when the weather gets cold.**

7. Why do people believe you shouldn't kill ladybirds?

**People believe that killing ladybirds is bad luck.**

8. What is your favourite fact about ladybirds?

**Children to select a fact from the text.**

# Ladybirds

Ladybirds are a species of insect. In fact, they are a type of beetle. They do not have a skeleton like humans but an exoskeleton in the shape of a hard shell. This shell is very clever as it can be opened to allow two pairs of wings to be released. Ladybirds can have a variety of colourings but the most common in the United Kingdom is bright red with dark patches or spots. Ladybirds should not be able to fly very well as their bodies are large compared to the size of their wings so they have to beat them very quickly to generate enough power to fly. In fact, they are able to beat their wings rapidly, at over 85 times a second. This is one of the fastest wing speeds in the animal kingdom.



## How Do Ladybirds Defend Themselves?

Ladybirds have a variety of approaches to ensure that they do not become prey for any other animals. First of all, their bright colours let other animals know that they are not tasty and not worth eating. Bright colours are known to be a warning in nature, making it clear that they are dangerous in some way. Other animals use bright colours to warn off predators such as wasps, snakes and poison dart frogs. Ladybirds have another, far more unusual way of defending themselves. They can bleed from their knees. This fluid smells terrible, discouraging predators from getting too close and is poisonous to any animals that eat it.

## Did You Know?

It is believed that a ladybird's age is directly linked to the number of spots on its shell. This is false however. The arrangement of spots can be used to define exactly what species of ladybird it is.

## Top Ladybird Facts

- Ladybirds don't have the same features as humans. They don't have a nose so use their feet in order to sense smells.
- Ladybirds are affected by old age, just like people. Whereas people's hair might go grey, when ladybirds get older, their spots and their colours start to fade.

Just as ladybirds are similar to wasps by using colour as a defence mechanism, they share features with other animals too. When the winter begins and the temperature drops, ladybirds search for places to keep warm. They may hibernate inside discarded bark and leaves, and even inside people's houses. They also gather together in groups to conserve warmth. This means they hibernate, like certain mammals, sleeping, waiting for the warm weather to arrive.

# Questions About Ladybirds

Answer the questions below in full sentences.

1. What is another name for a ladybird's hard shell?

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2. Why do ladybirds have to beat their wings so quickly?

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3. What does hibernate mean?

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4. Name two other animals that use bright colours to deter predators.

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5. How are ladybirds affected by old age?

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6. How does ladybird blood put off predators?

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7. Where might you find a ladybird in the winter?

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8. Name one amazing fact you learnt about ladybirds.

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# Questions About Ladybirds

## Answers

1. What is another name for a ladybird's hard shell?

**The shell can be called an exoskeleton.**

2. Why do ladybirds have to beat their wings so quickly?

**Ladybirds have to beat their wings quickly because their bodies are large and hard to move.**

3. What does hibernate mean?

**Hibernate means to sleep and stay warm over the winter.**

4. Name two other animals that use bright colours to deter predators.

**Children to select from: wasps, snakes and poison dart frogs.**

5. How are ladybirds affected by old age?

**Ladybirds' colours and spots fade as they get older.**

6. How does ladybird blood put off predators?

**Ladybird's blood smells unpleasant and is poisonous.**

7. Where might you find a ladybird in the winter?

**Ladybirds could be found in houses or inside old bark and leaves.**

8. Name one amazing fact you learnt about ladybirds.

**Children to select an appropriate fact to answer the question.**