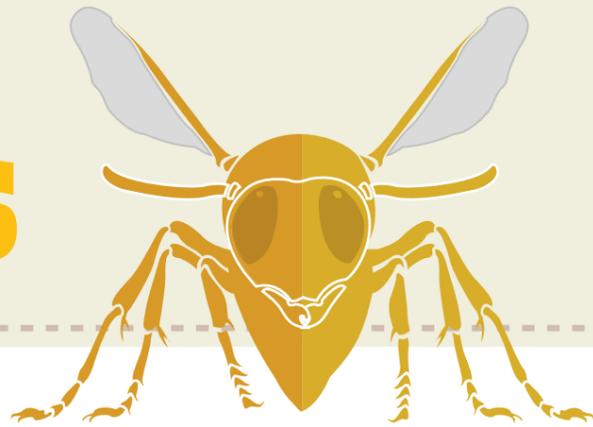




# Wonder WASPS



## A WASP DID IT!

Humans were not the first to make paper. It was the tiny wasp.

Paper wasps chew and mix fibres from wood and plant stems with their spit (saliva), to make a papery material to build their nests with. They live in colonies, with a queen in charge.

Potter wasps, on the other hand, make mud nests and are usually solitary. Most wasps, however, are tiny parasitoids - they live on other creatures, feeding on them, often killing them. Many of them are just too small for us to see them.

## For the FIELD DIARY

Remember, wasps out and about normally don't sting, but they can get aggressive near their nests. So, don't get too close to them or their nests - wasp stings can be painful, even dangerous.

### Follow a wasp

Once you spot a wasp, follow it for a while and, hopefully, it will lead you to its nest. You could also try and look for nests of paper wasps behind a window or on a tree branch. Hunt for a potter wasp - they often build their mud nests on the leg of or under a chair, behind a curtain, or in an electrical socket by plugging it with mud.

### Wasp or Bee?

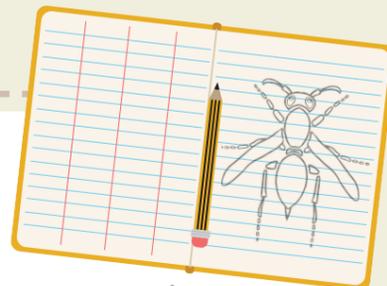
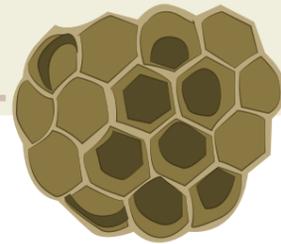
Bees are hairy and most wasps have pinched waists.

### Wait and watch

Once you find a wasp nest, observe it for the next 10 days for about 5 minutes each day. Note down any changes you see in the nest during this time.

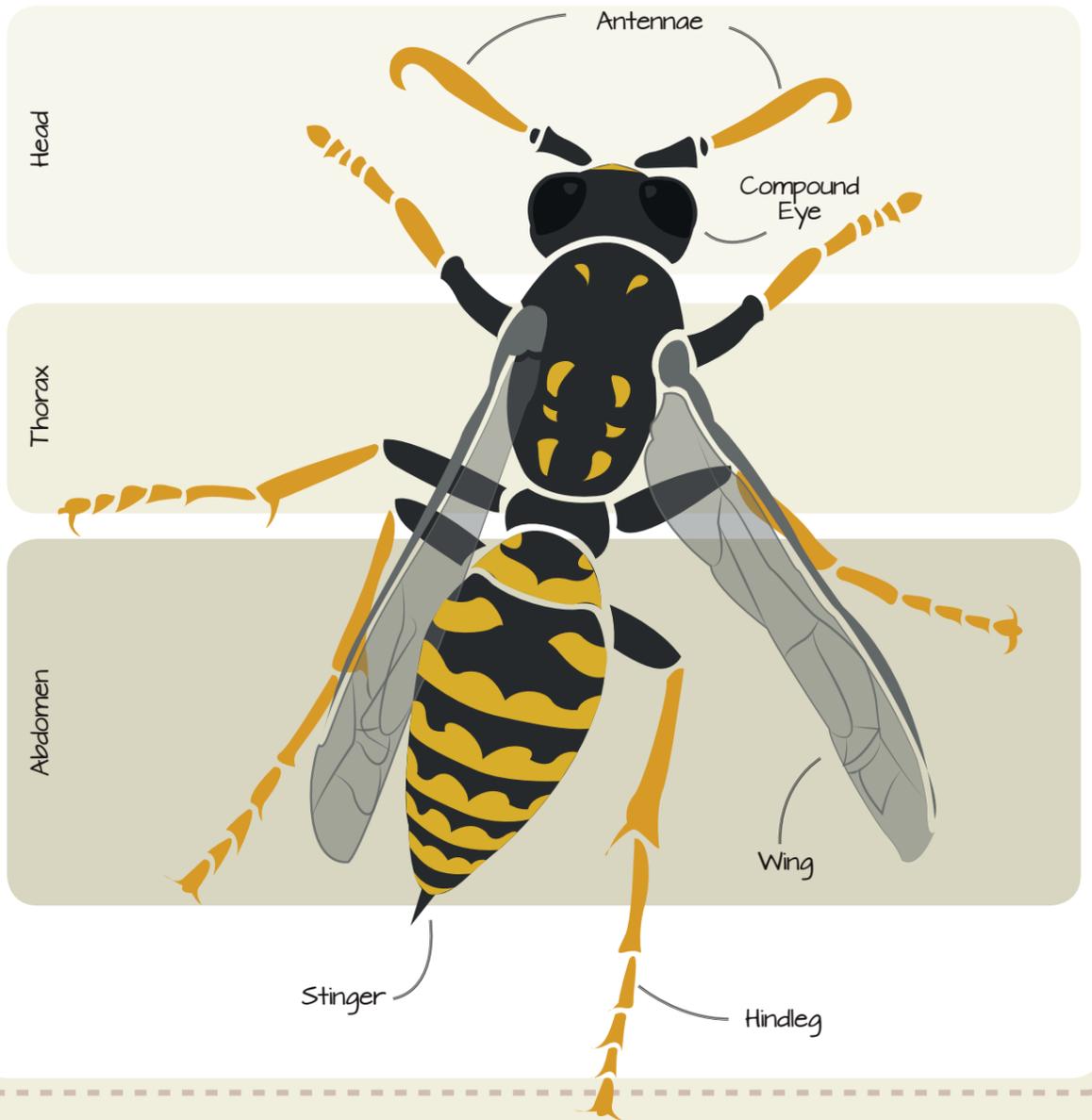
### Describe it

What kind of a nest have you found? Is it made of mud, some papery material? Where did you find it - inside your home, in your garden, on a wall or in a tree? How many wasps do you see visiting the nest? Draw the wasps you see and describe their patterns and colours. Approximately what length are these wasps?



## STINGING WASPS

Wasps sting using a sharp needle on their abdomen and inject venom when they do so. This venom is a mixture of many chemicals that cause pain and paralyze insects. In fact, a solitary potter wasp female will make a 'pot' nest to lay an egg in and will also put in an insect she has paralyzed with her venom. When the larva hatches it has something to feed on.



## CONTEST

Send your drawings of wasps and their nests to [edu@ncf-india.org](mailto:edu@ncf-india.org) for a chance to win a book about Indian animals. Visit us at [www.edu.ncf-india.org](http://www.edu.ncf-india.org) and tell us about any changes you saw in the wasp nest you found and observed for a few days. You can also write to [letters@planetbrainwave.com](mailto:letters@planetbrainwave.com) and tell us if you liked this activity.