



What Is a Bee?

A bee is a small, flying insect. The most common colour combination is yellow and black but bees can also be found in various colours, such as red, blue and green. There are around 20,000 species of bees but only seven make honey.

They live in most habitats found on Earth. There are two types of bees called solitary and social. Solitary bees often build their nests in the ground and mostly like to live alone. An example of a solitary bee would be a leafcutter bee. Social bees like to live together in hives or nests that can be found above and below ground. An example of a social bee is the honeybee.

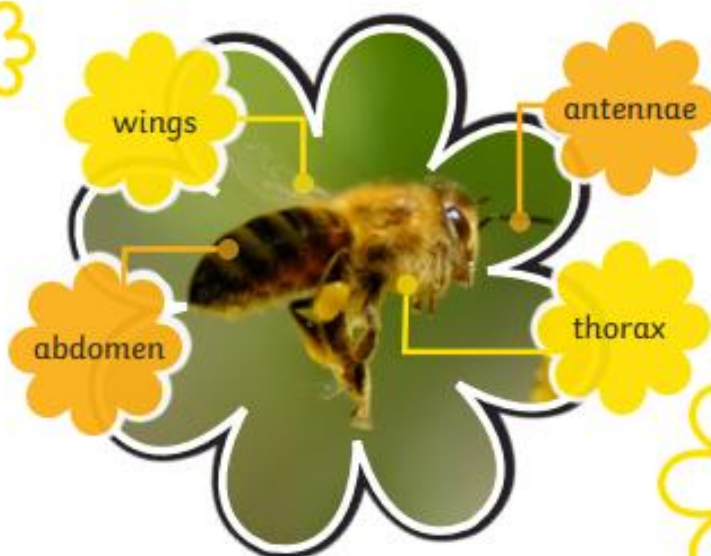
leafcutter
bee



Bees live almost everywhere on the planet and are necessary for both plants and animals.

The Bee Body

Almost all bees have an **exoskeleton** and are made up of three key parts called the head, **thorax** and abdomen. The head contains the eyes, mouth and **antennae**. The thorax contains four wings and six legs. The abdomen contains the digestive system and the honey sac in female honeybees. If the bee is female, the abdomen will have a stinger on the end. The buzz of a bee is caused by its four wings moving together. They hook together when the bee is flying and unhook when they land.



Did You Know...?

A bee's wings can move 11,400 times per minute.



Bees in a Honeybee Hive

In a honeybee hive, there are three types of bees that make up the community. They are called a queen, worker bees and drones. A queen is a female bee that can lay eggs. There is usually only one in a hive and she can lay up to 2000 eggs in a day. A worker bee is a female who can't lay eggs but is in charge of collecting nectar and keeping the hive tidy. She also takes care of the eggs and worm-like baby bees called larvae. A drone bee is a male bee that rarely leaves the hive. He helps a queen to lay eggs.



queen
bee

worker
bee



larva

Why Are Bees Important?

Most plants, flowers and crops that grow on Earth depend on bee **pollination** to reproduce. Various habitats also rely on bees to help them to grow.



Glossary

antennae:	Two long, thin parts on the heads of some insects that they use to touch and feel things with.
exoskeleton:	A hard outer shell that protects some insects from harm.
pollination:	The process of putting pollen in a flower so that it may produce seeds.
thorax:	The middle section of an insect's body.

Questions

1. According to the text, what other colours of bees are there? Tick one.

- ☐ red, blue and green
- ☐ red, brown and green
- ☐ red, blue and turquoise
- ☐ red, black and white

2. What does the head of a bee have? Tick one.

- ☐ mouth, nose and antennae
- ☐ eyes, ears and nose
- ☐ mouth, eyes and antennae
- ☐ mouth, eyes and ears

3. How many eggs can a queen bee lay per day? Tick one.

- ☐ 20,000
- ☐ 11,400
- ☐ 7
- ☐ 2000

4. Which bee likes to live in a hive? Tick one.

- ☐ solitary bee
- ☐ social bee
- ☐ spelling bee
- ☐ skipping bee

5. Fill in the missing words.

The _____ of putting pollen in a flower so that it may _____ seeds.

6. Look at the section called **What Is a Bee?**

Find and copy one word that means the same as 'several' or 'many'.

7. Do you think the name 'queen bee' is the right name for that type of bee?

Explain your answer.

8. How do bees help habitats grow? Explain your answer.

