

All About Bees



What Is a Bee?

Only seven of the 20,000 species of bees make honey. These small, flying insects can be seen in various colours but the most familiar colour combination is yellow and black.



Bees can live in most habitats, such as marshes, forests, sandy, rocky or chalky areas and grasslands. There are social and solitary bees. Honeybees are social bees. Social bees live together in communities or hives above or below ground. Bumblebees are solitary bees. Solitary bees often build their nests underground and mostly live by themselves.

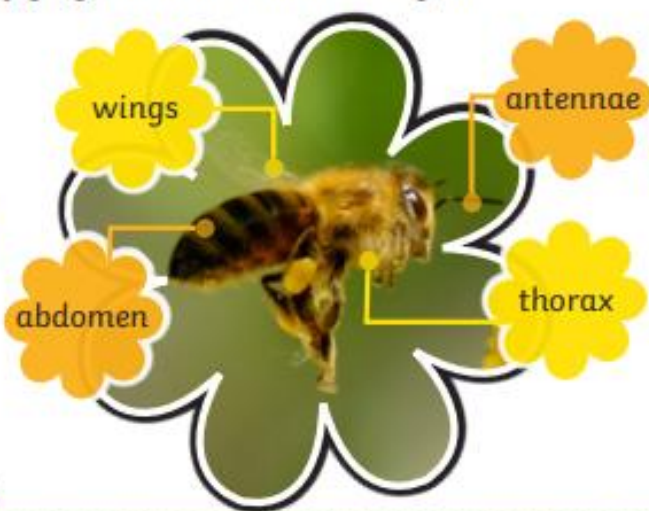
Bees in a Honeybee Hive

There are three primary types of bees that live and work together in a honeybee hive: the queen, workers and drones. A queen is an adult female that is around double the size of the worker bees and she can live for about two years. Her job is to release chemical scents that keep the hive community working together and reproduce with drones in order to lay eggs.

Frequently seen in most gardens, bees live almost everywhere on our planet and are extremely important to all life on Earth.

The Bee Body

Generally, the majority of bees have an **exoskeleton** and are made up of three key parts: the head, **thorax** and abdomen. The head contains the eyes, mouth and **antennae**. The thorax is divided into three distinct parts. The front legs are connected to the first part, the middle legs and the first pair of wings are connected to the second part and the back legs and the second pair of wings are connected to the last part. The abdomen contains the digestive system and the honey sac in female honeybees. Female bees have a stinger on the end of their abdomen. The buzz of a bee is the result of the fast beating of its four wings, which can move 11,400 times per minute. A bee's wings hook together when it is flying but unhook when they land.



All About Bees

A queen can lay up to 2000 eggs a day. When a queen dies, the other bees feed a worm-like baby bee called a larva. This makes a substance called royal jelly. This will eventually turn the larva into a new queen.

Worker bees are also female but they don't lay any eggs and only live for around 6 weeks in the summer. Their jobs are to collect nectar and pollen from flowers, make honey, take care of the larvae and eggs and keep the hive tidy. Drones are male bees that hardly ever leave the hive and their only job is to reproduce with a queen so she can lay more eggs.



queen bee



larva

Why Are Bees Important?

One out of every three mouthfuls of food humans eat depends on bees. A large number of plants, flowers and crops 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. What do bees feed to a larva to make a new queen? Tick one.

- ☐ nectar
- ☐ royal jelly
- ☐ pollen
- ☐ honey

2. Draw **four** lines and match each part of a bee to its description.

exoskeleton	•	this is only found on the end of female bees	•
stinger	•	the middle part of a bee where its wings and legs are	•
thorax	•	a hard outer shell that protects insects from harm	•
abdomen	•	the part of a bee that contains the digestive system	•

3. What are male honeybees called?

4. Fill in the missing words.

The thorax is _____ into three _____ parts.

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

Find and copy one word that means the same as 'well-known' or 'easily recognised'.

6. What sort of habitat might **not** have bees? Explain your answer.

7. Do bees help fruits grow on trees? Explain your answer.

8. Do you think the name 'worker bee' is appropriate for that type of bee?
Explain your answer.
