



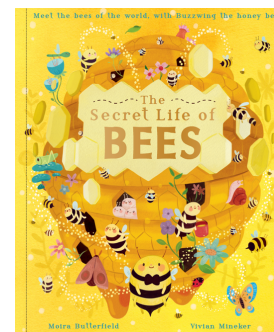
# The Secret Life of BEES

## Educator's Guide

By Moira Butterfield

Illustrated by Vivian Mineker

Curriculum Connections, Grades 1-4  
English Language Arts, Art, Science



\$19.95 US/\$25.99 CAN

ISBN: 9780711260511

Ages: 7 to 11 (Grades: 3 to 6)

48 pages

Hardcover, 9.6 x 11.7 inches



### Objective

Students will listen to the teacher read the book aloud or read the book independently; extend vocabulary; participate in a class discussion; and complete independent activities using the book as a springboard.



### About the Book

Buzzwing the honeybee takes readers on a beautifully illustrated journey through the world of bees filled with amazing science and intriguing folklore. Learn the secrets of this worker bee's tiny world, including the bee life cycle, bee anatomy, what happens inside the hive, the different types of bees and much more. With bee folktales from around the world, things to search for and find throughout, tips for making the environment welcoming to bees, and even a poetry-writing exercise, **The Secret Life of Bees** is brimming with reasons to admire and respect the hardworking honeybee.



### About the Creators

Moira Butterfield has written numerous children's books, including award-winning work for under-5s, highly commended historical, science, and natural history nonfiction. Moira lives in Bath, England.

Vivian Mineker is a Taiwanese American from Taipei and Portland, currently working out of Ljubljana, Slovenia. She uses watercolor, colored pencil, and digital processes to create a blend of traditional texture with a modern look and feel.



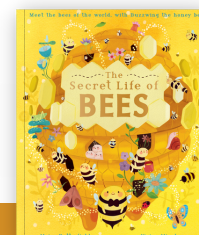
### Pre-reading discussion

If students are reading the book independently, ask them to keep a list of words that are unfamiliar or not understood in context. Encourage them to first try to figure out the meanings from the text and pictures, and then to consult a dictionary.

If reading the book together as a class, have students point out unfamiliar words. Give a brief definition and keep a list of these words for later review.

Some possible examples: pollination, swarm, thorax, enzymes, hibernate

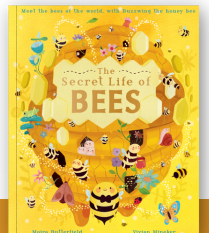
Before reading begins, ask the students to share what they know about bees. Has anyone been stung by a bee? Has anyone seen a beehive, inside or out? Do they find bees annoying or interesting? Do they like the taste of honey?





## Post-reading discussion questions

1. Talk about the difference between nonfiction books and fiction books. Which do you prefer reading? This book features both: true facts about bees and invented folktales about bees—plus a fictional narrator bee! Did you like that approach? How does this book compare with other nonfiction books about animals that you have read?
2. Do you enjoy the illustrations in the book? Why or why not? Do you think the bright colors and hidden pictures make learning bee facts more interesting? How would the book have been different if photographs had been used instead of illustrations? Would you have liked that better?
3. Describe what Buzzwing's bee family was like when she was born. What is a bee called right after it hatches? What do they eat while they are growing? Can you remember what jobs Buzzwing did until she was old enough to fly outside? Does the expression "busy as a bee" make sense to you now?
4. Name the three kinds of bees in Buzzwing's hive. What do worker bees do? What does the Queen bee do? What do the drones do? How are drones different from worker bees? Which type of bee would you like to be?
5. Why do the worker bees leave the hive each day? What are they looking for? Why do you hear a buzzing sound when they fly? When they come back, how do they let the other bees know what they found and where to find it? How many flowers can Buzzwing visit in a day? How do bees help flowers make seeds?
6. Bees are insects. How many legs do they have? Can you remember what their three body parts are called? What do bees use their antennae to do? What is a bee's long tongue called? What do they use it to do? Do you find most insects fascinating or creepy? How about bees?
7. How many eyes does a bee have? What are they called? Why do bees have super-powered sight? What are some special things they can do with this superpower? What would it feel like to have hairy eyeballs?
8. What happens when a hive gets too full? How do the bees raise a new Queen? How do the bees know to follow her to a new hive? Have you ever seen a swarm of bees? What would you do if you did?
9. How many types of bees are there in the world? What kinds of environments do they live in? Where are some of the places they make their homes? Buzzwing is a Western honeybee. Can you name some other types of bees mentioned in the book? Which is the biggest bee? Which is the tiniest?
10. Does "beekeeper" sound like a job you might like? What tasks does a beekeeper do? What are some of the tools she needs?
11. Why are bees gold and black, according to "The Baby and the Bees," a folktale from Greece? And what is the scientific reason for the bees' bright color? Name some other bee colors. Have you ever seen a bee that is not gold and black?
12. In the bee folktale from India, what happened to Kahsivat to help make him a great poet? Do you know anyone who sings, speaks, or writes with "honeyed" words?
13. Why does the folktale "Telling the Bees" recommend sharing family news with the bee? What are the "rules" for telling the bees? What news of your family would you share with the bees?
14. In the bee folktale from Australia, why should we think of the Moon Lady when we see the morning dew? Can you remember the moral of that story?
15. Which of the bee folktales was your favorite? Why?





## Activities

### English Language Arts

1. Consult your list of unfamiliar vocabulary words from the story. After confirming the definitions for all, use each of them in a sentence.
2. As suggested in the book, write a poem using some bee words: busy, buzzy, furry, flying, golden, sweet, honey, hive, Queen, pollen, grub.
3. Write your own bee folktale that answers a question about bees. For example, why does a bee have two stomachs, or hairy eyeballs? Or how did the bees learn how to dance?
4. Choose one of the following sentences and write an opinion essay about why you agree with it:
  - "I think we should protect bees and help them because they are good for people and the planet."
  - "I think bees are pests, and I wish there were not so many of them in my neighborhood."

### Art

1. Draw a comic adventure for Buzzwing. It could include some of her meadow friends, or some of the other bees around the world.
2. Make a world map and designate all of the countries where the bee folktales included in **The Secret Life of Bees** are from.
3. Choose your favorite bee fact from the book and illustrate a new page about it in the style of the book's illustrations. Don't forget to add some hidden pictures!
4. Do research to find some delicious food recipes featuring honey. Choose your three favorites and create decorated recipe cards.

### Science

1. Conduct research and write a report on one of the bees' enemies:
  - Bears
  - Honey badger
  - Bee-eater
  - Hive beetle
  - Kinkajou
2. Using the facts in the book, write two paragraphs about the relationship between bees and flowers. How do they interact? How do they help each other?
3. Conduct research and write a report comparing two of the bee types mentioned in the book. How are they alike? How are they different?
4. Buzzwing says: "We make around 1,760 pounds of honey in the hive in a year." Conduct research to find out how many of these would equal 1,760 pounds:
  - Bears
  - Flowers
  - Butterflies
  - Bees – Western honeybees, like Buzzwing
  - Elephants
  - Your classmates



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#### Also available:

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