



Bees

Adventures in Reading:

Family Literacy Bags from Reading Rockets



Funded in part by
the Park Foundation, Inc.

Contents:

- Two books - one fiction, one nonfiction
- Parent information sheet
- Three activity sheets
- Bookmark
- Parent survey

for teachers and librarians



This Reading Rockets Activity Packet is designed to support reading activities at home. We've chosen a fiction and nonfiction book about bees, appropriate for a third grade listening level, and included related activities to encourage some hands-on fun and learning. Just assemble the packet in a two-gallon zip top bag, and send home with your students.

Reading Rockets carefully chose books that are widely available and appealing to young readers. The titles selected should be available in your school library. If the two featured titles are not available, or you prefer another title, feel free to substitute books related to the theme. You'll find a list of suggested alternative titles included in the bookmark.

The featured books are ***The Bee Tree*** by Patricia Polacco and ***The Life and Times of the Honeybee*** by Charles Micucci. ***The Bee Tree*** offers a lesson about the rewards of hard work. Mary Ellen is reluctant to spend time indoors reading, so her grandfather creates an adventure that has them — and half the village — following a bee to its home and to the results of its hard work — its honey. In ***The Life and Times of the Honeybee***, detailed, full-color illustrations help explain the complex world inside a beehive and the fascinating process of making honey. Readers get the facts on the life cycle of bees, their work, and their relationship with people and plants.

The parent information sheet includes an introductory note that you can personalize instructions about how to use the packet, and tips for sharing fiction and nonfiction books with children.

The activities are designed to encourage further exploration and learning at home:

- >> Creativity Activity: a hands-on craft project
- >> Imagination Activity: encourages imaginative play, writing, or drawing
- >> Get real Activity: focuses on real-world experiences for parent and child
- >> The bookmark lists both the featured titles and additional titles

Putting it all together

Print out copies of the parent information sheet, the activities, the survey, and a master for making bookmarks. Cut the bookmark page into strips. You may wish to print the activity pages and bookmark on card stock for durability.

Into a two-gallon zip top bag, place:

- >> Two books — one fiction and one nonfiction
- >> Parent information sheet
- >> Three themed activity pages
- >> Bookmark
- >> Survey for parents

Send the packet home with your student. Encourage parents to keep the parent information sheet, the activities, and bookmark, and return the books and survey to you.

Let reading rockets know what you think of the family activity packets by e-mailing us through our website: www.readingrockets.org/sitecontact. Click on "Family Literacy Bags"

ADVENTURES IN READING!

Welcome

Dear _____

Exploring new ideas and enjoying books with you sends a powerful message to your child: Reading and learning are fun, and happen everywhere — not just at school. This Reading Rockets Activity Packet about Bees was created to help you and your child enjoy reading and learning together.

Start your learning adventure by reading some books with your child about this popular topic. Then explore the topic with three activities. Enclosed you'll find what you need:

- >> two books to share with your child
- >> three related activities
- >> bookmark with a list of other books to extend the fun, if you wish
- >> short survey to tell me if you enjoyed using the packet

The simple steps on the back explain how to use the packet.

The bookmark, this parent information sheet, and the activities are yours to keep.

When you've finished with the materials, please return the books and the completed survey to school in your child's backpack. Please return the Reading Rockets Activity Packet by _____.

I hope you'll enjoy reading and learning together!

Teacher signature

To learn more about children's books, reading with your child, and information about helping kids become confident readers, please visit www.ReadingRockets.org

ADVENTURES IN READING!

Instructions

How to use your Reading Rockets Activity Packet

Getting ready

1. Before you read the books to your child, be sure to read them yourself. One book is fiction — a “make-believe” story. The other book is nonfiction, or informational and true. Reading the books first will give you the “inside scoop” to the twists and turns of the story, the interesting information inside, and the parts of the books that will appeal most to your child.

2. Next, read the three activities to see which of them you think your child will enjoy most, and which one you have the time and materials on-hand to do right away. Chances are, after you read one (or both) of the books with your child, he or she may want to do an activity right away.

Start the fun

3. When you know you'll have at least enough time to read and talk about one of the books, grab your child and a book, and dive right in. Start with the fiction selection. Talk about the cover of the book with your child — can he guess what it is about? Have they ever read a book by the same author or illustrator or about the same topic?

Read the book to your child. If you are using the fiction title, you will be sharing a make-believe story. As you read and explore the pictures, you should note to your child that the author may include real facts in fiction writing. Talk with your child about how to confirm factual information found in works of fiction. Then, try the nonfiction book or one of the activities.

4. When you read the nonfiction book, take a moment to explain to your child the difference between the two types of books. The fiction book told a made-up, make-believe story, and a nonfiction book focuses on real people, places, and things. The information in nonfiction books can answer lots of questions and confirm facts.

5. Feel free to pick and choose from the activities, or change them to suit your child's interests. Read the books again over the next few days and try different activities. Most important: have fun!

When you're done...

6. Keep the bookmark, the activities, and this page. Complete the survey and return it with the books to your child's school.

Make the most of the excitement the books create, and try some hands-on learning or make-believe fun. Exploring new ideas alongside you lets your child see you learning — and reading — too, and gives your child personal experiences to support her growing knowledge.

Tips for reading nonfiction books with kids:

- >> *Wonder out loud. As you are reading, or afterward, talk about facts you find interesting or questions you have.*
- >> *Show your child how to use the table of contents, section headings, index, and word list (glossary) to find the answer to a specific question.*
- >> *Don't be afraid to jump around, reading pages that especially interest your child. You don't have to read a nonfiction book straight through.*

Tips for reading fiction books with kids:

- >> *Take your time and talk about the story with your child. Ask your child questions.*
- >> *Explore the pictures with your child.*
- >> *Read with expression. Change your voice or how fast you read to create excitement. Ham it up!*
- >> *You don't need to read every word. Keeping your child interested is the goal.*

the pollinator



Take a close look the anatomy of the bee in ***The Life and Times of the Honeybee*** or another nonfiction book about bees. The bee has many specialized body parts — from compound (multiple) eyes with ultraviolet vision to pollen baskets on the outside back legs. Bees are built to contribute to the survival of their colony (family).

Bees also contribute to our survival. Without their pollination of many fruits and vegetables, our food supply would be greatly reduced. As a bee visits flowers in search of their food (nectar), tiny grains of pollen from the anther (the male part) of a flower stick to the bee's body. As the bee moves on to other flowers, it takes the pollen along, transferring it onto the stigma (the female part) of the next flower and starts the pollination process — how a flower or plant develops new seeds.

This drawing activity challenges your child to design and draw a robot that could complete the transfer of pollen from one blossom to another and help a plant grow its fruit.

Supplies

- >> Drawing supplies: paper, pencil, markers, ruler
- >> Household junk — containers, boxes, rubber bands, pipe cleaners, paper clips, Styrofoam, toothpicks, etc. — or a building set such as LEGO or K'NEX (optional)

Getting Started

Ask your child to think about what you read about how a bee performs her pollen-collecting task. You might want to read more with your child to help him understand pollination and which bee body parts and bee senses make pollination possible. Then, ask your child to draw a bee and have him point out the bee anatomy that makes the bee good at pollinating.

Now help your artist focus on a new type of pollinator — a robotic one of his own design. To get him started, you might discuss:

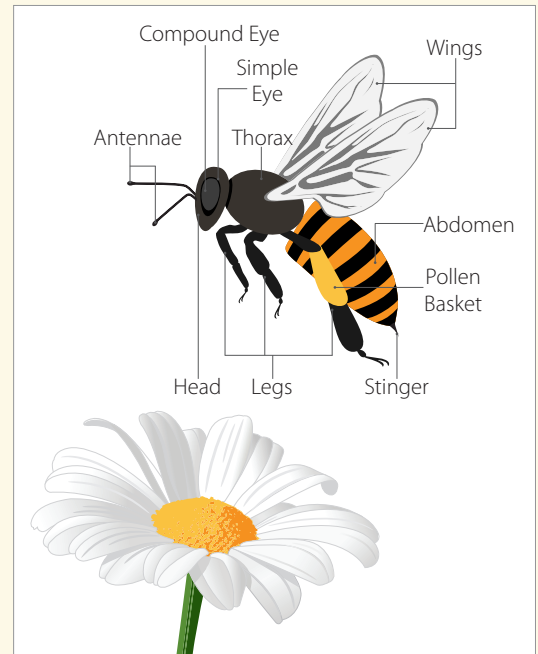
- >> What materials would he use to build the robot?
- >> What tasks does the bee robot need to complete?
- >> How could it be constructed?
- >> What could be the harm or benefit to nature of having robots perform pollination?
- >> How will his robot understand its environment?

Let him create and explain his design to you. If he's interested, provide some materials to create his robot or a 3-D model. When he's finished, talk together about what kind of reaction his robot might get from a real bee.

Buzz about Robots

Compare or get inspiration from the robot bees at Harvard University: <http://micro.seas.harvard.edu>

Learn why cuteness counts in robot design: <http://labcast.media.mit.edu/?p=206>



bee thankful



How do you feel when you see a bee? Talk with your child about his attitude toward bees and other insects. Children may be concerned that a bee will sting. The nonfiction title you read together should help your child understand why and when a bee might sting and how to avoid that situation.

In the fiction book you read — especially in *The Honeybee Man* or in *The Bee-Keeper of Orn* — point out how bees and people get along. The bees are considered friendly, helpful creatures, especially when they are busy making honey. And when people take care to be considerate and careful around bees, they benefit from the bees hard work.

Thanks to bees, we have many good foods to eat in addition to delicious honey. While bees are out collecting nectar and filling their pollen baskets, they are also moving pollen from flower to flower making possible pollination and the growth of important fruit and vegetable crops that we eat.

You and your child can raise a glass and toast the hardworking bees with a refreshing drink you make together.

Supplies

- >> Glasses
- >> Straws
- >> Blender or food processor
- >> Measuring cups and measuring spoons
- >> Honey
- >> Juice — apple, cranberry, mixed berry
- >> Fresh or frozen strawberries, blackberries, blueberries, cherries or raspberries
- >> Ice

Getting Started

Choose your own fruits and juice to make this smoothie-style drink to your own tastes. Blend together about 2-3 cups of fruit, 1 to 1½ cups of juice, and 2 to 4 teaspoons of honey. If you are using fresh fruit, you may want to blend in ice to make a thicker, frozen creation.

As you and your child decide what to add, have him write down the ingredients and amounts used in order to create a recipe that can be made again or to help you both to figure out what to change or try differently if you don't like the results.

Before you toast the bees, add a straw for drinking and ask your child to pretend with you that you are bees, sucking up sweet nectar with your proboscis — the bee's long, hollow tongue.

If the season and weather is right, enjoy your drinks outdoors. Take some time to observe the interaction between plants and insects and talk with your child about how plants and insects depend on each other and the role the honeybee plays in pollinating more than 150 agricultural crops — including your drink ingredients! If there are no busy bees about, check out this video www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_etyEdu9fQ featuring bees in action as they perform pollination for peaches, apples, blueberries, blackberries and more.

the daily bee



In California, the Sacramento newspaper ***The Sacramento Bee***, has been busy as bee reporting local news since 1857.

Bees are nearly always buzzing with activity. And while much of it is routine, there's lots in a bee's life that makes for exciting news — especially for another bee! Encourage your child to think and write about what he's learned about bees in his own ***Daily Bee*** publication.

Supplies

- >> A newspaper or online access to one
- >> Writing and drawing supplies — paper, pencil, markers, ruler

Getting Started

Pick up a copy of your local newspaper, or stop by the library together to look at one. You can also visit newspaper websites online. Help your child identify different parts of the paper and talk about the difference between reported news, opinion, and advertising. You might also offer some reporter tips, such as how write a news story by focusing on who, what, where, when, why, and how, and to emphasize the importance of research.

Ask him to imagine what kind of news and information bees would need and brainstorm ideas for a newspaper for bees. Some ideas to consider:

- >> Create a comic strip that tells a story from the point of view of a worker, drone or queen bee
- >> Write a news article "Conflicts in the Hive" that gives the inside scoop on what happens when a queen leaves the hive and how a new queen is chosen
- >> Write and draw an advertisement for flowers that would be really attractive to bees
- >> Write a news story that offers travel tips and best routes to take to favorite food sources
- >> News coverage of a bear attack on a hive
- >> Captioned drawings (or photographs) of a bee in action

If creating an entire newspaper seems overwhelming to your child, chose just one idea to focus on. Or ask your child to play newspaper editor and assign himself and you a story to work on together. If you have access to a digital camera, your child could create a video news story instead.

ADVENTURES IN READING!

Parent Survey

My child and I read books and did activities together about:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Animals | <input type="checkbox"/> Farms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The environment | <input type="checkbox"/> The Snowy Day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Folktales | <input type="checkbox"/> The Lorax |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food | <input type="checkbox"/> Rocks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Oceans |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dinosaurs | <input type="checkbox"/> Weather |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sleep | <input type="checkbox"/> Building |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Green Eggs and Ham | <input type="checkbox"/> Bees |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Where the Wild Things Are | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Very Hungry Caterpillar | |

Tell us about your experience with the activities:

- Easy and fun to do
- The directions were difficult to understand
- My child enjoyed the activities

Did talking about what you were reading, and the activities help your child to learn? (on a scale of 1 to 5)

1 2 3 4 5
_____ *(did not learn much)* *(learned a lot)*

Would you like to try another "read and learn together" activity with your child? yes no

What kinds of things is your child interested in?

BEES

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Featured titles

Fiction

The Bee Tree by Patricia Polacco

Nonfiction

The Life and Times of the Honeybee
by Charles Micucci

Additional fiction titles

The Bee-man of Orn
by Frank R. Stockton

The Honeybee Man by Lela Nargi and
Kyrsten Brooker

The Humblebee Hunter
by Deborah Hopkinson

Winnie-the-Pooh and Some Bees
by A.A. Milne

Additional nonfiction titles

The Hive Detectives
by Loree Griffin Burns

The Honey Makers by Gail Gibbons

Life of the Honeybee by Heiderose and
Andreas Fischer-Nagel

The Magic School Bus Inside a Beehive
by Joanna Cole

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