

Optimise B1+

Student name _____

Group/Class _____

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READING

Honey: The oldest of foods

The next time you are looking at a jar of honey in the supermarket think about this – it is possible that over 20,000 bees were needed to make that single jar! And the bees will have flown over 80,000 kilometres!

Honey is made when honey bees collect nectar from flowers. They take the nectar back to their hive where other bees, called worker bees, add natural chemicals called enzymes which help it resist bacteria and last a long time. Before they re-enter their hive, they do a little dance at the entrance, called the 'waggle dance'. The dance is a combination of wiggling their bodies fast and making a buzzing sound with their wings. In fact, a bee performs two dances, one shows the direction the other bees need to travel to find food and the other dance tells the bees how close the nectar is. The more the bee wiggles, the more nectar is to be found! The nectar is then taken to a special room where it is turned into honey.

It is difficult to say when honey originated, but fossils of honey bees have been found that are about 150 million years old. In Spain, there are some cave paintings from 7000 BC which show humans keeping bees. And archaeologists have discovered pots of honey thousands of years' old but perfectly preserved inside a pyramid! So we can say with confidence that not only has honey been eaten for a long time, it has also existed for a long time.

Honey is mostly used to make food sweeter, but it is also used for health purposes. You probably know it best when you have a cold or a sore throat. It is often used with lemon and boiling water in a hot drink and it can make your throat feel better. It is also a natural antibiotic and can be used as a dressing for wounds and a first aid treatment for cuts and burns.

Honey is popular with athletes because the natural fruit sugars in honey – fructose and glucose – are digested quickly by the body. For athletes and other sportspeople, honey gives them a natural energy boost. If you go running you can add honey to water and it will give you energy before, during and after your run. Honey is completely natural and nothing is added to it or removed from it, which is another reason why it is so healthy compared with other foods.

If honey is so good, why do bees let us take it from them? Bees produce honey so they can store it away in their hives during the winter when there aren't many flowers about. But bees produce two to three times more honey than they need, which means that the extra honey can be taken by beekeepers. Lucky for all of us who love honey!

1 Read the article about honey. What do the following words mean? Choose definition A or B. Read the text to see the words in context.

1 nectar (n)

- A a product made from honey that is very expensive
- B a sweet liquid that some flowers make and that insects and birds drink

2 hive (n)

- A a container in which bees live and make honey
- B the name for a group of bees who live together

3 fructose (n)

- A a type of sugar found in some fruits and honey
- B a type of fruit that bees like to eat

4 store (v)

- A to put something in a place so that no one can find or see it
- B to put something in a safe place until you need it

Score: /8

2 Read the text and choose the best answer (A, B, C or D).

1 The bees perform two dances

- A to give other bees two important pieces of information.
- B to say where the best flowers are.
- C so they can meet other bees in the hive.
- D one for inside the hive and one for outside the hive.

2 If a bee moves its body a lot, this means

- A it is very happy.
- B that honey is very close.
- C they know a place where there is a lot of nectar.
- D they have eaten a lot of honey.

3 What do the Spanish cave paintings tell us?

- A people painted with honey
- B painting has been done for a long time
- C eating honey is not something new
- D humans like bees

4 Nowadays, people also use honey

- A when they break their leg.
- B if they are not feeling well.
- C to keep them warm when they are cold.
- D to run faster.

5 Honey is different from most foods because

- A it is yellow.
- B you can add it to water.
- C it is made using an unnatural process.
- D it doesn't have any extra ingredients.

6 Why do bees store honey?

- A to hide it from people
- B to save it for a time when they need it
- C to have a big party
- D to keep them warm in winter

Score: / 12