

Investigating the Secret Life of the Garden Bumblebee

Learning objective: To identify and use the features of a non-chronological report, including formal tone, subheadings, and present tense verbs.

Read the report below written by Bea the Honeybee. Pay close attention to how she structures her information to inform the reader. Then, answer the questions that follow to demonstrate your understanding of report writing features.

The Garden Bumblebee (*Bombus hortorum*) is a fascinating insect found throughout the United Kingdom. Known for its distinct black and yellow stripes, this bee plays a vital role in our ecosystem.

Physical Appearance

These bees are easily identified by their three yellow bands and a white tail. They have a remarkably long tongue, which allows them to reach deep into tubular flowers to collect nectar. Their bodies are covered in fine, hair-like structures that help them gather pollen.

Life in the Colony

Unlike honeybees, bumblebees live in smaller colonies. A queen bumblebee emerges in the spring to find a suitable nesting site, often in abandoned rodent holes or dense vegetation. Once she has established her nest, she begins to lay eggs. As the workers hatch, they take over the duties of foraging and nest maintenance, while the queen focuses solely on reproduction.

Importance to Nature

Bumblebees are essential for pollination. As they move from flower to flower, they transfer pollen, which allows plants to produce seeds and fruit. Without these industrious insects, many of our favourite garden plants would struggle to grow.

Word bank: habitat · nectar · pollination · colony · characteristics · abdomen · fascinating · environment

1. Identify two physical characteristics of the Garden Bumblebee mentioned in the text. Why is the bee's long tongue particularly useful? (2 marks)

2. Explain why the author has used subheadings in this report. How do they assist the reader? (2 marks)

3. Compare and contrast the roles of the queen and the worker bees within the colony. Justify your answer using evidence from the text. (3 marks)

4. What might happen to the local environment if the population of Garden Bumblebees were to significantly decrease? (2 marks)

5. Is this text written in the past or present tense? Provide an example of a verb that proves your answer. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a scientific diagram of a Garden Bumblebee. Label the head, thorax, abdomen, and wings, and include a small sketch of a flower showing how the bee gathers nectar.



Extension challenge: Imagine you are a scientist. Write a new paragraph for Bea's report titled 'Threats to Bumblebees'. Research (or hypothesise) two reasons why bumblebee populations might be at risk and write them using formal, objective language. Ensure you include at least two words from the word bank.