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About This Book

The primary goal of any reading task is comprehension. *Document-Based Questions for Reading Comprehension and Critical Thinking* uses high-interest grade-level nonfiction passages, related documents, and critical thinking assessment practice to help you develop confident readers who can demonstrate their skills on standardized tests. In addition, you will build the comprehension skills necessary for a lifetime of learning.

There are four topic areas with eight lessons in each. Each lesson consists of three pages: a reading passage, a related document, and an assessment practice page containing multiple choice, true-false-explain, and short-answer document-based questions. This gives your students practice in all of the question types used in standardized testing. The students respond to the document-based questions based on the information gleaned from the passage plus its related document. Such questions improve a student's ability to apply prior knowledge, integrate information, and transfer knowledge to a new situation.

Readability

These passages have a 2.0–2.9 reading level based on the Flesch Kincaid Readability Formula. This formula, built into *Microsoft® Word™*, determines readability by calculating the number of words, syllables, and sentences. Average readability was determined for each of the four topic areas. The topics are presented in order of increasing difficulty.

The documents are not leveled. Many of them are historical pieces and therefore replicated with the exact wording. Some terminology may be challenging, but most students can handle difficult words within the context given.

Preparing Students to Read Nonfiction Text

One of the best ways to prepare students to read expository text is to read a short selection aloud to them daily. Reading expository text aloud is critical to developing your students' ability to read it themselves. Since making predictions is another way to make students tap into their prior knowledge, read the beginning of a passage, then stop, and ask them to predict what might occur next. Do this at several points throughout your reading of the text. By doing this, over time you will find that your students' ability to make accurate predictions increases.

Your questions will help students, especially struggling readers, focus on what's important in a text. Also, remember the significance of wait time. Research has shown that the amount of time an educator waits for a student to answer after posing a question has a critical effect on learning. So after you ask a student a question, silently count to five (ten if you have a student who really struggles to put his or her thoughts into words) before giving any additional prompts or redirecting the question to another student.

Talking about nonfiction concepts is also important. Remember, however, that discussion can never replace reading aloud because people rarely speak using the vocabulary and complex sentence structures of written language.

Busy Bees

Honeybees keep busy all year. There are many jobs for them to do. In spring the worker bees find flowers. At each blossom they get pollen or nectar. Then they return to their hive. They do a dance to tell the other bees where to find the flowers. Then they enter the hive. They turn the nectar into honey and store it in a honeycomb. They store the pollen to eat later.

The queen lays all of the eggs, and the worker bees do all of the work. All worker bees are females. Some worker bees feed the baby bees. They give them a mix of honey and pollen called beebread. Others build the honeycomb and guard the hive. One set of worker bees spends their lives taking care of the queen.

If you are a bee, you don't want to be a boy. Male bees are drones. Their only job is to mate with the queen. Then they die.

In the fall worker bees use water and plant sap to fix cracks in the hive. They must keep cold winds from blowing through the walls. Then the worker bees gather around their queen and move their wings rapidly throughout the cold winter months. They keep her warm and safe.

Bees may be tiny, but we need them. By going from plant to plant, bees spread pollen. This makes some plants grow fruits and vegetables. Without bees, less fruits and vegetables would grow. We would have less food.



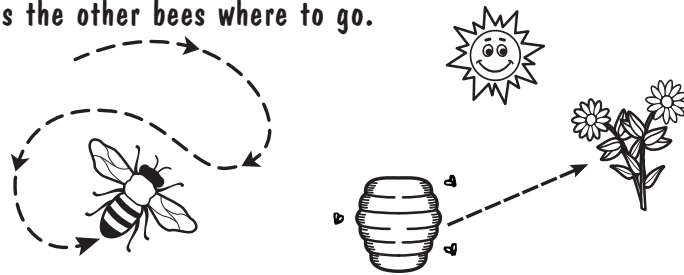
Busy Bees

NATURE FIRST

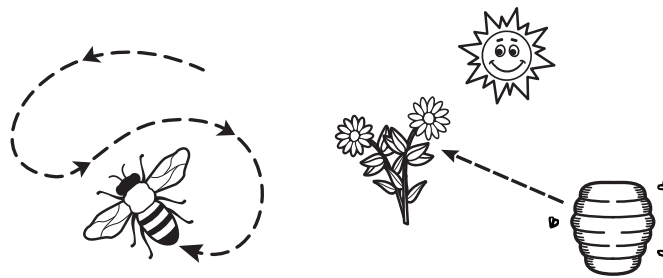
June 2006

Bees first visit the flowers closest to the hive. But soon they must go farther away. That's when the bees do a dance to tell the others where to find the flowers.

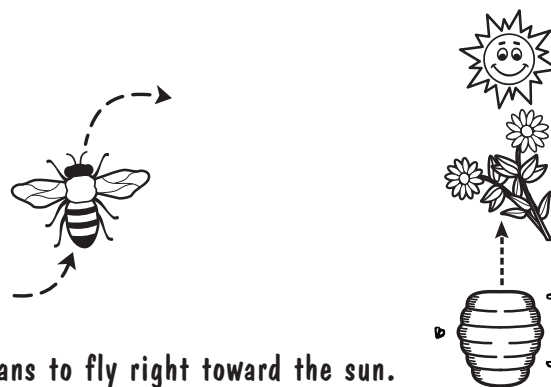
The bees come back to the hive. Then they dance in a circle. How they move their bodies in the middle of the circle tells the other bees where to go.



If the bee moves to the right, it means to fly to the right of the sun.



If the bee moves to the left, it means to fly to the left of the sun.



If a bee moves straight up, it means to fly right toward the sun.



Busy Bees

1. Which bees lay all the eggs?
 - a. worker bees
 - b. queen bees
 - c. drone bees
2. What happens after a bee visits the flowers on a cherry tree?
 - a. The tree grows more roots.
 - b. The tree drops its leaves.
 - c. The tree grows cherries.
3. Picture a boy getting close to a bee hive. Worker bees buzz all around him. What will probably happen next?
 - a. The bees will fly away.
 - b. The bees will sting him.
 - c. The bees will give him honey.
4. Drone bees are females and do all the work for the hive. True or False? Tell why.

5. The best flowers in a certain garden are located to the right of the sun. How can a bee tell the other bees where to go?

6. Beekeepers take care of bee hives in order to sell the honey. Do you think that you'd like to be a beekeeper when you grow up? Why or why not?
