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# Busy as a Bee

Ms. Frizzle is about to embark on another wildlife adventure with her class aboard the Magic School Bus®, of course. This time they plan to visit a beekeeper to see his beehives. We all know this will not be the normal school field trip!

**To the Teacher:** Familiarize the students with bees by sharing the Bee Facts with them and the picture of the Anatomy of a Worker Honeybee (page 10).

## Bee Facts

### Everywhere but the Poles . . .

Bees live in nearly every part of the world except the North and South Poles. They make honey, which people eat and beeswax, which is used in candles, adhesives, lipstick, chewing gum, and other useful things. Plants such as fruits and vegetables depend upon bees to pollinate them so they can reproduce seeds. As you can see, the bee is a very important and useful insect. There are about 20,000 different kinds of bees. Only the honeybee makes honey and wax.

### 80 Million Years Old . . .

Fossil bees have been found trapped in nectar and may have lived up to 80 million years ago. Bees most likely developed from wasplike ancestors that ate other insects. Gradually, they switched to flower nectar for their food. Scientists believe that bees have helped create a wide variety of flowering plants in the world, by spreading pollen among the plants.

### Solitary and Social . . .

There are *solitary* bees and *social* bees. Most bees are solitary, such as the carpenter, leafcutting, mining, and mason bees. Solitary bees usually live alone while social bees live in colonies that have as few as 10 or as many as 80,000 members. Honeybees seem to have the most highly developed societies. Stingless bees and bumblebees are less social than honeybees. Stingless bees build nests in trees, on walls, in crude hives, or in the open. They may have from 50 to tens of thousands in their colonies. The bumblebee builds colonies of 50 to several hundred bees in the ground.

