

Opinion Performance Task

Task:

Your class has been learning about bees and their positive and negative aspects. Now your school board has announced that it is considering allowing a local company to donate materials and train the students and staff to raise bees at the school. Your principal has asked students to write a multi-paragraph essay that explains your opinion about the plan to the school board. Before you begin, you do some research and find three articles about bees and beekeeping.

After you have reviewed these sources, you will answer some questions about them. Briefly scan the sources and the three questions that follow. Then go back and review the sources carefully to gain the information you will need to answer the questions and finalize your research. You may take notes on the information you find in the sources as you read. Your notes will be available to you as you answer the questions.

Directions for Part 1

You will now examine several sources. You can reexamine any of the sources as often as you like.

Research Questions:

After examining the sources, use the remaining time in Part I to answer the three questions. Your answers to these questions will be scored. Also, your answers will help you think about the sources you have read, and viewed, which should help you write your opinion essay.

You may look at your notes when you think it would be helpful.

Source #1: A Golden Treasure

In ancient Greece, one wise man thought honey trickled down into the sky from rainbows, and bees gathered the drops from the air. Today, people know bees make honey in their hives. The busy insects must collect nectar from two million flowers to produce one pound of honey. Their hard work gives us a special food.

A Tasty Treasure

For thousands of years, people have valued honey for its sweet flavors. Sometimes, these flavors vary. The taste of the honey depends on the nectar the bees collect. For instance, if the busy bees gather nectar mainly from orange blossoms, the honey is pale yellow and mild. In contrast, honey produced from buckwheat flowers is very dark and strong-tasting.

People have prized honey because it is an easy food to store, too. In fact, scientists digging in Egypt found some honey in a jar in a tomb. The golden food was still fine to eat.

Honey seldom spoils because it consists of little water. As a result, germs cannot easily grow in the syrupy liquid. Sometimes, the lack of water causes the honey to form crystals and turn into a gooey lump. When this happens, the honey remains safe to eat. Warming the jar in some hot water solves the problem.

Super Powers

While people simply enjoy honey's sweet taste, scientists have discovered the food offers other key benefits. One study tested honey samples from various regions in the country. In this way, different kinds of honey, such as clover honey or alfalfa honey, were included. Scientists found that all the honey samples contained certain vitamins and minerals. These vitamins and minerals are an important part of a healthy diet.

Honey also contains a sugar called glucose. Studies show that glucose from honey helps a person's stomach digest and absorb foods. For instance, eating honey increased the amount of calcium a person absorbed by 25%. The body can use this extra calcium for building bones.

Soothing and Healing

Honey has other surprising uses. When a person has a cold, honey works as well as a medicine to stop the cough. In one study, scientists examined 270 children who had ordinary coughs. Some of them took two teaspoonfuls of honey before they went to sleep for the night. Others swallowed a few spoonfuls of sweetened water. The children who ate the honey coughed less and slept more soundly.

In addition, some people use honey to heal minor scrapes. The thick liquid seals the wound and kills germs. The vitamins in honey help the body grow new blood vessels and skin. However, a doctor should always care for serious wounds.

Today, scientists continue to study honey. They are testing whether it can kill germs that cause food poisoning. They are investigating whether it can help people with allergies. Every day, this amazing food grows more valuable. Thank you, bees!

Source #2: Beekeeping for Beginners

A strange squat tower hides behind some bushes in a backyard. Before long, some honeybees disappear inside the structure; it is a hive box for bees. Today, there are beekeepers in every state in America. With the right supplies and some preparation, you can try this popular hobby, too.

Beehive Basics

First, you will need a home for your bees. Usually, beginners purchase a modern hive box. It contains different sections, and each one serves a specific purpose.

The base of the box includes the hive stand and bottom board. The hive stand has a slanted front edge that resembles a small slide. Bees loaded with pollen can safely land on the inclined board and creep inside their home.

The top of the hive has both outer and inner covers. The outer cover acts like a lid, neatly fitting over the hive's edges. It protects the hive from stormy weather and gusty winds. The inner cover is a flat board. This barrier prevents bees from attaching their sticky honey to the lid.

In the center of the hive, there are several crate-shaped boxes, or "supers." The bottom super is the brood chamber, where the queen bee lays her eggs. Eventually, they hatch into larvae, which resemble white, curved worms. Next, the larvae grow into pupae, with bodies shaped like bees. Finally, they become adults.

Directly above the brood chamber is the honey super. In this location, the bees construct their honeycomb and fill its waxy cells with honey. Every hive contains one honey super, but you can easily add more.

Special Equipment

Beekeeping does not require many tools, but a few are necessary. One essential object is a smoker. This machine releases little clouds of smoke when pumped. The smoke does not harm the bees, but it causes them to start consuming honey. After their meal, the bees are sleepy, so they are simpler to manage.

You will also need a bee veil, hat, and gloves. These clothing items guard against stings. In addition, some people wear bee suits, but a light-colored shirt and pants work well, too. Most importantly, clothing should always be clean and odor-free. Bees have a remarkable sense of smell, and numerous scents alarm them. If the bees are frightened, they may sting.

Ready for Bees

Most first-time beekeepers order bees for their hive from an established, trusted company. A box will arrive in the mail containing about 10,000 worker bees and one queen. To add them to your hive, you can consult a beekeeping guide and follow its instructions.

Caring for Your Hive

Typically, the bees quickly adjust to their new home and begin their tasks. The queen spends her time laying eggs in the brood chamber, while the workers forage for flowers full of pollen. The bees devote themselves to building a honey supply and strengthening their numbers.

In the summer, you should regularly check on your growing hive. You can add more honey supers if needed and occasionally remove some honey. At times, you should inspect the brood chamber to make sure the queen and the young bees are healthy.

In the winter, your hive needs little maintenance; the bees remain secure inside. However, you must be sure to leave enough honey to sustain the colony during the cold months.

Do you think you would like to try beekeeping? To gather more helpful information, visit a local beekeeper. Most beekeepers are excited to share their experiences and love for their hobby with newcomers.

Source #3: Controlling Problem Honeybees

Honeybees are valuable insects. They produce honey, and they help plants grow by spreading pollen. However, bees near homes can become a nuisance. To control these problem bees, you must understand their behavior and habits. The following information will provide some useful tips to guide you.

Keep Things Clean

Normally, honeybees rely on pollen as their main source of food, but they will eat other available fare. Sweet treats such as juices, sugar, and fruits attract them. In the late summer, when fewer flowers bloom, bees especially seek these easy meals.

Because of this, outside dining areas and open trash cans appeal to bees. The key to discouraging the bees is cleanliness. Always line trash cans with bags and shut their lids. After eating outdoors, wash off patio tables and wipe up spills. Close food bags and bring leftover snacks inside.

Recycling bins filled with dirty cans and bottles draw bees, too. You should cover the bins with some type of barrier. If necessary, use an old door screen or window. While the job takes time, it is important to stop the first bees from entering the bins. These bees will share their find with other hive members, and large numbers will soon arrive.

Watch and Wait

In the late spring, you may spy a big swarm of bees on a tree near your home. This happens when a crowded bee colony sends off some bees to start a new hive. The buzzing mass clusters in a temporary resting place such as a branch.

While the swarm looks threatening, these insects are not aggressive. The bees have no hive to defend, so they are not likely to sting. Once their scouts find a suitable location to build their next home, the bees will leave. If possible, the best approach is to be patient for a few days and wait for them to go.

Time for Experts

Unfortunately, sometimes scouting bees select the wall of a building for their new home. They find a way inside through a tiny crack or hole. Slowly, the bees begin to build a hive in the space.

When you notice bees entering a crack on the outside of your house, it is tempting to spray their doorway with bug spray. However, this plan is not wise for several reasons. First, the bee hive may be far inside the wall, and the spray will not reach it. Also, the spray could cause the bees to look for another exit and encourage them to enter your home. Finally, the spray may kill some bees, but their honey will remain in the wall. The sweet food will attract other insect pests.

Instead, you should call a pest control company. They have the proper tools and supplies to deal with defensive bees. Plus, they will remove the contents of the hive.

Once the experts finish their work, make your own repairs. Patch any cracks and plug entrance holes. Wash the area with soap and apply fresh paint. This will get rid of odors, which could attract future bees.

Today, in our country, honeybees help pollinate about 100 food crops. Most often, they are content to search for pollen and will not bother you. With a little understanding, it is easy to live in peace with these beneficial insects.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 Source #1 discusses some of the behaviors of bees. What do Source #2 and Source #3 explain about bee behavior that Source #1 does not? Draw a line from the source to the description of bee behavior. Not all descriptions will be used.

Source #2: Beekeeping for Beginners

The taste and appearance of honey depends on where bees gather nectar.

Source #3: Controlling Problem Honeybees

Bees send out scouts to look for a new place to build a hive.

Queen bees lay their eggs in the brood chamber of the hive.

2 What positive aspects of bees are presented in the sources? Provide specific details from at least **two** sources in your answer. For each example, include the source title or number.

Name: _____ Date: _____

3 Explain why it is important to protect bees. Give **two** reasons why bees are valuable, **one** from Source #1 and **one** from Source #3. For each reason, include the source title and number.

Directions for Part 2:

You will now review your notes and sources, and plan, draft, revise, and edit your opinion essay. You may use your notes and refer to the sources. Now read your assignment and the information about how your essay will be scored; then begin your work.

Your Assignment:

Your school board is considering allowing a company to donate “beekeeper kits,” and train the students and staff to raise bees at the school. Your principal has asked students to write a multi-paragraph essay to give an opinion about the idea. The audience for your essay will be the principal and the school board. In your essay, clearly state your opinion and support your opinion with reasons that are thoroughly developed using information from what you have read.

Now you are going to write your opinion essay to submit to the principal. Your essay should include information supporting your opinion about beekeeping at your school. Choose the most important information from all three sources to support your ideas. Then, write an opinion essay that is several paragraphs long. Clearly organize your essay and support your ideas with details from the sources. Use your own words except when quoting directly from the sources. Be sure to give the source title or number when using details from the sources.

REMEMBER: A well-written opinion essay

- has a clear opinion
- is well-organized and stays on the topic
- has an introduction and a conclusion
- uses transitions
- uses details from the sources to support your opinion
- develops ideas clearly
- uses clear language
- follows rules of writing (spelling, punctuation, and grammar)

Now begin work on your opinion essay. Manage your time carefully so that you can plan, write, revise, and edit the final draft of your opinion essay. Write your response on a separate sheet of paper.

