

## Bees like playing with balls, study finds

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Everyone knows that bees are busy. There is even a saying in English that one can be "as busy as a bee". However, little is known about how bees play. Scientists have discovered one way that bees could relax after a busy day making honey - they play with

balls. The scientists are from Queen Mary University of London. They did different tests on bees "playing" with different things. The insects particularly liked playing with small, wooden balls. The researchers said the way bees played was a little like how humans play. Younger bees rolled more balls than older bees, while adult males spent longer playing with balls than adult females. The ball-rolling bees are the first known insects to "play".

The researchers experimented on 45 bumblebees in a specially designed test area. The bees were given two options. The first choice was to fly or walk directly to get a sugary treat. The second choice was to get to the treat by going around different coloured wooden balls. Most of the bees decided to play with the balls and then get their treat. A researcher said the experiments showed that bees are more thoughtful than people believed. She said: "Bees are a million miles from the mindless, unfeeling creatures they are traditionally believed to be." She added that: "This research provides a strong indication that insect minds are far more sophisticated than we might imagine."

Sources:  
the guardian.com / scientificamerican.com / science.org

### Writing

People are too busy and need to relax more. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

bees / busy / English / relax / honey / scientists / balls / insects / humans / adults / researchers / test / choice / fly / walk / treat / experiments / a million miles / minds

### True / False

- 1) The article says an English saying says that one can be as busy as a bee. T / F
- 2) Scientists know a lot about how bees play. T / F
- 3) All bees play with balls after they finish making honey. T / F
- 4) Older bees played with balls more than younger bees did. T / F
- 5) Researchers conducted tests using 45 bumblebees. T / F
- 6) Most bees in the tests played with balls before going to a sugary treat. T / F
- 7) A researcher said bees believed people are very thoughtful. T / F
- 8) The researcher said insects might be more sophisticated than we thought. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                          |               |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| 1. <b>saying</b>         | a. mature     |
| 2. <b>little</b>         | b. people     |
| 3. <b>particularly</b>   | c. stupid     |
| 4. <b>humans</b>         | d. especially |
| 5. <b>adult</b>          | e. choices    |
| 6. <b>options</b>        | f. expression |
| 7. <b>directly</b>       | g. advanced   |
| 8. <b>mindless</b>       | h. straight   |
| 9. <b>indication</b>     | i. not much   |
| 10. <b>sophisticated</b> | j. sign       |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) When are you as busy as a bee?
- c) How do bees make honey?
- d) What kinds of treats do you like?
- e) Would you rather fly or walk?
- f) What might bees think about?
- g) Do you like being busy?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

## Phrase Match

- one can be as busy
- little is known about how
- relax after a busy
- They did different
- adult males spent longer
- fly or walk directly to get
- Most of the bees decided to play
- bees are more thoughtful than
- a million
- insect minds are far more
- a sugary treat
- tests on bees
- miles
- day making honey
- sophisticated
- bees play
- people believed
- playing with balls
- with the balls
- as a bee

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you know about bees?
- How busy are you at the moment?
- How do you think bees might play?
- Do you think other insects play?
- What do you think of honey?
- What ball games do you like to play?
- What are the benefits of bees?
- How do you relax after a busy day?

## Spelling

- There is even a syngia in English
- coridesedv one way
- relax after a busy day making yoneh
- The tensticsi are from Queen Mary University
- The insects aacrrilpytlu liked playing
- adult fseamel
- a specially iegeddns test area
- fly or walk directly to get a sruagy treat
- a liomlin miles
- mindless, unfeeling ectaeurrs
- This research provides a strong nodinaitci
- insect minds are far more eosiipdhtastc

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. i	3. d	4. b	5. a
6. e	7. h	8. c	9. j	10. g

## Role Play

### Role A – Football

You think football is the best ball game. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their games. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): golf, pool or bowling.

### Role B – Golf

You think golf is the best ball game. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their games. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): football, pool or bowling.

### Role C – Pool

You think pool is the best ball game. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their games. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): golf, football or bowling.

### Role D – Bowling

You think bowling is the best ball game. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their games. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): golf, pool or football.

## Speaking – Ball Games

Rank these with your partner. Put the best ball games at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Football
- Tennis
- Basketball
- Basketball
- Pool
- Golf
- Rugby
- Bowling

### Answers – True False

1 T	2 F	3 F	4 F	5 T	6 T	7 F	8 T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.