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Life in a Pond

How does a pond food chain work?

The water is still while frogs croak and crickets chirp softly. The pond seems so peaceful, but don't be fooled. Over and under the water, there is a lot of activity. Plants and animals are growing, and animals are searching for food.

All the energy in a pond comes first from the sun. Tiny plants called *algae* (al'jē) use the sun's energy to make their food. Tadpoles and small insects eat the algae. Large insects and small fish eat the tiny insects and tadpoles. Frogs and big fish eat the large insects and small fish. Hawks, ducks, and raccoons eat the big fish and frogs.

It is like a chain. Each animal in a food chain needs to eat many smaller living things. This means there are many more smaller animals than larger ones. One small pond may have only a few ducks. But it will have hundreds of frogs and thousands of insects. There will be billions of algae cells. You can see that a quiet pond is really a very busy place.



QUESTIONS

1. What are *algae*?
 - a. very small fish
 - b. small pond animals
 - c. tiny plants
2. What does the story say that tadpoles eat?
 - a. algae
 - b. fish
 - c. insects
3. A food chain *always* begins with
 - a. tiny fish.
 - b. a pond.
 - c. the sun.
4. Why should there be more small living things than large living things in a pond?
 - a. Smaller things are harder to catch.
 - b. Larger things must have enough to eat.
 - c. Smaller things live underwater.
5. If all the algae in a pond were killed, what would happen to the animals?
 - a. They would all leave.
 - b. Nothing would happen.
 - c. They would starve.

Honeybees

*Honeybees
can do
three kinds
of jobs.*

The honeybee is one of the most unusual insects in the world. Bees are special because they divide up their work. Each bee has a certain job to do.

The busiest bee is the worker. Workers build the nest, called a *hive* (hīv). Inside the hive, workers make a honeycomb (hūn'ē kōm') from wax. They store honey there for food. Workers are always cleaning and fixing the hive. They even stand at the opening and fan their wings to cool the hive. Worker bees will attack anything—even people—to

keep the hive safe.

Another kind of bee is the drone. Drones are male bees, and their job is to fly with the queen bee and mate with her. After the queen mates, the worker bees drive the drones away. The drones then starve to death.

The third kind of bee is the queen. Each hive needs only one queen, and her job is to lay eggs. She can lay as many as 2,000 eggs a day.



QUESTIONS

1. The bee's nest is called a
 - a. drone.
 - b. honeycomb.
 - c. hive.
2. Wax is used to make the
 - a. nest.
 - b. honeycomb.
 - c. fan.
3. Which jobs do workers do?
 - a. They lay 2,000 eggs each day and build a nest.
 - b. They mate with the queen bee and then starve.
 - c. They clean the hive and keep it cool.
4. According to the story, bees
 - a. are very dangerous insects.
 - b. will attack anything or anyone to protect the hive, if necessary.
 - c. are like any other insect that flies.
5. The drone is driven away when its job is finished, because
 - a. it attacked the workers.
 - b. it is no longer needed in the hive.
 - c. the queen bee has died.