

Name: .....

Date:.....

### The Story of the Bees and the Flies

There were once two tribes of people who lived near one another. They were not at all alike for one of the tribes looked for food and carried it away to safely save it for winter while the other played and sang and danced all day long.

"Come and play with us," said the lazy people but the busy workers answered, "No, come and work with us. Winter will soon be here. Snow and ice will be everywhere and if we do not save food now we shall have none for the cold, stormy days."

The busy people brought honey from the flowers but the lazy people kept on playing. They laughed together and whispered to one another, "See those busy workers! They will have food for two tribes and they will give us some. Let us go and dance."



While the summer lasted, one tribe worked and the other played. When winter came, the busy workers were sorry for their friends and said, "Let us give them some of our honey." So the people who played had as much food as if they too had brought honey from the flowers.

Another summer was coming and the workers said, "If we should make our home near the lilies that give us honey it will be easier to get our food." So the workers moved away but the lazy people played and danced as they had done before for they thought, "Oh, they will come back and bring us some honey."

By and by the cold came. The lazy people had nothing to eat and the workers did not come with food. The manito\* had said to them, "Dear little workers, you shall no longer walk from flower to flower. I will give you wings, and you shall be bees. Whenever people hear a gentle humming they will say, 'Those are the busy bees, and their wings were given them because they were wise and good.'"

To the other tribe the manito said, "You shall be flies and you too shall have wings; but while the workers fly from flower to flower and eat the yellow honey, you shall have for your food only what has been thrown away. When people hear your buzzing they will say, 'It is good that the flies have wings, because we can drive them away from us more quickly.'"

\* A manito is a supernatural being that controls nature.

Adapted from the Project Gutenberg EBook *The Book of Nature Myths*, by Florence Holbrook

[www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org)

**Questions**

1. How are the two tribes different?

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2. Why will the busy workers not play with the other tribe?

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3. Why do the tribes need to save food?

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4. What type of food are the worker tribe collecting?

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5. Why are the lazy tribe not worried about collecting food?

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6. What happens when winter comes and the lazy tribe have no food?

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7. Is it fair that the lazy tribe have as much food as the busy tribe? Why do you think this?

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8. Where do the worker tribe move to? Why?

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9. What do the lazy tribe do when the worker tribe move?

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10. Why is the lazy tribe not bothered that the worker tribe has moved away?

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11. Does the worker tribe bring the lazy tribe food?

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12. What is a manito?

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13. What has the manito done for the worker tribe?

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14. Why were the workers given wings? Look for two good qualities.

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15. What has the manito done to the lazy tribe?

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16. What do the lazy tribe eat now?

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17. Why will people be glad that flies have wings?

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18. Two seasons are mentioned in the story. What are they?

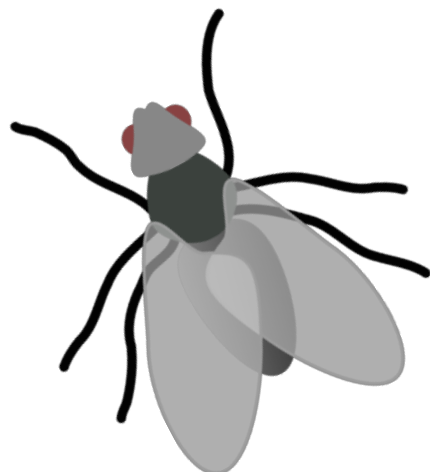
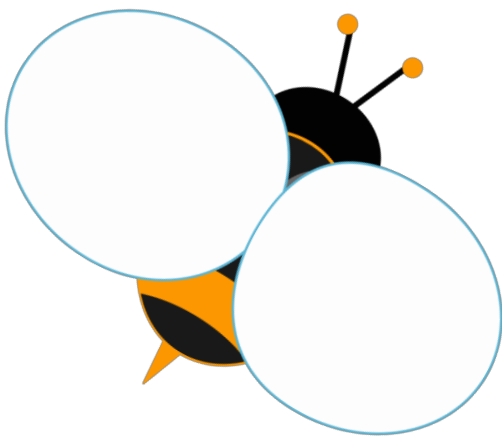
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19. Three types of weather are mentioned in the story. What are they?

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20. What is the moral of the story?

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Answers

1. How are the two tribes different?  
*One tribe looked for food (and carried it away to safely save it for winter).  
The other tribe sang and danced all day long.  
One tribe is busy, the other tribe is lazy.*
2. Why will the busy workers not play with the other tribe?  
*Winter will soon be here.*
3. Why do the tribes need to save food?  
*If they don't they will have none for the cold, stormy days.*
4. What type of food are the worker tribe collecting?  
*Honey.*
5. Why are the lazy tribe not worried about collecting food?  
*They will have enough food for the two tribes and will give them some.  
They think the worker tribe will share their food with them.*
6. What happens when winter comes and the lazy tribe have no food?  
*The worker tribe feels sorry for them and shares their food.*
7. Is it fair that the lazy tribe have as much food as the busy tribe? Why do you think this?  
*Various answers*
8. Where do the worker tribe move to? Why?  
*Near the lilies. Because they get their honey from the lilies (and it will be easier to get it if they live nearby).*
9. What do the lazy tribe do when the worker tribe move?  
*Played and danced (as they had done before).*
10. Why is the lazy tribe not bothered that the worker tribe has moved away?  
*The think that the worker tribe will come back and bring them honey.*
11. Does the worker tribe bring the lazy tribe food?  
*No.*
12. What is a manito?  
*A manito is a supernatural being that controls nature.*
13. What has the manito done for the worker tribe?  
*Given them wings (so they don't have to walk from flower to flower).  
Turned them into bees.*

14. Why were the workers given wings? Look for two good qualities.  
*They were wise and good.*
15. What has the manito done to the lazy tribe?  
*Given them wings.*  
*Turned them into flies.*
16. What do the lazy tribe eat now?  
*Only what has been thrown away.*  
*Leftovers / rubbish.*
17. Why will people be glad that flies have wings?  
*So they can drive them away more quickly.*
18. Two seasons are mentioned in the story. What are they?  
*Summer and winter.*
19. Three types of weather are mentioned in the story. What are they?  
*Snow, ice and storms.*
20. What is the moral of the story?  
*Example answers:*  
*Don't be lazy.*  
*Work hard.*  
*Be prepared.*  
*Sharing is good.*  
*Don't take things for granted.*