

## These notes are for:

- Years 3, 4, 5 & 6
- Primary

## Key Learning Areas:

- English
- HSIE/SOSE
- Science & Technology

## Example of:

- Junior Fiction
- Non-Fiction

## Experience of:

- Environment
- Animal Perspective
- First Person
- Natural History

## Values addressed:

- Understanding, Tolerance & Inclusion
- Honesty & Trustworthiness
- Care & Compassion

## Themes:

- Conservation
- Bees
- Survival
- Anti-war

\*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

Walker Books Australia      Ph +61 2 9517 9577  
 Locked Bag 22                      Fax +61 2 9517 9997  
 Newtown, N.S.W., 2042

For enquiries please contact Melissa Hamilton:  
 mhamilton@walkerbooks.com.au

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## Sting - Overview



### Sting (pbk)

By Raymond Huber  
 ISBN: 9781921150890  
 ARRP: \$14.95  
 NZRRP: \$16.99  
 No. of Pages: 160  
 April 2009

## Outline:

An action packed adventure story about a young honey bee called Ziggy who feels as though he is an outsider in his own hive. Sent by the Queen on a mission to discover how other bees live, Ziggy begins to unravel the clues to his own identity and the role of the bees in a secret military project. After a series of adventures involving wasps and humans, Ziggy eventually discovers the truth about his past and leaves to find his real family in the human city. Once there, they immediately accept him for what he is and together they use their special gifts to defeat a swarm of killer bees threatening the human city.

**Sting** is a thrilling adventure from a bees point of view that emphasises the importance of our environment and our relationship with animals.

## Author Information:

**Raymond Huber** grew up in Christchurch, NZ. His mother worked in a library so he grew to love books. His first jobs included social work at the City Mission, gardener, Insect Research Assistant, and then a Primary School Teacher for 15 years. He worked with groups of gifted children; and as a lecturer at Teacher's College. He has always enjoyed writing, including poems, textbooks for children, and School Journal items. Children's books are important to him: he reads and reviews them, collect them, gives talks about them ... and now he writes them.

Science fascinates him too and he's written science books for children. He still teaches a little, writes jokes and makes movies for the school musicals, and runs writing workshops.

## How to use these notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

## Raymond Huber on writing *Sting*:

“When I was a child, I was terrified by a swarm of bees that flew around me. Then a few years ago someone gave me a strange birthday present: a beehive – full of real bees. I’m still learning how to care for these fascinating creatures.

I read a newspaper report about army scientists training bees for war zones – that made me angry. At the same time I stumbled on some beehives in an isolated valley and knew this was where my story would begin. Then I heard about the mysterious disappearance of bees worldwide – this gave me the motivation to keep writing; to try and imagine the world through a bee’s eyes.

I’d always wanted to write the kind of book I loved to read as a kid – combining thrills, humour, science, and a very small hero (the *Hobbit* was the first novel I read). As I wrote *Sting* I met some amazing ‘bee people’: Beekeepers who seemed to communicate with bees; conservationists who spoke out for endangered bees; and scientists who discovered incredible abilities of bees.”

## Classroom activities for *Sting*:

### Guided Reading Activities:

- Read aloud the first paragraph of *Sting*. Ask students what they think this story will be about? Who they think this character is? Is the story in first person or third person? Is the story past, present or future tense?
- Create a list of the characters names from Chapters 1-2. What do all these names have in common? Why do you think they all have this feature? Think of some other names beginning with ‘z’.
- Research wasps and bees. You can use the library or the computer lab for this task. What are some of the differences/similarities between these creatures? Create a table to help display your information.
- On page 22 Ziggy says that “wax was valuable”. What products can be made from beeswax? What other types of wax are there and how can they be used? Create a poster with pictures and facts about wax and the different types there are.
- In Chapter 4 Ziggy meets a wild bee that doesn’t have a hive built by humans. Think of other animals that work for humans or provide humans with food e.g. sheep. Do these types of animals also live in the wild like the bee that Ziggy meets? Research animals that have been domesticated and create a chart with each animal’s name and its role in society.
- In Chapter 5-6 Ziggy is told that he was not born to his hive. How does this make him feel? Why do you think it is important to feel as though you belong somewhere? Discuss where you feel you belong/don’t belong.
- Read Sophie’s second diary entry on page 51. Who do you think Sophie is? What do you think “Project Sniffer” is? Sophie writes: “ ... but the bees should have no trouble with their acute senses.” What do you think she is referring to? Discuss.
- In chapter 7-8 Xola tells Ziggy to get a “bee’s-eye view” of the army base. What would a “bee’s-eye view” look like? Draw a “bee’s-eye view” of your street or school.
- On page 74 Xola states that the humans have now broken their treaty with the honey bees. What does Xola mean by this? What is a treaty? Research other treaties and what they have been used for.
- On page 86 Sophie writes that her dad’s saying was “Anger is a stone thrown into a wasps’ nest”. What do you think this means? Do you think it would be sensible to throw a stone into a wasps’ nest? Do your parents/ teachers/friends have any particular sayings that they use? Make a class list of interesting sayings and their meanings.
- Read Chapters 11-12. Xola stops Ziggy from entering the wasps nest and being poisoned. Why shouldn’t you touch substances when you don’t know what they are? Research the symbols and signs for poisons and who you should contact if poisoning occurs.
- Read Chapters 13-14. Ziggy enlists the help of the carder bee by being friendly. Think of times when you have needed someone to help you with something. Which works better, demanding or asking?
- On page 107 Zody describes a monster “that sucked up bees with its hot breath and squished them under its black paws”. From the description what do you think this is? Think of another object, like a building, house or boat and imagine how Ziggy might describe it.
- On page 108 Ziggy uses mind maps to help him get to places. Try and think of the way you come to school. Draw the path that you take and landmarks that you see along the way. Try to remember left and right hand turns.
- Sophie often refers to hybrids in her diary entries. What is a hybrid? Research other things that have been created as hybrids. In what other ways has the term hybrid been used?
- Read Chapter 17-18. The killer bees or Africanised bees are an introduced species that could “corrupt hives everywhere” (page 128). What are some introduced animals to your country? How have they impacted on the environment?



- On page 136 Osmia and Ziggy describe the helicopter as a dragonfly. What other human inventions can you think of that might appear animal-like or have been modelled on animals?

- The last paragraph in Sophie's diary is:

"The only way humans will survive, Sophie, is to learn to see the world through the eyes of the smallest creatures."

What does it mean to see the world through the eye's of someone else? Discuss.

In groups each choose a creature (different-sized creatures) to imagine the world through e.g. an ant, a bird, a dog, an elephant, a fish, a snake. Imagine the classroom through this creatures eyes, how are your responses different?

- Compare the quote in the previous question with the quote at the beginning of *Sting* (page 9). What do these words mean to you? Discuss or write your answers.

### Fact Finding:

1. What is the agreement that Ziggy and the other bees have with humans? Chapters 1-2 (*they give them a home and the bees given them honey*)
2. How much honey does Zabel have to eat to make a few flakes of wax? Chapters 1-2 (*a day's worth*)
3. Why do the bees fan their wings over the honey? Chapters 1-2 (*to sweeten it*)
4. There's enough poison in a queen wasp to kill how many bees? Chapters 3-4 (*1,000*)
5. Wasps have smooth stings. What do bees stingers have on them? Chapters 5-6 (*hooks*)
6. What can a Queen bee do that her sister bees cannot? Chapters 5-6 (*sting many times*)
7. What does Ziggy use to find his way over the trees? Chapters 9-10 (*a mind map*)

- These questions can be answered from *Dr. Sophie Domisse's Guide to Bees*, at the back of the book.

Bees harvest how many flowers to create a half a kilogram jar of honey?

Honey has a healing property. What does it fight?

How many different kinds of bee have been discovered in the world?

What do bees use to communicate?

What are the six senses of a bee?

How can we save bees?

### Word Bank:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • Chapter 1-2<br>homing<br>drone<br>classifying  | • Chapter 3-4<br>myriad<br>hovered<br>pollen                   |
| • Chapter 5-6<br>intercept<br>plummeted<br>lull  | • Chapter 7-8<br>stampede<br>scorching<br>reckless<br>sonorous |
| • Chapter 9-10<br>pesky<br>tussle<br>pulsated    | • Chapter 11-12<br>blundered<br>lingered<br>crevice            |
| • Chapter 13-14<br>musty<br>fragment<br>contours | • Chapter 15-16<br>provoked<br>trooped                         |
| • Chapter 17-18<br>obscured<br>topsy-turvy       | • Chapter 19<br>pollens<br>magnetic                            |

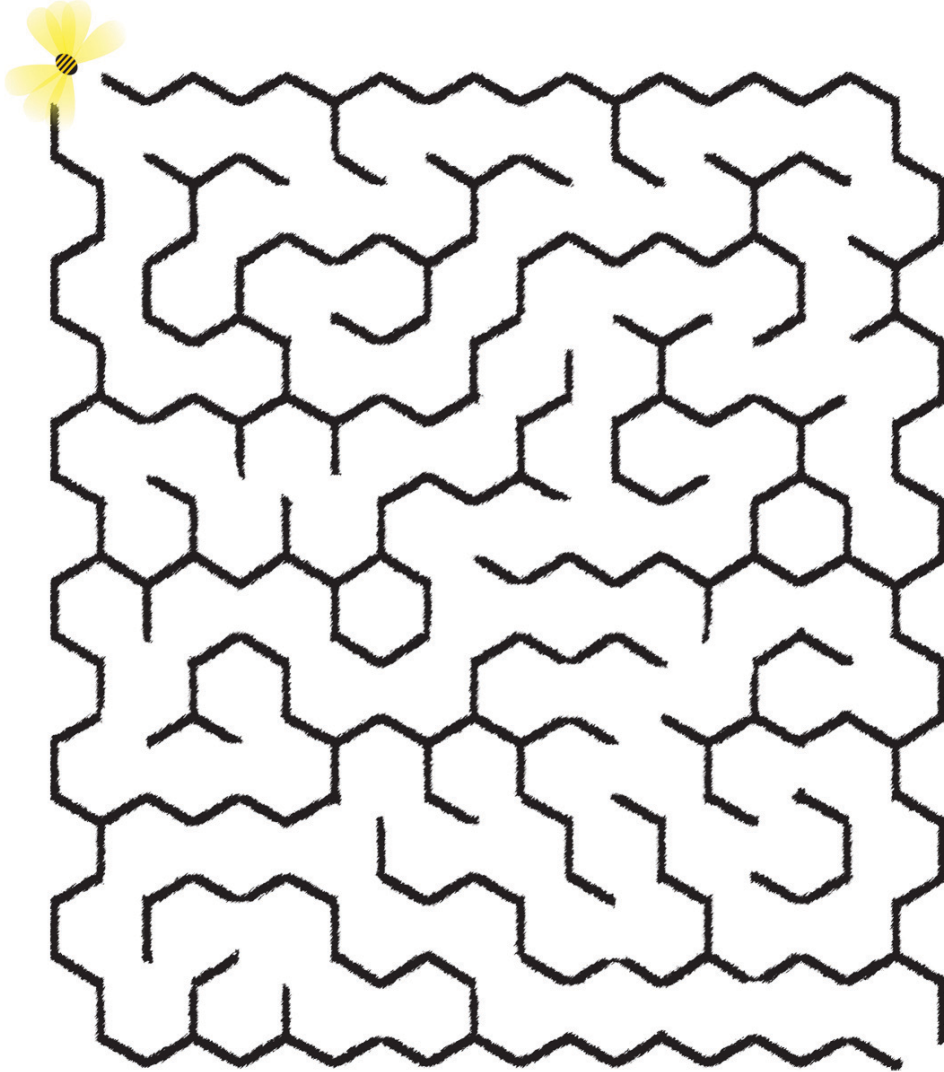
### Spelling Bee:

- Try using the spelling bee at the back of the book. Include some more words from the word bank above. You can use the congratulations card at the end of these notes for students who successfully complete the task.

Check out Raymond Huber's website for more information about the author, bees and *Sting*!

[www.raymondhuber.co.nz](http://www.raymondhuber.co.nz)

**Sting Maze** Get Ziggy from one end of the honeycomb maze to the other.



**Sting Certificate**



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