

The Dance That Gives Directions

PASSAGE · NON-FICTION

SKILLS TRAINED

Working memory

Delayed recall

Inference

HOW TO USE THIS SHEET

About 15 minutes

- 1 Read the passage twice, slowly. Take about four minutes.
- 2 Turn to the next page and cover this one. No looking back.
- 3 Write what you remember, then mark it on the last page.

When a honeybee finds a patch of flowers, it does not simply fly home and keep the news to itself. It returns to the hive and dances.

The dance happens in the dark, on the upright wall of the comb, with other bees crowded round. It looks like a figure of eight. The bee runs forward in a straight line, wagging its body, then loops back and does it again.

Everything in that straight run is information.

The direction of the run tells the other bees which way to fly, measured against the sun. If the bee runs straight up the comb, the flowers lie towards the sun. If it runs at an angle, the flowers lie at that same angle from the sun.

The length of the waggle tells them how far. A longer waggle means a longer flight.

The other bees do not watch the dance. They press close and feel it.

An Austrian scientist named Karl von Frisch worked all this out in the nineteen forties, after years of patient watching. Many people refused to believe him. An insect, they said, could not possibly be giving directions.

He was right, and he was given a Nobel Prize for it.

Cover the passage before you start.

Looking back turns this into a copying exercise. Getting it slightly wrong from memory is what makes it work.

PART A Tell it back

Write down everything you can remember about the honeybee's dance and what it tells the other bees.

PART B 4 questions

1 Where in the hive does the dance take place?

2 What does the direction of the straight run tell the other bees?

3 What does the length of the waggle tell them?

4 The passage says the other bees feel the dance instead of watching it. Why must that be?

PART C Mark your own work

Now go back to the passage. Tick every answer you got right. You do not need the same words as the answer below — if you wrote the same idea in your own words, it counts.

- ☐ 1 • In the dark, on the upright wall of the comb.
- ☐ 2 • Which way to fly, measured against the position of the sun.
- ☐ 3 • How far away the flowers are. A longer waggle means a longer flight.
- ☐ 4 • Because the hive is dark, so they cannot see the dancing bee at all.

FACTS RECALLED IN PART A

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QUESTIONS CORRECT

— / 4

DATE

THE STRATEGY Teach it to someone

Explain the whole thing to someone else without looking at the page — and let them ask you questions. The places where you go quiet or get muddled are exactly the places you have not learned yet. Go back and read only those.

WHERE YOU ALREADY DO THIS

Think of a time you gave someone directions. What did you have to tell them: which way, how far, or both?

FOR THE PARENT OR TEACHER · This sheet trains recall, not reading speed. Do not prompt during Part A, and do not let them look back. Question 4 asks your child to work something out rather than remember it, so a thoughtful wrong answer there is worth more than a lucky right one — talk it through together afterwards.