

Just One Bee

Text by MARGRETE LAMOND and ANTHONY BERTINI

Illustrations by CHRISTOPHER NIELSEN

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**Shortlisted for Picture Book of the Year
in the 2022 Children’s Book Council of Australia Awards.**

Synopsis:

Just One Bee is an inspiring children’s book about hope and the courage to dream. One-bee dreams to restore desolate fields back to fields of flowers but she can’t do this alone. She meets another bee who has a single flower and a queen bee but does not believe change is possible. He tries to squash One-bee but her determination and optimism wins through.



Teacher notes by Joanne Purcell and Robyn Ewing AM © 2021

Joanne Purcell is an Independent Scholar of Children’s Literature, Humanities and English Senior Secondary Teacher and former lawyer. **Robyn Ewing** is Professor Emerita, Teacher Education and the Arts and former primary teacher.

Unit suitable for: Australian Curriculum: Years 1 and 2 (NSW Stage 1). Each of the activities are layered and can be easily extended and elaborated if the unit is developed for later stages. See attachment 1 for a summary table of Australian Curriculum English content descriptions and NSW Syllabus outcomes.

Duration: Three to four weeks with 2 lessons a week

General Capabilities: Critical and creative thinking, Literacy, Personal and Social Capability.

Themes: Bees, lifecycle, climate change, landscape, nature, emotions, individual action, hope.

Before reading

About Margrete Lamond, Co-Author

Margrete Lamond is founding publisher at Dirt Lane Press and an author, educator and researcher. She is 'excited by all things in the world of words and illustrations and, most particularly, by the magical integration of words and illustrations as they manifest in picture books' (<https://margretelamond.com>).

She has been a full-time publisher of books for children and young adults for over twenty years, and an editor for much longer. Her first book for Dirt Lane Press, *The sorry tale of fox and bear* was short-listed for the NSW Premier Literary Awards.

About Anthony Bertini, Co-Author

Anthony Bertini works in the corporate world and his specific focus is Clean Tech. He co-founded 350.orgAustralia. He believes young people are critical to societies' efforts to deal with climate change. Anthony's first book, *Things My Pa Told Me*, was published by Hardie Grant Egmont/Little Hare and has been translated into several languages and sold over 20,000 copies. *Where Happiness Hides* was Anthony's first book with Dirt Lane Press.

About the Christopher Nielsen, Illustrator

An award-winning illustrator, Christopher Nielsen specialises in advertising, editorial, children's books, corporate packaging and publishing illustrations. 'Christopher Nielsen's illustrations flow from a love of vintage design. Tin toys, Mexican wrestlers, Matchboxes, Medical Charts and Indian Goddesses all jostle for attention amongst the flotsam and jetsam of his flip-top head. His images have been adopted by wineries, zoo's, department stores, radio stations and fish mongers around the globe. When he's not making images for you or raising a young family he can be found on stage playing guitar with his band *The Ramalamas*. (<http://www.chrisillo.com/about>).

Illustrations

Background to the illustrations

Christopher Nielsen writes that as an artist he tries 'to stay away from direct artistic influences and to look to other things like music, film or nature for inspiration.' Nielsen also starts with thumbnail or quick sketches. He uses tracing paper and once he has refined them he cuts stencils out of the tracing paper and makes prints. These are scanned and put together and coloured in photoshop. See <https://www.jackywinter.com/artists/christopher-nielsen/artwork/e1df05fd-472b-4112-ade9-7c529d2e03fe>

In illustrating *Just One Bee* Christopher was influenced by the painter Eyvind Earle, who is particularly well known for his work at Disney in revolutionising backgrounds in animated movies, particularly *Sleeping Beauty*. See <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-artist-made-disneys-sleeping-beauty-enchanted-impossible-animate>

Students may find it interesting to focus particularly on the visual narrative and how it influences our understanding of the story. Older students may be interested in tracing the influences to Disney feature films, in particular *Sleeping Beauty*.

Introduction

Teacher notes have been written for Years 1 and 2 (Australian Curriculum), although the content could be expanded and adapted to suit other years/stages. Each lesson builds on the previous lesson to engage students and richly explore content and themes of the text. The teacher notes follow a sequential approach to ensure maximum student engagement and understanding of the text:



Literature

Connecting with the text

#1 Lesson Objective: Making connections with the text.

Evidence of Learning: Students make text-to-world or text-to-self connections.

Time: 20 mins.

Prior to the lesson: The teacher may wish to explore with students the subject of bees and their lifecycle and role in the environment prior to introducing the text. This could support deeper engagement in the activities suggested for later in the Unit, such as exploring what a bee-friendly garden is.

Learning activities:

- **Discussion about dreams.** What do you dream of for the world? If you had a magic wand, what is one thing you would do to make the world a better place?

- **Teacher introduces text.** Discuss the front and back covers and record observations, things the students are wondering about. The teacher conducts a **'book walk'**: teacher talks about the pictures and engages students in a discussion **predicting** what the text might be about.
 - **The teacher reads** text to whole class. Identify the learning intention for the lesson. Model a text-to-world connection (bees, flowers, landscape etc).
 - **See, Think, Wonder:** 'make a connection with the text'. Teacher monitors students' connections as students share their connections with a partner noting one thing they **see**, what they are **thinking about**, and what they **wonder** about the world in the story - is it like our world? Use think-pair-share and then share with the whole class.
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Literature and Context

Extending connections with the text

#2 Lesson Objective: Exploring the text in context of our community, school and 'me'.

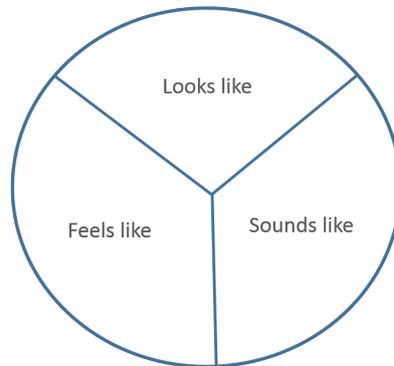
Evidence of Learning: Students make text-to-world or text-to-self connections.

Time: 1 hour (20-minute walk followed by activities). May need more time for creative responding.

Learning activities:

- **Community walk: bee and flower audit.** Take the class for a walk around the school community including the school itself as well as surrounding areas within about half a kilometre. Have students carry a clip board and paper and count how many bees they see, how many flowers they see and other things they notice about the landscape and the environment. If possible, have students take photos, otherwise the teacher will need to take photos. Alternatively, if time permits, students could emulate Nielsen and make a few small sketches.
- **Discussion.** When the class gets back to the classroom, students think-pair-share about what the walk. Teacher collects observations.
- **Looks like, sounds like, feels like.** Show photos to the class and discuss. Jointly construct a Y chart about what they saw, felt and heard about their local environment and the number of bees, flowers and other things they noticed.
- **The whole class reads the text again.** Teacher identifies **words that describe landscape** as they read and writes them on the board (eg dust, wind etc). Students also notice **colour** and **shape** as they explore how the landscape is depicted in the text at the start of the story compared to the end of the text. Using a class set of texts would be ideal, so students could share copies of the text.
- **Joint construction.** Jointly construct another Y chart about what students saw, felt and heard about the environment in the text at the start and at the end of the story.

- **Teacher identifies** other new words in the text and explores what they mean (eg. frail, fragile, meddle etc). Create a 'words chart' for the wall.
- **Compare the three charts** of the beginning of the text, the end of the text and the local environment (following the bee and flower audit). What do students notice?



Rich assessment task

Students work in pairs to develop two collages of pictures, shapes, drawing, colours and **words from the text**. One collage represents the landscape at the start of the text which is bad for bees and the other collage a landscape that is good for bees.

Stick the photos from the community walk on the section of the collage that best represents how helpful the local landscape is for bees (this will support later activities that encourage students to take action locally to support bees).

Context

Exploring purpose

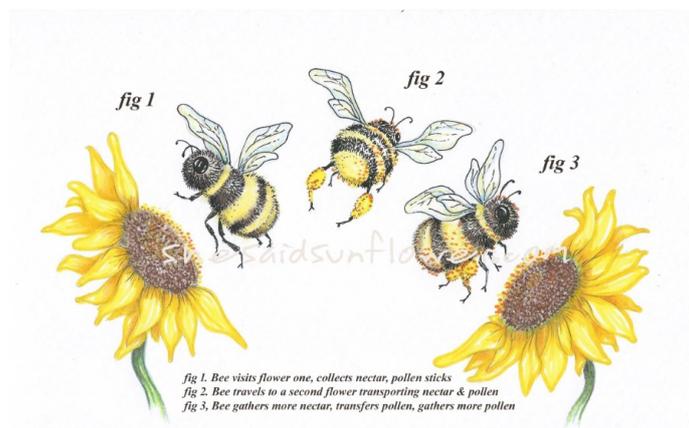
#3 Lesson Objective: Exploring the purpose behind the text.

Evidence of Learning: Students make text-to-world or text-to-self connections.

Time: 45 mins

Learning activities:

- **Read** the section in the back of the book called 'About Bees'. Discuss reasons for its inclusion in the book.
- **Debate.** Present students with the statement 'The little Honey Bee is a good topic for a children's book'. Prepare four sections of the room with signs that say: 'strongly agree', 'strongly disagree', 'agree' and 'disagree'. Have students go to the corner that reflects their opinions most strongly.
- **Reflection and discussion.** After a quick think-pair-share, choose a student or have a teacher go to each corner and interview people about their choices and why they feel that way. Students can move to a different corner if someone has been persuasive enough to change their opinion.
- Repeat the activity with more complex topics such as 'Without bees there would be no food'.
- **Model flowchart.** Identify as a class 'why bees are important' and compile a flow-chart on the board pointing to the relevant page in the text (ie. collects pollen, delivers to new flower, grows fruit, grows seeds, new flowers grow from the seeds).
- **Explore.** Have available a variety of reference non-fiction books (from the school library) in the classroom and/or posters about the pollination process for students to look at. For example:



Source: <https://shesaidsunflower.com/how-do-sunflowers-pollinate/>

Rich assessment task

Students work in their pairs again (from last lesson) to create together one more collage that responds in some way to the idea: 'Why bees are important'

Display student collages in the classroom (ie. there are now three pages per student pair, one with a bad environment for bees, one with a good environment for bees, and one that explores 'Why Bees are Important').

Responding to Literature

Exploring character & emotion through words and illustration

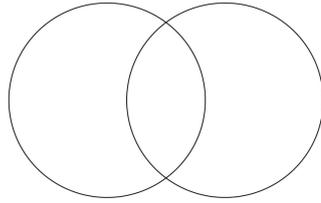
#4 Lesson Objective: Exploring character through embodiment, words and illustration

Evidence of Learning: Students identify similarities and differences, embody and explore characters' feelings.

Time: 30 - 45 mins. (More time may be needed if literacy tasks included)

Learning activities:

- **Teacher reads text again**, asking students to focus on how the two characters, One-Bee and Other-Bee are depicted.
- **Look closely at the illustrations as a class.** Discuss what the students infer from the illustrations about each character? Notice the **words** - how is each character described? Explore the meaning of unfamiliar words.
- **Turn and talk.** How are they the same? How are they different? How do you know? Look carefully at the images of both bees again.
- **Body Sculptures.** Explain to the students that we are now going to sculpt each other (see Attachment 2). Model sculpting as a class. In pairs students decide who is A and who is B. A sculpts B as One-Bee and then B sculpts A as Other-Bee.
- Make a gallery exhibition of all the One-Bees and look at the similarities and differences. Repeat with a gallery of all the Other-Bees.
- **Make a list** of the descriptive words on the board for each character.
- **In pairs improvise a short conversation** between One Bee and Other Bee. These can be listened to around the class circle and/or recorded.
- **Create a Venn Diagram** as a class that identifies similarities and differences.



- **Group reflection.** Teacher has laminated copies of faces/illustrations that show six basic emotional responses: Happiness, Sadness, Fear, Disgust, Anger and Surprise. Explore what each emotion means with the class. Place students in groups of 3 or 4. Each group has a set of emotions/faces. As the teacher re-reads the text again, they pause at each key moment to ask: *How do you think One-Bee feels right now? How do you think Other-Bee feels right now? Why?*
- **Still image.** In small groups of 3 students choose a key moment in the text to depict as a still image. Model a still image with the whole class first (for information about still or frozen images, see below). Key moments in the text could include when One-Bee notices a flower, when One-Bee and Other-Bee first meet, when One-Bee goes looking for the other flower, when One-Bee comes back with pollen, when the fruit & seeds and flowers grow, the field of flowers at the end.
- **Enact image.** Once each group has chosen a key moment and decided on how they will depict it, all groups enact their still image at the same time. If time some of the still images can be viewed at this point and the others at another time. Teacher can tap in to how some of the characters are feeling at this moment in time. The still images can be captured on camera. Students can draw the still image they depicted and add thought or speech bubbles.
- **Visual literacy.** Teacher and students spend time as a class closely examining how the visual narrative has been created. Does it influence how we see the characters? Why is Other-Bee dressed the way he is? Does the landscape create hope or despair at different points in the story? What features suggest these different feelings?

Rich assessment task

Students pick one of the emotions and, imagining they are either One-Bee or Other-Bee in the story. They then draw/paint/model/make a response. Invite students to share their ideas with each other and, once created, explain their choice of colour and shape and what they were thinking when creating the piece. Incorporate a literacy element into the task whereby the teacher writes out the student's explanation, and the student copies out key words, or writes the entire description themselves. Display the artwork in the classroom, alongside the description.

Examining Literature

Exploring connections to other texts

#5 Lesson Objective: Listen to a range of Haiku poems.

Evidence of Learning: Students listen to poems and identify a favourite.

Time: 30 - 45 mins. More time may be needed if students perform the poems

Resources: A variety of Haiku poems about bees.

Learning activities:

- Teacher **models** reading one poem at a time to students. Discuss favourites.
- Teacher **identifies syllables** as they re-read one of the Haiku poems about bees such as:
 - Gathering nectar (5 syllables)
 - Bees sing in close harmony (7 syllables)
 - Flower to flower (5 syllables)
- Teacher models how to identify syllables by placing your hand under your chin. Each time your jaw drops, a new syllable is isolated. Model the first line.
- Students learn poem by repeating after teacher and clap each syllable. Students practice identifying syllables.
- Teacher identifies words that convey information in the poem (lexical words) eg. 'gathering', 'sing', 'harmony'. These tell us information about bees. Discuss what the words mean.
- Return to the non-fiction books about bees and other resources about nature and/or their own ideas and invite students to go on a 'word hunt' to find other words that could be used to describe bees. Give students strips of card to record their words.
- Create a 'Bees and Nature' word wall to add the strips of card with words to.
- As a class, with teacher support, use the words to try to create the class's own Haiku about bees. Display the end result in the classroom.

Rich assessment task

Provide and read through a variety of bee-inspired Haiku poems. Arrange students into groups based on their favourite one. Students learn their poem off by heart and practice reciting it. They might also like to add gestures, small movements or percussion. Then each student takes a turn to stand up and recite their poem to the class over several sessions. Consider organising a real audience for students, such as another class or school assembly or parent open day.

Creating Literature

Applying learning

#6 Lesson Objective: Bringing Learning to the Community

Evidence of Learning: Students apply their learning to real-life situations

Time: A number of lessons depending on creation.

Learning activities could include:

1. Create **an exhibition** in which students' collages and creative responses are presented. Include descriptions of the work and the students' thinking as part of the display.
2. Use the Bee & Flower audit to prompt changes to the school environment, which could include students **writing a persuasive letter** to the school Principal proposing more flower beds and places for bees to come. Students could apply their learning to make the case for change, just as One-Bee did.
3. Students could imagine and create a **theatrical performance** in which One-Bee and Other-Bee explain what a Bee Friendly Garden is. See <https://www.dirtgirlworld.com/blog/howtogetyourgardenbuzzing> which includes a downloadable poster of a Bee Friendly Garden Guide. This is a short inspirational 'Save The Bees' video from Dirt Girl: <https://youtu.be/F5945zhhw6c> to kick-start ideas.

Other resources and connections

Science: Students grow a 'Bee Friendly' garden which could include sweet peas using a teepee frame of sticks, as modelled by Dirt Girl World, ABC S01: E11 'Bees'. Available via Clickview. See also the Bee Friendly Garden Guide poster noted above.

Science: Extend your class' exploration of honeybees into Science by considering the life cycle of bees and how honey is created. ABC Education includes video resources called 'Bee Heroes': <https://education.abc.net.au/home#!/digibook/2748838/bee-heroes>

Literacy & Science: Consider a 'Mini-Beast Heroes' exploration that involves comparing the honeybee to other insects: <https://education.abc.net.au/home#!/digibook/2744765/minibeast-heroes>

Literacy: The Curious Kids section of ABC Education include much about bees too: <https://education.abc.net.au/newsandarticles/blog/-/b/3682310/curious-kids-how-do-bees-make-honey>

Attachment 1: *Just One Bee* Curriculum Links

General Capabilities evident throughout this unit include [Literacy](#), [Critical and creative thinking](#) and [Personal and social capability](#).

Content descriptions below link to [Australian Curriculum: Year 1 \(English\) and Year 2 \(English\)](#) and [NSW Education Standards Authority Stage 1 English Outcomes](#).

Literature	Discuss how authors create characters using language and images (ACELT1581) (EN1-11D)
Literature and context	Discuss how depictions of characters in print, sound and images reflect the contexts in which they were created (ACELT1587) (EN1-11D)
Responding to literature	Discuss characters and events in a range of literary texts and share personal responses to these texts, making connections with students' own experiences (ACELT1582) (EN1-10C) Compare opinions about characters, events and settings in and between texts (ACELT1589) (EN1-11D)
Examining literature	Listen to, recite and perform poems, chants, rhymes and songs, imitating and inventing sound patterns including alliteration and rhyme (ACELT1585) (EN1-6B) Identify, reproduce and experiment with rhythmic, sound and word patterns in poems, chants, rhymes and songs (ACELT1592) (EN1-6B)
Creating literature	Recreate texts imaginatively using drawing, writing, performance and digital forms of communication (ACELT1586) (EN1-10C) Create events and characters using different media that develop key events and characters from literary texts (ACELT1593) (EN1-10C)

Source for content descriptions: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

Attachment 2: Drama Strategies

The drama strategies explored in the unit support the Australian Curriculum content descriptors for Drama. They may also be adapted to reflect students' level. For Foundation to Year 2 the relevant descriptors are [ACADRM029](#) (Sharing artworks through performance, presentation or display) and [ACADRR030](#) (Responding to and interpreting artworks).

Drama Strategies

Sculpting: Participants use the body of another as 'thinking clay.' They show or instruct the 'thinking clay' to represent a character or concept, negotiating facial expressions, gesture, body position.

Still image/Freeze frame/ Frozen moment: A particular dramatic moment is frozen to allow close study. (Also known as tableau and depiction.)

Source: Adapted from the Glossary in Ewing, R. & Simons, J. with Hertzberg, M. & Campbell, V. (2016). *Beyond the script*. 3rd edn. Newtown, Sydney: PETAA).