

# Bees are Blue

## Teaching Notes

**Author:** Terri Owbridge

**Illustrator:** Sara Fandrey



### Synopsis:

When Jack discovers that Australia's bees are not just yellow and black, but sometimes blue, he becomes determined to find them. With help from his Nanna, Jack creates the perfect garden for blue-banded bees by planting native flowers and building a bee home. Learning all he can about these fascinating insects, Jack also discovers that seeing them is going to take some patience, too! Bees are Blue is a fun, educational story about the importance of bees, the ways in which we can provide for them, and features delightfully rich illustrations.

## **In the classroom:**

### **Before reading:**

Discussion Questions:

- Introduce the book by looking at the cover.
  - What can children see?
  - Ask children what they think the story will be about.
- What do children already know about bees?
  - What colours are they?
  - What do they do?
- Why do children think bees are important?
  - What would happen if there were no bees?
- Have they ever seen a blue-banded bee?
  - Where might they live?
- How do animals and insects, like bees, help plants?

### **During reading**

Guided Questions:

- Why do you think Jack is surprised to learn that some bees are blue?
- What do you think Jack and Nanna will need to grow a garden for bees?
  - What would make a garden a good home for bees?
- Did it surprise you to learn that some bees do not make honey?
  - Why do people associate bees with honey?
- Jack has to be patient to see a blue-banded bee. Have you ever had to wait for something exciting? How did it make you feel?

### **After Reading**

Discussion and reflection:

- Why was it important for Jack to be patient and wait?
  - What can we learn from this?
- What new things have you learnt about bees?
  - What did you find most interesting?
- Why is it important to protect blue-banded bees?

- How can we help with this?
- What do you think Nanna means when she says “Magic is everywhere”?
  - Have you ever experienced a magical moment in nature?
  - What happened?
  - How did it make you feel?

## **Classroom Activities:**

### Science and Nature:

- Bee spotting walk – Take students outside to observe insects and plants. Can they find a bee? What other pollinators might they see?

### Art and Crafts:

- Build a bee home – Using cardboard tubes, clay, twigs, and other materials, students can create a mini bee home. Discuss with children what would be needed and how it would help the bees.
- Make a Bee Mask – Create paper masks using blue stripes to turn students into blue-banded bees!

### Writing and Literacy:

- If I were a Bee... - Ask students to write or tell a short story about a day in the life of a bee.
- Bee Rhymes – Encourage students to think of rhymes for words found in the story. Students could also be encouraged to write a short poem or song using their findings.

## **About the Author:**

Terri Owbridge is an Australian writer for children and adults. Terri’s passion for storytelling led her to a career in journalism and communications. Her first children’s picture book, *Sticking Out*, was published in 2022. She hails from a long line of talented creators, who

taught her the magic of the arts from a young age. Terri currently resides in Western Australia with her husband, daughter, and perfectly mischievous tabby cat.

**About the Illustrator:**

Sara Fandrey is an Italian/German children's book illustrator living in Portugal. Influenced by her love for all things vintage, she prefers soft, desaturated colour palettes. Sara combines traditional and digital techniques, and you can find warm lightning, cute (often magical) characters, and a dash of humour in her work. Away from drawing, you will find her running after (or reading to) her two children.