

The Thing About Bees: A Love Letter

BY SHABAZZ LARKIN



MATERIALS & RESOURCES:

- [Read Aloud Link](#)
- Available on [EPIC!](#) - free to educators
- [Strawberry Time Lapse](#) - video for students
- PB & J Circle Map printable
- Items for making PB & J sandwiches *see activity
- Booklet Template printable
- Colored pencils
- Regular pencils
- Long reach stapler

SUMMARY AND DETAILS

This unique book is a love letter written as a poem from the author, Shabazz Larkin, to his two sons. This artist, author, and activist is learning to overcome his fear of our most amazing pollinators -- bees! With careful research and experiences with his sons, Larkin is learning to be fearless and wants to teach kids to be brave when facing their fears.

Lexile Level: Not available

Guided Reading Level: Not available

Genre: Fiction

PRE-READING QUESTIONS

- Are you afraid of something? What and why? The author of this book is afraid of bees and we will find out why.
- Let's look at the dedication page, what does it mean to be fearless?
- The author wrote a Note to Readers, let's find out what he wants us to know before reading this book.
- On the back cover of this book, the author has written "love will conquer fear." What do you think that might mean? Why do you think he put that on his book?
- Who do you think the boys on the front and back cover are? What does that tell us about the author?

POST-READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Who are the main characters in this story? How do you know?
- Look at this page again with the steps of how pollination

happens. Why do you think that the author included this at the beginning?

- If the numbers were not on the boxes, would you know what order to read them in? How would you know?
- Look at the page with the bees going away with the balloon and kite. Why do you think that the author wrote the words where they don't line up?
- The first group of words doesn't have a period, the period comes at the end of the next group of words. What do you think that means?
- Can you identify some of the rhyming words in this book? They will help us determine where the verses and stanzas are in the poem.
- This book is a fiction book. What does that mean?
- Are there some parts of the book that are non-fiction? Why do you think that this book has both? Why did the author choose to do that?
- What do you think is the message of this book, or what the author is trying to tell you? What is your evidence to support this?

POST-READING DISCUSSION ANSWERS

- The main characters are the dad/author and his two sons. They are on every page in the illustrations, the author also tells you that he wrote this book for his two sons.
- The author wanted the reader to understand the basic concept of pollination so that later in the book he can address why bees are important to have on earth for foods to grow.
- We read left to right and top to bottom so that would be a logical way to read this if the boxes were not numbered. We read a comic book or graphic novel in the same way.
- The first two lines on this page are called a verse, it is part of the rhyming pattern that the author has chosen. He wrote the text where it lines up differently than a regular text, he wanted to draw your attention to the rhyming pattern.
- The period tells the reader that this is the end of the first verse, the second period tells the reader that this is the end of the stanza. There are two verses in this stanza.
- Rhyming pairs: rude/food, ear/fear, thing/sting, hurts/worse, mango/tacos, pickles/drizzle, ear/fear, food/mood, eye/sky, park/heart, do/you
- The story is written from the author's imagination.
- This book has a story in the middle that is fiction with nonfiction parts at the beginning and the end. The author wants to inform the reader with those parts that are real facts and entertain

the reader with the story portion.

- The author is trying to tell us that it is ok to be afraid of something but if you learn about the thing that scares you, you might overcome your fear. Understanding what causes your fear is a good way to learn how to handle it. The letter that the author writes to the reader at the end of the story is the evidence to support this message. He also says that bees sting like moods sometimes sting but that does not change love between people.

ACTIVITY: PEANUT BUTTER AND STRAWBERRY JELLY SANDWICH

The author explains how the strawberry plant is pollinated for his opening page. Reread this page with the students and discuss how bees are responsible for one in every three bites of food that we eat. The video is a time-lapse of a strawberry growing. Point out to the students that the white flowers bloom, they are pollinated, the flower dies, and the strawberry begins to grow. The video will allow you to zoom in on one flower so that the students can see the process up close.

- [Strawberry Time Lapse](#) - video for students

After watching the video, brainstorm about some ways the students like to enjoy strawberries. Let them know that they will be making a peanut butter and strawberry jelly sandwich. Display the Circle Map either as an anchor chart for the whole class or send individually for digital learning. This visual tool will help guide the conversation of what is needed to make a sandwich. Encourage the students to think about more than just each item that is needed, think about the work surface, what you would serve the sandwich on and other important details.

When the students have finished brainstorming, the next step is writing out the steps for making the sandwich. The students should have their own set of logical steps for success. This will be helpful for creating their booklet in the assessment portion of the lesson.

Have the items ready for each student to make her own sandwich. Be sure to check for allergies and gluten issues before this lesson. The jelly and nut butter of choice can be purchased in individual packets to avoid contamination. Seed butter can be substituted for peanut butter.

Items needed: bread, strawberry jelly, peanut butter or a substitute nut butter, plates, napkins, plastic knife, clean work surface, napkins

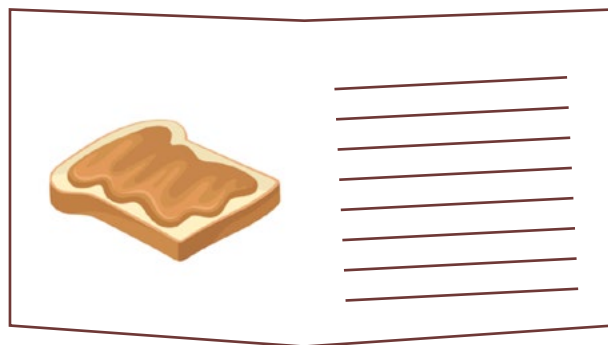
ASSESSMENT

The students will write a How-To Booklet about their sandwich making process. The educator should make booklets for each student using the **Booklet Template**. Students will make a title page and include their name as the author and illustrator.

Steps for using Booklet Template:

1. Make multiple copies of the **Booklet Template** on the front and back of the paper.
2. Cut the page in half in portrait setting so that you have two stacks of paper that are 8 ½ by 5 ½

3. Each student will need as many pages of their booklet as they have steps in their process. Once you know how many pages the student will need, fold the pages in half and use a long reach stapler to staple.
4. The student should use the left side of the page that is blank to illustrate each step.
5. They should use the lines on the right side of the page to write a sentence to give the details of that step. **Example:** "Spread the peanut butter on one piece of bread."



JOURNAL PROMPTS

- What is something that you are afraid of? Write a personal narrative using the way the author of this story did and tell your story. Begin with, "Here's the thing about..."
- Open to a picture in this book that you like and write a story to go with the picture. You can be one of the characters in the picture or you can write about a personal experience that the picture reminds you of.
- Do you think we should stomp on all of the bees and get rid of them just because they sting? Why or why not? Be sure to give reasons for your opinion.
- If you could design a fruit what would it be? What would it look like? What kind of plant would it grow on? What would the flower look like? What kind of insect would be the pollinator? Give lots of details and draw a picture of your fruit and the plant/flower that it grows from!

The Honeycombers Book Club - The Thing About Bees lesson standards

ELA COMMON CORE

WRITING STANDARDS FOR LITERATURE / INFORMATIONAL TEXT

1st Grade: [RL.1.1](#), [RL.1.2](#), [RL.1.4](#), [RL.1.5](#), [RL.1.6](#), [W.1.1](#), [W.1.5](#), [W.1.7](#), [W.1.8](#)

2nd Grade: [RL.2.1](#), [RL.2.3](#), [RL.2.4](#), [RL.2.7](#), [W.2.1](#), [W.2.3](#), [W.2.7](#), [W.2.8](#)

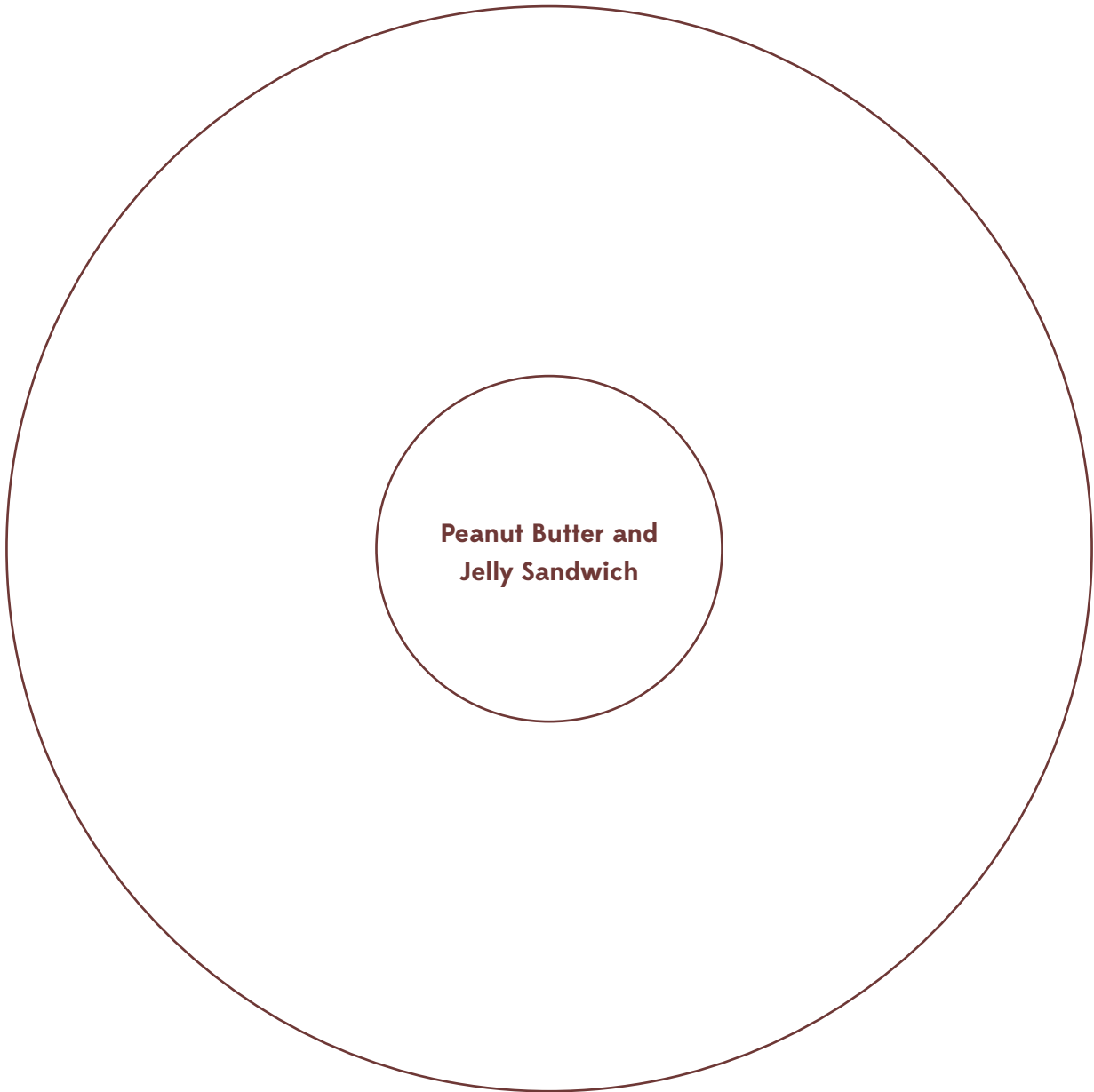
3rd Grade: [RL.3.1](#), [RL.3.3](#), [RL.3.4](#), [RL.3.5](#), [W.3.1](#), [W.3.3](#), [W.3.4](#), [W.3.7](#)



Name: _____

PB & J CIRCLE MAP

What do you need for a Peanut Butter and Strawberry Jelly Sandwich? Write everything you can think of that you need.



A series of 25 horizontal lines, evenly spaced, providing a writing area on the right side of the page.