



**GRADE: 7**

**Name of the Student** \_\_\_\_\_

## *How Doth the Little Busy Bee*

*How doth the little busy bee  
Improve each shining hour,  
And gather honey all the day  
From every opening flower!*

*How skilfully she builds her cell!  
How neat she spreads the wax!  
And labors hard to store it well  
With the sweet food she makes.*

*In works of labor or of skill,  
I would be busy too;  
For Satan finds some mischief still  
For idle hands to do.*

*In books, or work, or healthful play,  
Let my first years be passed,  
That I may give for every day  
Some good account at last.*

- Isaac Watts



## Summary:

### 1st stanza

The poet wonders as to how the little honey bee is so busy, how it becomes more energetic, and works even harder as the day goes by. He also wonders how it is able to gather honey all day long moving from flower to flower.

### 2nd stanza

The poet tells us that the female honey bee skilfully builds the cells inside the honey comb. She neatly spreads the wax, makes honey from the nectar and works hard to store it well.

### 3rd stanza

Being inspired by the busy bee the poet too wants to be like it. So he says that whenever he has to do some work or show his skill, he will be busy doing it. For he feels that, otherwise Satan will try to influence the person who is idle and make him do something mischievous. Here, it reflects the proverb, 'Idle mind is a devil's workshop'.

### 4th stanza

The poet wants to spend his childhood days, reading books, working and playing healthy games. He wants to be able to pass with flying colours in whatever he does. So that whenever he has to give an account of what he has done, he will be able to give a good report of all that he has done.

### Meanings:

shinning hour: day time; when the sun is shinning

labor hard: work hard

sweet food: honey

Satan: devil

idle hands: people who do not do any work

healthful play: playing healthy games

first years: childhood days

**Rhyming scheme: abab**

**Answer the following questions:**

**1<sup>st</sup> stanza**

- Q1. What is the poet wondering about?
- Q2. For how long is the honey bee, busy?
- Q3. What does the bee gather all day long?
- Q4. From where does it gather honey?
- Q5. What part of the day is it?
- Q6. Explain the line: 'Improve each shining hour'

**2<sup>nd</sup> stanza**

- Q1. How does the bee build her cell?
- Q2. What does the bee spread so neatly?
- Q3. For what is the bee working so hard?
- Q4. What does the sweet food refer to?
- Q5. Why is the bee called, busy bee?
- Q6. What can we learn from the bee?

**(Not covered in the syllabus)**

**3<sup>rd</sup> stanza**

- Q1. How is the poet going to be busy?
- Q2. What is Satan's intention?
- Q3. What does the poet mean by idle hands?
- Q4. Why shouldn't anyone be idle?
- Q5. From whom does the poet get inspiration to work hard?

**4<sup>th</sup> stanza**

- Q1. What is meant by 'first years'?
- Q2. How does the poet want to spend his first years?
- Q3. Explain the phrase - 'healthful play'?
- Q4. How does the poet wish to account for his deeds?
- Q5. Why does the poet want to keep his childhood busy?