Teamwork

How do some insects work together?

What do termites, ants, and honeybees have in common? They are all **social (SOH-shuhl)** insects. Social insects live together in large groups called colonies. Social insects always have at least one queen. The queen is the mother. She lays the eggs. The rest of the group divides the work.

Amazing Ants

Ants often live in underground nests. The nests have thousands of rooms connected by tunnels. Millions of ants may live together in a nest. It can contain more than one queen. Worker ants take care of all the other ants. Larger worker ants are called soldier ants. Their job is to guard the nest.

Busy Bees

A beehive is filled with rows of cells called honeycombs. They are made of beeswax.
Life in a honeybee hive is busy. Up to 60,000 bees may live together. Only one queen bee lives in a hive. Worker bees do all the chores. They care for the young bees and the queen. They clean and guard the hive and control the hive’s temperature. The workers also make food for all the bees in the hive.

**Talented Termites**

Termites build tall nests in wood or soil. A nest can be up to 40 feet high. Millions of termites may live in one nest. Every colony has a king and a queen. They make the eggs. Worker termites build the nest and care for the eggs. Soldier termites protect the colony.
colony  
col · o · ny

Definition

noun

1. a place which is under the control of a distant country. People from that country often move to and live in the colony.

America was a colony of England before it became independent.

Advanced Definition

noun

1. a territory governed by a distant country, often settled by citizens of that country.

Before its independence, America consisted of thirteen British colonies.

Many settlers died of starvation in the newly established colonies.

The Republic of the Congo, a nation in Central Africa, was once a French colony.

2. a distinct group of people of the same nationality, or a group of animals of the same species living closely together.

Brazil's Japanese colony is the largest in South America.

Their house is host to a colony of termites.

Spanish cognate

colonia: The Spanish word *colonia* means colony.

These are some examples of how the word or forms of the word are used:

1. Ants live in large groups called colonies. Some colonies are made up of millions of ants. Different members of a colony have different jobs.

2. By the 20th century, Europe's African colonies began to seek their independence.

3. To survive, the Pilgrims would have to work together and create a colony.

4. Before the Revolutionary War, there were thirteen colonies under British rule in North America.

5. Though the colonies officially belonged to Spain, they did not want the king always looking over their shoulders and managing their affairs.
**guard**

**Definition**

**verb**

1. to protect or pay close attention to something in order to keep it safe.

*The dog guarded the sheep.*

*The soldier guarded the entrance.*

**noun**

1. a person whose job is to watch out for danger or protect property.

*There were guards around the president's house.*

**Advanced Definition**

**transitive verb**

1. to protect from danger or harm.

*A fierce dragon was said to guard the castle.*

*Security officers guarded the princess.*

2. to keep watch over so as to prevent escape; keep in check; restrain.

*The soldiers guarded the prisoners.*

*You should guard your speech.*

**intransitive verb**

1. to take precautions (fol. by against).

*The farmers in the valley need to guard against floods in the rainy season.*

2. to provide protection.

*Waterproofing your basement will guard against water damage.*

**noun**

1. one who watches out for danger or intrusion; one who protects.

*The museum had guards at every exit.*
2. one who watches over (another) so as to prevent escape.

   *There are guards in the prison day and night.*

3. something used to prevent harm; safety device.

   *The goalie is putting on his shin guards.*

**Spanish cognate**

*guardia*: The Spanish word *guardia* means guard.

**These are some examples of how the word or forms of the word are used:**

1. Their job is to **guard** the nest.
2. They stand near the nest's entrance and **guard** it.
3. They clean and **guard** the hive and control the hive's temperature.
4. If another player accidentally kicks you, he or she will hit the shin **guard** instead of your leg.
5. Veterans are people who have served in the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast **Guard**.
6. The greyhound is a large dog. It is very fast. It likes to chase things. The greyhound is also quiet. It does not make a good **guard** dog.


**protect**

**Definition**

*verb*

1. to defend or keep safe from danger or harm.

   *A fence protects us from our neighbor's dog.*

   *The new law protects workers against certain dangers in factories.*

**Advanced Definition**

*transitive verb*

1. to ensure the safety of; shield from danger or harm.

   *A mother bear may attack to protect her young.*

   *The levee was built to protect the city from flooding.*

   *Wax will protect the car's finish.*

2. in economics, to guard the secure growth of (an industry) by means of tariffs on competing goods from other countries.

   *The government took steps to protect the food industry.*

*intransitive verb*

1. to provide or be capable of providing a shield against danger or harm.

**Spanish cognate**

*proteger*: The Spanish word *proteger* means protect.

---

**These are some examples of how the word or forms of the word are used:**

1. A spider uses its silk for many purposes, including weaving webs, **protecting** its eggs, and catching food.

2. The skin plays many important roles. It acts as a barrier and helps **protect** the body from disease.

3. Spiders are helpful animals. They **protect** plants by eating insects--their favorite food! That helps farmers keep their crops alive.
4. The dam **protects** the farms from floods and salt water that might travel down the river from San Francisco Bay.

5. It was very important that all of the animals in the jungle knew what the others' preferred foods were, so that they could **protect** themselves.

6. A year later, Congress passed the federal Endangered Species Act. The law **protected** many animals that were in danger of dying out, including peregrine falcons.

7. Scientists have found a vaccine to **protect** birds from bird flu. But researchers are still racing to create a vaccine to prevent the disease in humans.

8. Efforts are being made to help **protect** horseshoe crabs. Scientists warn it will take 20 to 30 years to see if the horseshoe crab population has increased.

9. Hard shells **protect** turtles. A predator cannot bite the hard shell. Some turtles can pull their legs inside their shells. They can pull in their heads and tails too.

10. Some ants are soldiers. Their job is to **protect** the nest. They stand near the nest's entrance and guard it. They fight off enemy insects that try to enter the nest.

11. A clownfish has scales on its body. This fish sleeps in the branches of a poisonous plant. The plant helps **protect** the fish at night. The clownfish eats small plants.
1. According to the text, what do termites, ants, and honeybees have in common?
   - A. They are all social insects.
   - B. They are all antisocial insects.
   - C. They are all worker insects.
   - D. They are all soldier insects.

2. To organize this text, the author divides it into sections with subheadings. What does the author describe in the section with the subheading "How do some insects work together?"
   - A. what social insects are
   - B. an ant colony's underground nest
   - C. all of the chores that worker bees do
   - D. the job of soldier termites

3. Read these sentences from the text.

   "Ants often live in underground nests. The nests have thousands of rooms connected by tunnels. Millions of ants may live together in a nest.

   […]

   Termites build tall nests in wood or soil. A nest can be up to 40 feet high. Millions of termites may live in one nest."

   Based on this information, how are ants and termites different?
   - A. Ants live underground, whereas termites live above ground.
   - B. Ants live in nests, whereas termites live in hives.
   - C. Ants only have one queen, whereas termites can have more than one queen.
   - D. Ants have soldier ants that protect the colony, whereas termites do not.
4. Based on the information in the text, how are worker ants and worker bees similar?
   A. Worker ants and worker bees both care for the other insects in their colonies.
   B. Worker ants and worker bees both lay eggs for their colonies.
   C. Worker ants and worker bees both build homes for their colonies.
   D. Worker ants and worker bees both make food for their colonies.

5. What is a main idea of this text?
   A. Soldier termites protect the colony.
   B. Social insects always have at least one queen.
   C. Social insects live and work together in colonies.
   D. Ants often live in underground nests.

6. Read this sentence from the text.
   "How do some insects work together?"

   Why might the author have begun the text with this question?
   A. to introduce a key question that the text will answer
   B. to signal an argument that the text will be making
   C. to persuade readers to answer the question
   D. to show the author's confusion about how insects work together

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.
   An ant nest can contain more than one queen, __________ a beehive only contains one queen.
   A. like
   B. if
   C. but
   D. then
8. Social insects always have at least one queen. What does the queen do?

9. Describe the work of worker ants, worker bees, and worker termites.

Support your answer with evidence from the text.

10. Worker insects are just as important as queen insects.

Form an argument for or against this statement.

Support your answer with evidence from the text.