

How to Skin a Bear



"I hate feathers," I say, as Dad throws the limp, dead duck at me. It flip-flops through the air, until – *snap!* My dog, Dog, leaps up and snatches it in his pointy teeth. I grab the duck's scaly feet and yank firmly, but Dog won't let go.

"I *especially* hate feathers covered in dog slime," I snarl through gritted teeth.

"Well, plucking feathers is your job, Bee," says Dad, chuckling. "As you get older, you will learn new skills, but for now, get plucking!" My dad is the sort of dad whose goatskin tunic doesn't go all the way round his belly. He is also one of the tribe elders. That means that he gets to do fun jobs like hunting. It's so unfair. I could be a mighty hunter too, if only I had the chance.

After the elders come back from their hunt, Dad makes new bows from the animal guts and furry clothes from their skins.

"Rargh," I say, finally jerking the duck from Dog's slavering jaws. Dog huffs and shakes his tufty head, trying to spit the feathers from his teeth. I got a feather stuck in my teeth once. It was fluffy and sharp at the same time.

Ignoring my groaning, Dad sings as he mixes up the deer brains. He massages the brain goo into the deerskin that he's tanning.

"Rubbing in the gloopy brain,
Gloopy brain, gloopy brain,
Rub the leather soft again,
Rubbing in the brain!"

Glumly, I pull out hunk after hunk of feathers and throw them onto the ground. I'm tired and I'm grumpy. The tribe has been on the move for at least five suns now, trekking and tramping to our summer hunting ground at the Rock of the Long Sun.

Travelling is boring. We walk all day, carrying everything we own on our backs, then we set up camp, and soon enough, we pack everything up and set off again. My feet are sore and my back is full of aches. Travelling is especially boring when you're the youngest in the tribe and your job is plucking duck feathers.

Extract from the Twinkl Originals story '[How to Skin a Bear](#)'.



Questions

1. Who is telling the story? Tick **one**.

- a dog
 Bee
 Dad
 a bear

2. What bird is Bee plucking? Tick **one**.

- a duck
 a chicken
 a goose
 a turkey

3. Match these nouns with the adjective that describes them.

pointy

gloopy

scaly

feet

teeth

brain

4. Label these events 1-4 in the order that they happened. The first one has been done for you.

- Dog grabbed a duck in his teeth.
 Bee's dad massaged the deerskin he was tanning.
 1 Bee's dad threw her a limp duck.
 Bee plucked the duck feathers.

5. Find and copy one word that shows how Bee was feeling.

6. Find and copy one word that means 'pull'.

7. Explain in your own words why Bee doesn't like plucking feathers.

Answers

1. Who is telling the story? Tick **one**.

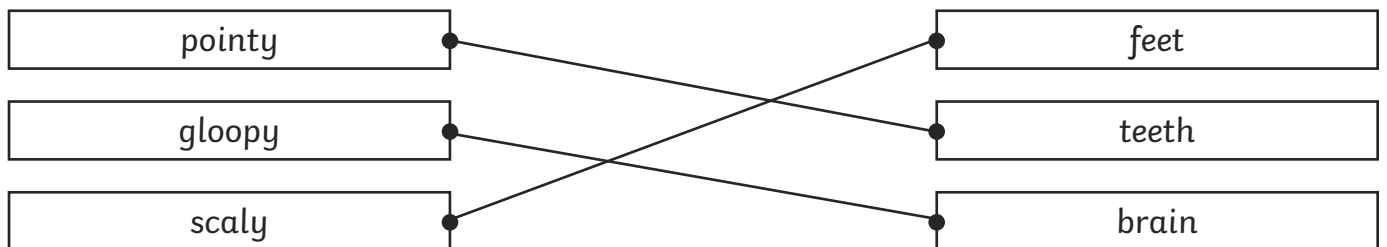
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Accept any of the following:

- **snarl**
- **groaning**
- **glumly**
- **tired**
- **grumpy**

6. Find and copy one word that means 'pull'.

yank

7. Explain in your own words why Bee doesn't like plucking feathers.

Children's own responses which refer to any of the following:

- **Feathers are pointy and sometimes covered in dog slime.**
- **Hunting is a much more fun job.**
- **It makes travelling even more boring.**

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"I. Hate. Feathers," I growl, for probably the fifth time. "I hate ducks, too." Dog jumps up and down. Dog is my dog. I trained him from a puppy. He gets excited whenever I shout. He's still got feathers wedged in between his teeth.

"Well, I don't hate ducks, Bee," says Dad, glancing towards me. "Duck skin makes lovely, soft leather. Your underpants are made of duck skin. *Rubbing in the brain...*" he continues to sing happily.

Fuming, I glare around at the tribe as they go about their fun, featherless tasks.

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8. Which word best describes how Bee feels towards her tribe at the end of the extract? Explain your choice.

- worried
- jealous
- scared
- tired

Answers

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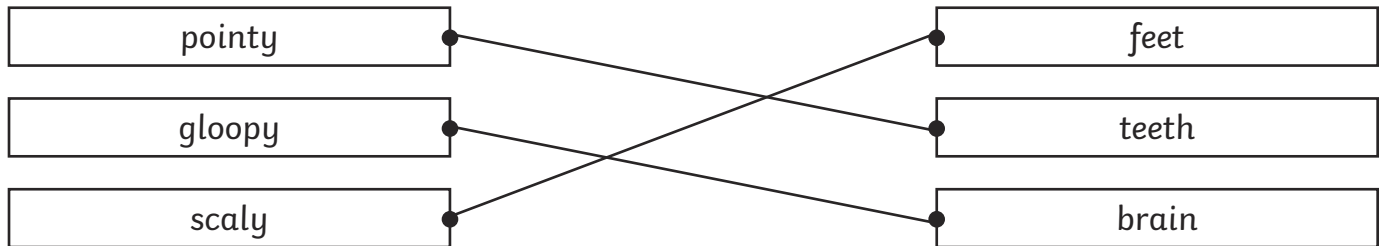
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Accept responses which refer to the word 'hate' being emphasised/louder/exaggerated in Bee's speech.

8. Which word best describes how Bee feels towards her tribe at the end of the extract? Explain your choice.

worried

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Children's responses should justify their answer with evidence, such as 'Bee glares at them and says that their tasks are 'featherless', showing that she is jealous because she has to pluck feathers and they don't.'

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Fuming, I glare around at the tribe as they go about their fun, featherless tasks.

Knotted Mane is my dad's sister. Her job is to gather berries. She sneakily eats them as she's going along, so her lips are always juice-purple. I could learn to gather berries...

Breath of the Vulture is my dad's sister's man. He gets to make the drums and flutes for the ceremonies. I could learn to make an instrument...

Tumbling Pebble is Vulture's brother. He weaves the sticks and furs to make our shelter. I could learn to construct a shelter...

Bent Tree is the tribe's chief. She starts the fire with a stick and a clump of moss. Then she sits by it all day long with her eyes closed. I could learn to build the fire...

Even Snore of the Rat is learning how to navigate, and he's only two summers older than me. I could learn to navigate, and I could do it a lot better than Rat!

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4. Which one of these is **not** a member of Bee's tribe?

Tumbling Pebble

Breath of the Vulture

Nose of the Rat

Bent Tree

5. Explain in your own words why Bee doesn't like plucking feathers.

6. Look at the beginning of the extract. Why do you think 'hate' is written in italics?

7. List five different jobs that must be completed by the members of the tribe.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5. _____

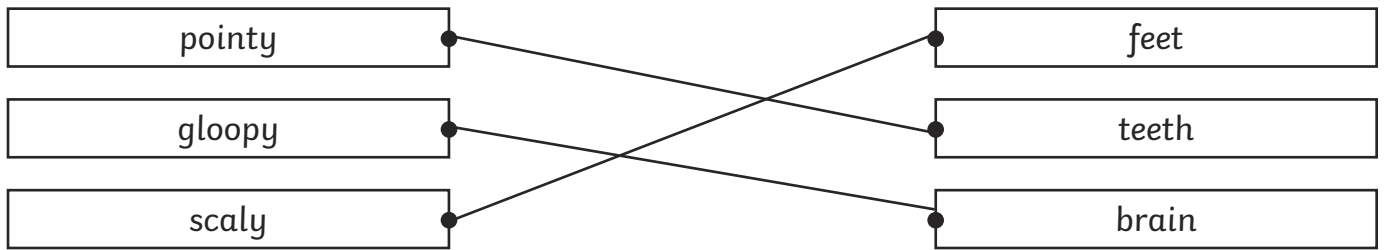
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9. Summarise the main points in this extract and what we know about Bee.

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Accept responses which refer to the word 'hate' being emphasised/louder/exaggerated in Bee's speech.

7. List five different jobs that must be completed by the members of the tribe.

Accept any five of the following

- **plucking feathers**
- **tanning leather**
- **hunting**
- **making bows**
- **making clothes**
- **gathering berries**
- **making drums and flutes**
- **weaving sticks and furs to make shelters**
- **building the fire**
- **navigating**

8. Which word best describes how Bee feels towards her tribe at the end of the extract? Explain your choice.

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Children's own responses which justify the answer 'jealous', such as: 'Bee glares around at her tribe and their 'featherless' tasks, then lists each of the tribe members' tasks and explains how good she would be at them 'if only I had the chance'. Bee is bored of travelling and says that being the youngest and plucking feathers makes it worse.'

9. Summarise the main points in this extract and what we know about Bee.

- **Bee introduces herself and what she does. She explains that she is plucking feathers from ducks, which is a job that she hates.**
- **Bee's dad tells her that she will have to wait until she is older to go hunting or carry out other tasks, but Bee is impatient.**
- **Bee describes how she feels about being the youngest in her tribe and how the constant moving around makes her feel tired and sore.**
- **Bee introduces some of the other members of the tribe when she looks at what they are doing and the tasks they carry out. She thinks that she could do any of the jobs she has mentioned.**