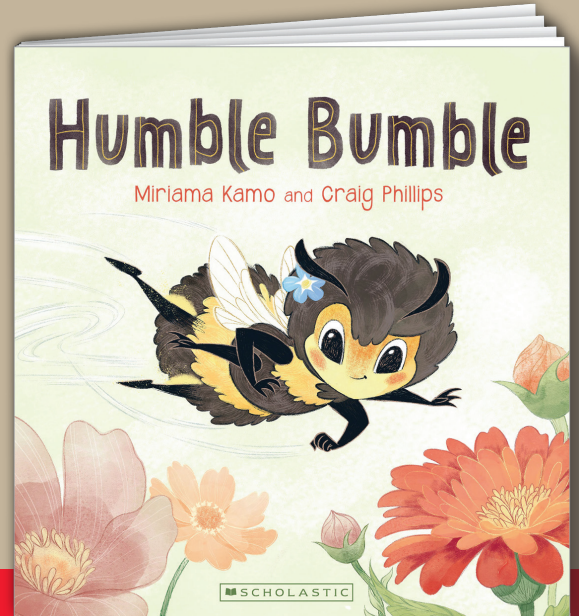


# Humble Bumble

By Miriama Kamo

Illustrated by Craig Phillips



- Reading • Writing • Science • Social Studies
- Art • Māori Proverbs

## Synopsis

This is a charming tale about a little bee called Humble Bumble, who is anything but.

Each morning, she cheerfully insists she's "too humble to brag," even as she swoops in to carry others' pollen, take the credit, and bask in the praise from her fellow bees. From Bumble Pīpī to Bumble Whi, Humble Bumble finds ways to help, and be noticed for it, until she gets a little too clever. Claiming a whole field of flowers as "already harvested," she sends the rest of the hive searching further afield, only to collapse from exhaustion with her work half done.

When the Queen finds out, Humble Bumble must face the sting of her actions. But through honest words, a few brave offers of help, and a shared load, the hive discovers something even sweeter than pollen: kotahitanga—unity.

With a light touch of humour and te reo Māori woven throughout, *Humble Bumble* is a playful exploration of teamwork, ego, and what it really means to be humble.

## About the Author

**Miriama Kamo** is an award-winning journalist. She has been the anchor of TVNZ's flagship current affairs programme *Sunday* and Māori current affairs programme *Marae*. Miriama has worked on many of TVNZ's key programmes including *1 News* as a newsreader. She is also a keen writer who is published in *Metro*, *NZ Herald* and *The Spinoff*. Miriama has also written several other children's books with Zak Waipara as illustrator, about the Matariki stars, as well as the much-acclaimed *Matariki Around the World*, with Rangī Matamua and Isobel Te Aho-White..

## About the Illustrator

**Craig Phillips** is a professional illustrator with two decades of experience working with top publishers. His art has featured in major anthologies and exhibitions, including the Museum of American Illustration. In 2017, he illustrated *American Gods* by Neil Gaiman, and released his award-winning solo book *Giants, Trolls, Witches, Beasts*, which earned multiple honours in New Zealand and Australia.

# Writing and Illustration Style

*Humble Bumble* is 32-page paperback picture book written for the 3+ age group. In this gentle, delightful tale, Miriama Kamo explores the themes of humility, kindness, sharing and working as a team. Throughout the English edition of the book, helpful footnotes appear at the bottom of the relevant pages to provide the English definitions for some of the Māori words, phrases and proverbs. A more in-depth glossary also appears at the back of the book. Many of the translations feature in the text itself. The text is written in third person past tense, with present-tense dialogue between the characters. On page 32, non-fiction text provides helpful extra information about bumblebees, their lifestyle and the important role that they play in nature. The book is also available in te reo Māori (*Te Pi Māhaki*).

Craig Phillips is an award-winning international illustrator whose artwork transports you into the small world of Bumbles. His beautiful illustrations are sketched by hand and then finished in inks and brush and digitally coloured. The lovely Bumbles and colourful flowers are drawn with a delicate colour palette of soft pastels. Craig sets the main character, Humble Bumble, apart from the other Bumbles by placing a blue flower on her head. The type is set in Janda Safe and Sound with the onomatopoeic words ‘Bzzzzzzzz!’ set on curves.

## Shared Learning and Discussion Points

Read the book aloud and, if appropriate, have the students read along with you. Use some of the questions provided to help the students make connections and predictions, check comprehension and promote discussion. Asking questions about *who*, *what*, *where* and *when* encourage the students to recall important information from the text, such as: What’s the name of the main character? The purpose of *why* and *how*, which encourages open-ended responses, is to encourage the students to make inferences and predictions, problem solve and draw on their past experiences and prior knowledge. After reading the story, discuss what the students knew about bumblebees before they read the story and what knowledge they learned after reading it. Talk about how bumblebees around the world face many dangers and what you can do to help them.

### ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

Look at the front cover and read the blurb on the back cover.

- What do you think Humble Bumble is doing on the front cover?
- What are the specks of yellow on the Bumble’s legs? What other insects collect pollen?
- Have you heard the word ‘Humble’ before? Do you know what it means? How can you find out?
- When you read the text on the back cover, do you think Humble Bumble sounds humble at all? Do you think she’s showing off to others?
- How do you act if you want to be humble?
- Do you think Humble Bumble is going to be a team player? Why or why not?

### COMPREHENSION:

- What does the author mean when she says ‘At the sun’s first glow’? How else could she have described the time of day? (p.3)
- Have you seen a bumblebee sleep in a flower? Where else might a bumblebee sleep? (p.3)
- Humble Bumble tries to look at her reflection in a dew drop. What does this tell you about Humble Bumble? (p.4)
- Have you heard the word ‘Mōrena’ before? What can you see in the text that is its English translation? (p.4)
- Why do you think bumblebees collect pollen? (p.4)
- Point out the asterisk at the end of the last line on page 4. Explain that this symbol indicates that there’s a footnote at the bottom of the page. A footnote is an additional piece of information that usually appears at the bottom of the relevant page. Read the footnote to find out the English translation of the Māori proverb. Have you heard this proverb before? What do you think it means? (p.4)
- What does the word ‘puehu’ mean? Point to the helpful glossary at the bottom of the page. Read the English meaning of the word ‘puehu’. (p.6)
- Why do you think Bumble Pipī is happy to carry the pollen that she has collected back to the nest? (p.6)
- Humble Bumble insists on carrying the pollen. Why do you think she’s doing this? (p.7)
- Back at the nest, all the other Bumbles greet Humble Bumble. Why do you think she doesn’t say who really collected the pollen? Why is she pretending that she was the one who collected it? (p.8)
- How do you think Bumble Pipī feels when she’s ignored? (p.9)



- What do you think Humble Bumble is thinking when she sees Bumble Brie with so much pollen on her legs? (p.10)
- Do you think Humble Bumble wants to help Bumble Brie, or do you think she's up to something? Why do you think Humble Bumble is like that? (p.11)
- Look at Bumble Brie's facial expression. Do you think she believes that Humble Bumble is trying to be helpful? (p.11)
- When Humble Bumble calls to the other Bumbles that they're bringing a lot of puehu, do you think she's being misleading? What should she say instead to be more truthful? (p.12)
- Look at Bumble Brie's body language. She looks deflated. Why is she acting like this? (p.12)
- What clue is there in the illustration on page 12 to show which Bumble really collected the pollen? (p.12)
- Sometimes the one quietly achieving something doesn't get the recognition or credit for his or her actions. Instead, the one boasting the most and making the most noise is the one that others pay attention to. Why do you think Humble Bumble is acting so grandly? Why do you think Bumble Brie doesn't say something about it? (p.13)
- Do you think most of the Bumbles are happy to work quietly away and not get the recognition they deserve? (p.14)
- Humble Bumble seems to crave recognition from the other Bumbles. What important lesson does she need to learn? (p.14)
- Bumble Brie is also ignored. How do you think she feels about that? (p.15)
- Bumble Whī is the fastest of all the Bumbles. How do you think Humble Bumble might feel about that? Do you think she might be jealous of Bumble Whī? Do you think jealousy is a good or bad thing? Explain your answer. (p.16)
- What do you think Humble Bumble is planning to do when she sees Bumble Whī fly back to the nest? (p.17)
- Bumbles are social insects. They live and work in large groups. Do you think there should be more important members of the group or should everyone be equal? Explain your answer. (p.18)
- The Bumbles ignore poor Bumble Whī. What could Bumble Whī do when that happens? (p.19)
- Humble Bumble drags her feet across every single flower in the field so that the other Bumbles think the pollen has already been collected. Is this a good idea? Why or why not? (p.20)
- Humble Bumble's actions mean that the other Bumbles have to fly much further and use up more energy than they really need to. What kind of Bumble is Humble Bumble? (p.21)
- Humble Bumble has the whole field of flowers to herself. Is Humble Bumble being selfish or smart? Do you think she is being humble? Explain your answer. (p.22)
- Have you heard someone brag? How did it make you feel? (p.22)
- It's good to be proud of your achievements, but what happens when you forget about humility in the process? (p.22)
- Humble Bumble works alone and gets the work only half done. How could she work smarter? (p.23)
- Pī Kuīni, the queen Bumble, scolds Humble Bumble for her actions. Do you think Humble Bumble deserves that? Why or why not? (p.24)
- Humble Bumble feels ashamed when she's told off. What can she do now to make amends to the others? (p.25)
- On page 26, Pī Kuīni tells Humble Bumble a Māori proverb. Do you agree with the proverb? Explain your answer. (p.26)
- Why does Humble Bumble buzz awkwardly inside her flower? (p.26)
- Bumble Brie offers to help Humble Bumble collect the puehu in her flower. How does this help the situation? Would you do something like that? Why or why not? (p.27)
- Then all the Bumbles offer to help. They all look happy now. Why is this? (p.28)
- Why does Pī Kuīni smile when she sees the Bumbles flying off together? (p.29)
- How do you feel when you do the mahi and achieve what you set out to do? How do you feel when you've done mahi together as a group? (p.30)
- Do you think Humble Bumble finally learns the true meaning of kotahitanga? Explain your answer. (p.31)
- Do you think Humble Bumble will sleep well in her flower? Why or why not? (p.31)
- The illustrator has identified the main characters in subtle ways. Humble Bumble has her blue flower, but can you see which features Pīpī, Brie, Whī and Pī Kuīni have that distinguish them from the other Bumbles?
- The whakauki/proverb 'kāore te kūmara e kōrero mō tōna ake reka' suggests we shouldn't speak of our own achievements and remain humble. Do you think that's useful or not?

### SEE NEXT PAGE FOR ACTIVITIES



teacher toolkit

 SCHOLASTIC

# Activities

## ACTIVITY 1: BUMBLE NAMES

The author names some of the Bumbles, such as Humble Bumble, Bumble Pīpī, Bumble Brie and Bumble Whī. Names often have special meanings, for example, the word 'pīpī' means 'to squeak or chirp'. Invent a name for four other Bumbles in the nest. You may choose to give them Māori names and write the meanings of the names in English. Share your names with a friend.

## ACTIVITY 2: WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

Design a 'Did You Know?' fact box. You could even refer to it as a 'What's the Buzz?' fact box. The term 'What's the Buzz?' means what people are saying about something or someone. Revisit the facts featured on page 32 and choose one of them to go in your fact box. Design a fun-looking border to surround your text. It could have bumblebee-themed colours, such as black, yellow and white or it could have a lovely brightly coloured natural floral border. Draw a bumblebee as well. Work alone or in pairs and then display your finished work around the classroom.

## ACTIVITY 3: PETAL POWER

Design three character trait diagrams, each in the shape of a stylised flower with about four or five petals. Characters have physical traits (outside) and personality traits (inside). In the centre of your flower diagrams feature the name *Humble Bumble*. On one petal diagram, list all the physical character traits of Humble Bumble, such as four wings, baskets on her legs, stinky feet and so on. Next, on another flower diagram, list the personality traits of Humble Bumble at the beginning of the story, such as boastful, not humble, not hard working and so on. Then, on the third petal diagram, list the traits that Humble Bumble displays by the end of the story, such as humble, hard-working and a team player. Work in groups or complete the task as a teacher-led class activity.

## ACTIVITY 4: BUMBLE AND KŪMARA

The author features some well-known whakataukī (Māori proverbs) in her story. In a footnote on page 4, she has the following proverb: 'The kūmara never speaks of its own sweetness'. In other words, the kūmara doesn't say how sweet it is, or doesn't self-praise itself. The proverb is about humility, a word that means you show no special importance that makes you better than others. Draw a picture of the kūmara and a large speech bubble coming from its mouth, then draw Humble Bumble facing the kūmara. Write what the kūmara would say to Humble Bumble on page 4 when it sees Humble Bumble trying to catch her reflection in the dew drop. Alternatively, you could write about what the kūmara would say when Humble Bumble on page 8 takes the credit for collecting so much pollen.

## ACTIVITY 5: STINKY FEET!

On pages 20 and 32, we learn that bumblebees have stinky feet. As they collect pollen from flowers, they leave behind a special scent from their feet. This lets other bumblebees know that they don't need to visit that flower to gather pollen. Draw a picture of Humble Bumble's stinky feet on a beautiful colourful flower that has lots of pollen on it. Have fun with the stinky feet aspect of the illustration. Use lots of squiggly movement lines to indicate a terrible smell is coming off Humble Bumble's feet!

Written by Janine Scott