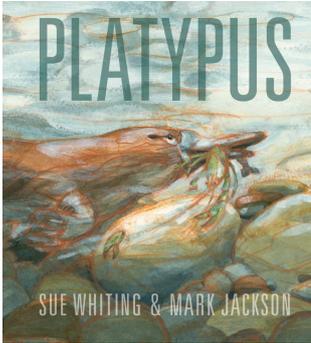




Walker Books Classroom Ideas



Platypus

by Sue Whiting
Illustrated by Mark Jackson
ISBN: 9781922077448
ARRP: \$27.95
NZRRP: \$29.99
August 2015

*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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Outline:

Platypus leaves his burrow in the riverbank and dives into the cool green pool. It is dusk and he is hungry. Platypus is always busy, always moving, looking for his next meal. Follow platypus as he plays, swims, dives and scurries around his riverbank home.

Author/Illustrator Information:

Sue Whiting started her working life as a primary school teacher with a special interest in literacy education and children's literature. In 2005 Sue left teaching to pursue a career in children's book publishing. She is also a successful author who has written numerous books for children and young adults: fiction and nonfiction, picture books through to YA.

Mark Jackson is an illustrator based in Melbourne. He has co-illustrated several books with his wife, Heather Potter, and their work has been featured in several exhibitions. Mark has three previous titles published by Walker Books Australia: *The Truth About Penguins* written by Meg McKinlay, 2010; *Not Like Georgie* written by Scott Hatcher, 2009; and *Stuck!* written by Charlotte Calder, 2009. For more information and samples of his artwork, please visit his website: <http://www.jackpot-art.com/>

How to Use These Notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

<p>These notes are for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary years 2+ • Ages 5+ 	<p>Key Learning Areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • Science 	<p>Example of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-fiction • Narrative non-fiction 	<p>Themes/Ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Platypuses • Australian wildlife • Nature 					
<p align="center">National Curriculum Focus:*</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>English</p> <p>Year 2</p> <p>ACELA1460 ACELA1463 ACELA1465 ACELA1466 ACELA1468 ACELA1469 ACELT1587 ACELT1589 ACELT1590 ACELT1593 ACELY1665 ACELY1666 ACELY1668 ACELY1671</p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Year 3</p> <p>ACELA1475 ACELA1477 ACELA1478 ACELA1483 ACELT1594 ACELT1596 ACELT1598 ACELT1599 ACELT1600 ACELT1601 ACELT1791 ACELY1678</p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Science</p> <p>Year 2</p> <p>ACSSU030 ACSSU032 ACSI037</p> <p>Year 3</p> <p>ACSSU044 ACSHE050</p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>*This book is a useful resource for biological sciences study throughout the F-6 Australian Curriculum.</p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>*Key content descriptions have been identified from the Australian National Curriculum. However, this is not an exhaustive list of National Curriculum content able to be addressed through studying this text.</p> </td> </tr> </table>				<p>English</p> <p>Year 2</p> <p>ACELA1460 ACELA1463 ACELA1465 ACELA1466 ACELA1468 ACELA1469 ACELT1587 ACELT1589 ACELT1590 ACELT1593 ACELY1665 ACELY1666 ACELY1668 ACELY1671</p>	<p>Year 3</p> <p>ACELA1475 ACELA1477 ACELA1478 ACELA1483 ACELT1594 ACELT1596 ACELT1598 ACELT1599 ACELT1600 ACELT1601 ACELT1791 ACELY1678</p>	<p>Science</p> <p>Year 2</p> <p>ACSSU030 ACSSU032 ACSI037</p> <p>Year 3</p> <p>ACSSU044 ACSHE050</p>	<p>*This book is a useful resource for biological sciences study throughout the F-6 Australian Curriculum.</p>	<p>*Key content descriptions have been identified from the Australian National Curriculum. However, this is not an exhaustive list of National Curriculum content able to be addressed through studying this text.</p>
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Walker Books Classroom Ideas

Discussion Questions and Activities:

Before Reading

Before reading *Platypus*, examine the front and back cover of the book. Identify the following:

- The title
- The author
- The illustrator
- The publisher
- The blurb.

What do you think the book will be about just from the information available on the cover? Write your predictions down and revisit them after reading the book. Were your original thoughts correct?

Have a class discussion on platypuses where students call out what they know about them and the teacher records these thoughts in a mind map on the board. After reading the book as a class, revisit the mind map and remove any incorrect information and add in new information that you have learned from the book.

Exploring the Text

Is *Platypus* an imaginative, informative or persuasive text? Is it a combination of more than one of these types of texts? How can you tell? Who do you think the book was created for?

The text in this book is presented in two styles. Identify the formats. Why do you think the book is designed this way? Read the book using each format separately and then discuss how the different formats change the purpose and alter the perception of *Platypus*. Which writing style do you prefer: the descriptive storytelling style or the informative factual style? In what types of texts would each of these writing styles usually be used? For example: novels, short stories, newspaper articles and reference books.

A number of literary devices are used in the text, including:

- Metaphor
e.g. "Its tangle of roots clings desperately, a catcher's mitt for fallen leaves and broken-off branches." (page 6)
- Personification
e.g. "...the water lazes in a still green pool..." (page 6)

Can you find any other examples of these devices? What effect do you think each of them has on the text?

Read page 14 and discuss what effect the rhyme and repetition has on the reader. Why do you think Sue Whiting used this style on this page?

Platypus includes an index at the back of the book. What is the purpose of an index? How do you use it? In what kind of books would you normally find an index?

Using the index as a starting point, collect any other words from the book that you don't know the meaning of and create a platypus dictionary. You can also collect words and phrases from any further research to add to your dictionary. Illustrate some of the entries to help further explain their meaning.

Research Sue Whiting online or in your school library. What other books has she written? How are they similar or different to *Platypus*?

Exploring the Illustrations

Mark Jackson has included a discarded plastic bottle in one of the illustrations. Why do you think he chose to include this? What can people do to avoid having their rubbish end up in rivers and other places it doesn't belong?

Look at the colours the illustrator has used in *Platypus*. Why do you think he chose to use these colours? Do they accurately represent the environment that platypuses live in?

Research Mark Jackson online or in your school library. What other books has he illustrated? How are they similar or different to *Platypus*?



Walker Books Classroom Ideas

Further Activities

Find other books about platypuses in your school library. How do the authors and illustrators deal with the subject of platypuses differently to Sue Whiting and Mark Jackson? Choose one other book about platypuses and present it to the class, explaining how it is different from *Platypus*.

Draw a large picture of a platypus and label its features and characteristics (such as their waterproof fur, venomous spur, etc.) Also draw pictures of some of the animals that platypuses like to eat.

Think about the colour of a platypus and the colours of the muddy rivers where they live. How does their colouring protect them from predators?

Do you think a platypus is a good animal for a pet? Why or why not? Hold a class discussion.

In small groups, create a diorama in a cardboard box to represent the platypus's habitat. Try to incorporate materials from the natural environment into your display. Use the text and illustrations as a guide as to which colours and materials to use.

In what areas of Australia do platypuses live? Are you likely to see one in the wild? Where can you go to get a closer look at a live platypus?

Read the poem *Old Man Platypus* by Banjo Patterson to the class (the poem can be found at <http://allpoetry.com/Old-Man-Platypus>). Using information that you have learned from this book, Banjo Patterson's poem and further research, write your own poem about a platypus.

"[Platypuses'] biggest threat is loss of habitat, through drought, flooding, land clearing and water pollution." (page 28)

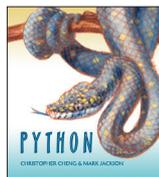
How can your class or school help in protecting or regenerating natural habitats for platypuses?

Write a book review on *Platypus*. Write what you liked about the book and how the author and illustrator conveyed information in an interesting way. Mention any books that are similar to this book and make a recommendation as to who you think will enjoy this book.

Great Titles From Walker Books' Nature Storybook Series:



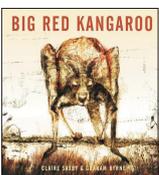
Bilby Secrets
Edel Wignell
Mark Jackson
9781921529320 HB
9781922077042 PB
Classroom ideas available



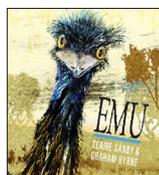
Python
Christopher Cheng
Mark Jackson
9781921529603 HB
Classroom ideas available



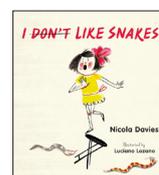
Flight of the Honey Bee
Raymond Huber
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Luciano Lozano
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