

Appreciating poems: Read this poem and take the quiz below to check your understanding

### THE PLATYPUS

My child, the Duck-billed Platypus

A sad example sets for us:

From him we learn how Indecision

Of character provokes Derision.

This vacillating Thing, you see,

Could not decide which he would be,

Fish, Flesh, or Fowl, and chose all three.

The scientists were sorely vexed

To classify him; so perplexed

Their brains that they, with Rage at bay,

Called him a horrid name one day, -

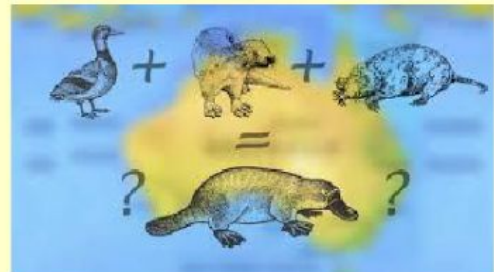
A name that baffles, frights, and shocks us, -

Or-ni-tho-rhyn-chus Par-a-dox-us.

- By Oliver Herford- An American writer and artist who wrote many funny poems for children to enjoy



The platypus is a semi-aquatic mammal that has a very unusual appearance. It is duck billed. has a beaver-like tail, lays eggs, and has otter-like webbed feet.



#### 1. New words: Here is the glossary for the new words in the poem.

1. derision - a strong feeling that somebody is ridiculous.
2. vacillating - to keep changing your opinion on something in a way that annoys people.
3. perplexed - confused and anxious
4. sorely - very much
5. vexed - upset or annoyed
6. horrid - very unpleasant or unkind
7. baffles - to confuse somebody completely.
8. at bay - to prevent a problem.



II. Choose the correct answer.

1. The 'him' in the poem refers to the

- i. poet                      ii) platypus                      iii) reader                      iv) scientists

2. The 'we' in the poem refers to the

- i. poet                      ii) platypus                      iii) reader                      iv) scientists

3. Why did the scientists find it difficult to classify the platypus?

- i. He chose to have the qualities of fish, flesh and fowl all at once.
- ii. They were sorely vexed with him
- iii. They were perplexed and angry

4. What irritating qualities does the platypus have according to the poet?

- i. Indecision of character
- ii. Unable to decide which he wanted to be
- iii. Both (i) and (ii)

5. As a result of these qualities, what do the scientists feel towards the platypus?

- i. Angry and confused
- ii. full of praise and admiration
- iii. None of the above

6. What is the outcome of the scientists' confusion and anger?

- i. they call him a horrid name that confuses and frightens people
- ii. they give him a pleasant name that is liked by people
- iii. they leave him nameless!

7. Do you think the poem is funny? Here are some lines from the poem. Choose the options that support your opinion.

- i. The vacillating thing you see, could not decide which he would be
- ii. The scientists were sorely vexed to classify him
- iii. So perplexed their brains that they called him a horrid name one day
- iv. All the above lines make the poem funny

8, Match the pairs of rhyming words in the poem.

Platypus	perplexed
Indecision	day
see	us
vexed	derision
bay	three