

TASK 4 - Poetry

Read the poem *A Dog's Mistake* on this page. Using complete sentences, answer questions 26 to 32.

A Dog's Mistake

He had drifted in among us as a straw drifts with the tide,
He was just a wand'ring mongrel from the weary world outside;
He was not aristocratic, being mostly ribs and hair,
With a hint of spaniel parents and a touch of native bear.

- 5 He was very poor and humble and content with what he got,
So we fed him bones and biscuits, till he heartened up a lot;
Then he growled and grew aggressive, treating orders with disdain,
Till at last he bit the butcher, which would argue want of brain.

- Now the butcher, noble fellow, was a sport beyond belief,
10 And instead of bringing actions he brought half a shin of beef,
Which he handed on to Fido, who received it as a right
And removed it to the garden, where he buried it at night.

- 'Twas the means of his undoing, for my wife, who'd stood his friend,
To adopt a slang expression, "went in off the deepest end",
15 For among the pinks and pansies, the gloxinias and the gorse
He had made an excavation like a graveyard for a horse.

- Then we held a consultation which decided on his fate:
'Twas in anger more than sorrow that we led him to the gate,
And we handed him the beef-bone as provision for the day,
20 Then we opened wide the portal and we told him, "On your way."

Banjo Paterson

*gloxinia is a flowering houseplant

*gorse is a dark green bush with small, yellow flowers

Questions: A Dog's Mistake

26. What action of the dog in stanza two shows that it was not very smart?

1 mark

27. "He was just a wand'ring mongrel..." (line 2)

Why is this an appropriate description of Fido?

2 marks

28. Give the meaning of each of the following words as used in the poem.

heartened (line 6) -

portal (line 20) -

2 marks

29. Identify a simile used in the poem.

1 mark

30. What do you understand about the wife's behaviour from the line, "went in off the deepest end"?

2 marks

31. Complete the table below with evidence to support your answers.

Persons in the poem	Quality	Evidence from the poem
The wife	kind	
Fido		

3 marks

32. If you were the butcher, would you have brought beef for Fido? Give a reason for your answer.

2 marks