



Teacher Resource

Platypus

Focus Questions

Discuss the BTN story as a class and record the main points of the discussion. Students will then respond to the following:

1. What are some unique features of the platypus?
2. Platypuses are monotremes. What does that mean?
3. Scientists originally thought the platypus was a fake. True or false?
4. What are some threats to platypuses?
5. Why are some scientists in New South Wales trying to change the protection status of the platypus?

Activity: Note taking

Students will practise their note-taking skills while watching the BTN Platypus story. After watching the story, ask students to reflect on and organise the information into three categories. What information in the story was...?

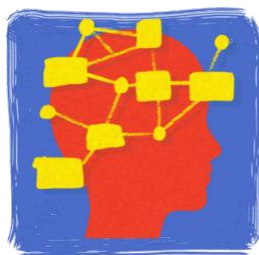
- Positive
- Negative or
- Interesting



Activity: Class Discussion

Create a class mind map with PLATYPUS in the middle. Ask students to record what they know about the species. In small groups, ask students to brainstorm responses to the following questions:

- What do you know about platypuses?
- Why is it important to protect the species?
- What is the conservation status of platypuses? Is it the same in every state?
- What makes the platypus unique?
- What questions do you have about platypuses?



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KEY LEARNING

Students will develop a deeper understanding of platypuses and create a profile.

CURRICULUM

Science – Year 5

Examine how particular structural features and behaviours of living things enable their survival in specific habitats.

Science – Year 6

Investigate the physical conditions of a habitat and analyse how the growth and survival of living things is affected by changing physical conditions.

Activity: Key Words

Students will brainstorm a list of key words that relate to the BTN Platypus story. Here are some words to get them started.

THREATENED SPECIES	MAMMAL	MONOTREME
BURROW	VENOMOUS	ELECTRORECEPTORS

Ask students to write what they think is the meaning of each word (including unfamiliar words). They will swap definitions with a partner and ask them to add to or change the definition. Check these against the dictionary definition.

Activity: Platypus profile

Students will research and write a profile featuring the platypus. Encourage students to use a range of sources to find their information.

Research

Students will research the following and then share their research findings with the class or create a display in the classroom.

- Illustration or photo
- Name (common and scientific name)
- Conservation status – What is being done to protect the species?
- Appearance
- Adaptations
- Habitat
- Threats
- Unique features



Further Investigation

Students will respond to one or more of the following questions.

- How do platypuses use electroreceptors in their bills to detect prey? Why is it necessary for hunting?
- How does the platypus's venom work?
- Why do platypuses glow under UV light?
- Investigate why scientists originally thought the platypus was a fake.

Activity: Platypus Dreaming Story

Students will explore Indigenous people's connection to the platypus through Dreaming Stories. [Listen to Biladurang](#) - the Dreaming Story of how First Nations people believe the platypus got its features. Ask students to retell the story in their own words.



Useful Websites

- [Platypus Protection](#) – BTN
- [Platypus Return](#) – BTN
- [Platypus](#) – Australian Museum
- [What is a monotreme?](#) – Australian Museum
- [The platypus: a unique and vulnerable Australian](#) – Museums Victoria
- [Our animals: Lives of platypuses](#) – ABC Education