

## Grade VIII - English

### Lesson 6. The Duck and the Kangaroo

#### Poetry

#### Soul of the Poem

The poem opens with a conversation between the duck and the kangaroo. The duck admires the kangaroo for the way it hops. The duck feels bored of his life in the pond. The duck, therefore, requests the kangaroo to give it a ride on his back. The duck also promises that it would not say anything except "quack." The duck wanted to see the entire world.

The kangaroo reflects on what the duck had said and thinks that this might bring him some luck. However, he had one objection. The kangaroo believed that the duck's wet and cold feet might cause some problem to the kangaroo. It was possible that he might get unwell because it .

The duck offers a quick solution to the problem raised by the kangaroo. The duck told him that he already bought four pairs of socks and a cloak to keep away the cold. Also, the duck said that he would daily smoke a cigar to keep himself warm.

Hearing this, the kangaroo agrees to the duck's idea and both of them rejoice. The kangaroo asked the duck to sit in a steady manner and balanced him properly. And then went round seeing the world in complete happiness.

#### Stanzawise Explanation of The Poem

#### Stanza 1

Said the Duck to the Kangaroo,  
'Good gracious! How you hop!  
Over the fields and the water too,  
As if you never would stop!  
My life is a bore in this nasty pond,  
And I long to go out in the world beyond!  
I wish I could hop like you!  
Said the Duck to the Kangaroo.



**Reference :**

The above lines have been taken from Edward Lear's poem, 'The Duck and the Kangaroo.'

**Context :**

The poet in these lines shows the boredom experienced by the duck.

**Explanation :**

The duck praises the Kangaroo. The duck is fascinated to see the kangaroo's hop, especially over the fields and water. The duck compares the kangaroo's life to his, and thinks that he has a boring life, forced to live in the pond. The duck longed to step out into the world and go around it, but to no avail. The duck could only wish and fancy that had he had the ability to hop, life would be different and interesting.

### Stanza 2

'Please give me a ride on your back!'

Said the Duck to the Kangaroo.

'I would sit quite still, and say nothing but "Quack",

The whole of the long day through!

And we'd go to the Dee, and the Jelly Bo Lee,

Over the land, and over the sea;-Please take me on

A ride! O do!'

Said the Duck to the Kangaroo.

**Reference :**

Same as above

**Context :**

The poet in these lines shows the duck making an attempt to change his boring life.

**Explanation :**

The duck thinks of a way to translate his boring life to something interesting. He asks the kangaroo to give him a ride on his back. The duck promises the kangaroo that he would not trouble him and not say anything except 'quack'. The duck begins to think of the places they might go to. He thinks that they could go to the Dee and the Jelly Bo Lee, all imaginary places.



The duck would also then be free to go over the land and the sea. The duck almost pleads to the kangaroo that he might accept his wish.

### Stanza 3

Said the Kangaroo to the Duck,  
'This requires a little reflection;  
Perhaps on the whole it might bring me luck,  
And there seems but one objection,  
Which is, if you'll let me speak so bold,  
Your feet are unpleasantly wet and cold,  
And would probably give me the roo-  
Matiz! Said the Kangaroo.

**Reference :**

Same as above

**Context :**

The poet highlights the kangaroo's apprehensions in giving in to the duck's request.

**Explanation :**

The kangaroo tells the duck that he needs some time to think about the matter. He reflects that this proposal might bring him some luck. On the contrary, he thought that there was also a possibility that he might get unwell.

He explains to duck his objection. The wet, cold and unpleasant feet of the duck might make him prey to diseases like rheumatism.

### Stanza 4

Said the Duck, 'As I sat on the rocks,  
I have thought over that completely,  
And I bought four pairs of worsted socks  
Which fit my web-feet neatly.  
And to keep out the cold I've bought a cloak,  
And every day a cigar I'll smoke,  
All to follow my own dear true  
Love of a Kangaroo!"



**Reference :**

Same as above

**Context :**

The poet in these lines share the duck's enthusiasm in fulfilling his wish.

**Explanation :**

The duck spent some time sitting on the rocks, meditating upon the nature of the problem. Soon, the duck was able to come up with a solution.

He went to the kangaroo and told him that he has bought four pairs of woollen socks and a cloak in order to keep away the cold. Also, that he would daily smoke a cigar to keep himself warm and thereby avoid all problem of cold.

### Stanza 5

Said the Kangaroo, 'I'm ready!

All in the moonlight pale,

But to balance me well, dear Duck, sit steady!

And quite at the end of my tail!

So away they went a hop and a bound,

And they hopped the whole world

Three times round;

And who so happy, - O who,

As the Duck and the Kangaroo?

**Reference :**

Same as above

**Context :**

The poet in these lines describes the happiness experienced by the duck and the kangaroo.

**Explanation :**

The kangaroo agreed to the solution offered by the duck. The kangaroo made the last warning, asking the duck to balance himself well and ride at the end of kangaroo's tail. This way they decided to go around the world, hopping from one place to another in complete happiness.



Working with the Poem

1. Taking words that come at the end of lines, write five pairs of rhyming words. Read each pair aloud.

For example, pond- beyond

Back.....

Bold.....

Duck.....

Rocks.....

Ready.....

Ans. Back-quack

Bold-cold

Duck-luck

Rocks-socks

Ready-steady

2. Complete the dialogue.

Duck : Dear Kangaroo! Why don't you

.....

Kangaroo : With pleasure, my dear Duck, though

.....

Duck : That won't be a problem. I will

.....

Ans.

Duck : Dear Kangaroo! Why don't you let me ride on your back?

Kangaroo : With pleasure, my dear Duck, though there is just one problem, your wet and cold feet .....

Duck : That won't be a problem. I will bring with me a few pairs of woollen socks and a clock.

3. The Kangaroo does not want to catch 'rheumatism'. Spot this word in stanza 3 and say why it is spelt differently. Why is it in two parts? Why does the second part begin with a capital letter?

The word 'roo-Matiz' is the alternative spelling of rheumatism. It is spelt differently so as to link it with the 'roo' that comes in the kangaroo. Rheumatism is associated with joint pains.



Kangaroos are good at hopping, without taking into consideration the effect this would have on their body.

**4. Do you find the poem humorous? Read aloud lines that make you laugh.**

The poem is a bit humorous. For instance, the lines, “and everyday a cigar I’ll smoke”, “And we’d go to the Dee, and the Jelly Bo Lee, Over the land and over the sea.”

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**Chapter Practice**

**Very Short Answer Type Questions**

**1. Why was the duck fascinated by the kangaroo?**

The duck was fascinated by the fact that the kangaroo was able to hop.

**2. What were the Dee and Jelly Bo Lee?**

The Dee and Jelly Bo Lee were imaginary places that duck wanted to go to.

**3. Why was the duck unhappy?**

The duck was unhappy because of his boring life. The duck was also not happy knowing that his life was restricted to the pond.

**4. What appeal did the duck make before the kangaroo?**

The duck appealed to the kangaroo to make him ride on his back and show him the entire world.

**5. Select a word or a phrase from the poem that describes the socks purchased by the duck.**

“Worst ed socks”

“Socks which fit my webbed feet neatly.”

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**Short Answer Type Questions**

**1. What objection did the kangaroo raise?**

The kangaroo did not mind carrying the duck on his back, but he had an objection. The kangaroo felt that the wet and cold feet of the duck may cause him some problem. The kangaroo feared that he might catch rheumatism.



## 2. What solution did the duck offer?

The duck purchased four pairs of woollen socks and a cloak to keep away the cold. He also decided to daily smoke a cigar. This was the solution that the duck offered to keep away the kangaroo from catching cold or rheumatism.

### Value Based Question

**The duck and the kangaroo, both seem to represent two important virtues. What are they?**

The duck is fascinated by the kangaroo's ability to hop from one place to another. The duck is seen to have a very positive and appreciative nature in the poem.

Rather than being jealous of the Kangaroo's skills, the duck compliments him and is willing to seek his help to be able to enjoy the world. The Kangaroo, too, is humble in being willing to help the duck and offer him a glimpse of the world outside the pond.

### Extract Based Questions

#### Extract 1

**Directions (Q.Nos.1- 6) read the extract given below and answer the following questions.**

'Good gracious! How you hop!  
Over the fields and the water too,  
As if you never would stop!  
My life is a bore in this nasty pond,  
And I long to go out in the world beyond!  
I wish I could hop like you!'

**1. Who is the speaker of these lines?**

- (a) The duck                      (b) The kangaroo                      (c) The poet                      (d) The frog

**Ans. (a) The duck**

**2. Who was bored of his life?**

- (a) The duck                      (b) The Kangaroo                      (c) The poet                      (d) The frog

**Ans. (a) The duck**



3. Who was very good at hopping?

- (a) The duck                      (b) The Kangaroo                      (c) The Poet                      (d) The frog

Ans. (b) The Kangaroo

4. What did the speaker long to do?

The speaker longed to go out into the world beyond the pool.

5. What does the phrase, 'good gracious' mean in these lines?

The phrase, 'good gracious' conveys the sense of speaker's surprise.

6. Where did the speaker wish to go?

The speaker wished to go over the land and in the water too.

### Extract 2

Directions (Q.Nos.1- 6) Read the extract given below and answer the following questions.

Said the Duck, 'As I sat on the rocks,  
I have thought over that completely,  
And I bought four pairs of worsted socks  
Which fit my web-feet neatly.  
And to keep out the cold I've bought a cloak,  
And every day a cigar I'll smoke,

1. How many pairs of socks did the duck buy?

- (a) One                      (b) Two                      (c) Three                      (d) Four

Ans. (d) Four

2. The word worsted means.....

- (a) woollen                      (b) cotton                      (c) nylon                      (d) worse

Ans. (a) woollen

3. What did the duck decide to do daily?

- (a) Smoke a cigar                      (b) Step into water  
(c) Ride the kangaroo's back                      (d) Roll into the mud

Ans. (a) Smoke a cigar

4. What was the quality of the worsted socks?

The worsted socks fitted the duck's webbed feet neatly.



**5. What other things did the duck purchase besides the socks?**

The duck also purchased a cloak besides the worsted socks.

**6. Why does the duck make all these purchases and plans?**

The duck made all these purchases to keep the cold away.

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