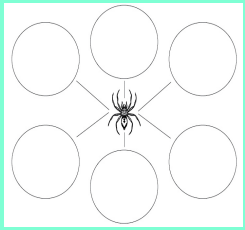
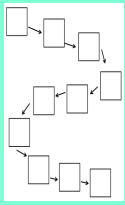
Third reading - question the author

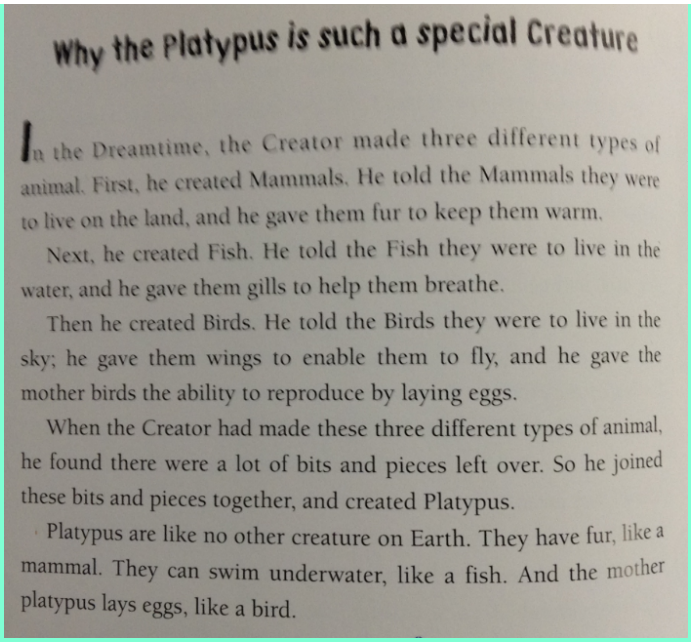
LO: To check my understanding as I read the story.

What have you remembered about the myth?
You could:
- draw a mind map
- draw a story board
- re-tell the myth as a summary









Why the Platypus is such a special Creature

In the Dreamtime, the Creator made three different types of animal. First, he created Mammals. He told the Mammals they were to live on the land, and he gave them fur to keep them warm.

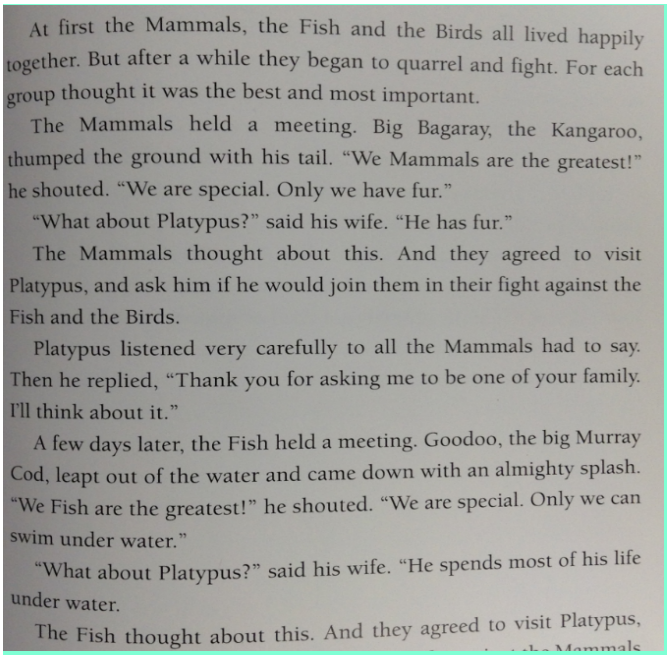
Next, he created Fish. He told the Fish they were to live in the water, and he gave them gills to help them breathe.

Then he created Birds. He told the Birds they were to live in the sky; he gave them wings to enable them to fly, and he gave the mother birds the ability to reproduce by laying eggs.

When the Creator had made these three different types of animal, he found there were a lot of bits and pieces left over. So he joined these bits and pieces together, and created Platypus.

Platypus are like no other creature on Earth. They have fur, like a mammal. They can swim underwater, like a fish. And the mother platypus lays eggs, like a bird.

This is an Australian ancient aboriginal legend from the Billabong (oxbow lake). I know other aboriginal stories such as what makes frogs croak and why kangaroos have pouches. I know other stories involving platypuses such as the 'Little Platypus.' I know that this Creation story is different from the Creation story in the first book (Genesis) in the Bible.
This creation story is from the Dreamtime which is the period during which life was created, according to Aboriginal culture. In this legend the creator creates just three animals: Mammals, Fish and Birds. Finally, the platypus was made from the left over pieces which resulted in platypuses having a mixture of characteristics which we would usually associate with mammals, fish and birds.



At first the Mammals, the Fish and the Birds all lived happily together. But after a while they began to quarrel and fight. For each group thought it was the best and most important.

The Mammals held a meeting. Big Bagaray, the Kangaroo, thumped the ground with his tail. "We Mammals are the greatest!" he shouted. "We are special. Only we have fur."

"What about Platypus?" said his wife. "He has fur."

The Mammals thought about this. And they agreed to visit Platypus, and ask him if he would join them in their fight against the Fish and the Birds.

Platypus listened very carefully to all the Mammals had to say. Then he replied, "Thank you for asking me to be one of your family. I'll think about it."

A few days later, the Fish held a meeting. Goodoo, the big Murray Cod, leapt out of the water and came down with an almighty splash. "We Fish are the greatest!" he shouted. "We are special. Only we can swim under water."

"What about Platypus?" said his wife. "He spends most of his life under water.

The Fish thought about this. And they agreed to visit Platypus,

Just like siblings in a family, the different animals first lived happily together before they started quarrelling with each other. Each of them thought they were more important than each other.

The Mammals thought they were special and the greatest. Soon afterwards, the Mammals decided to ask the Platypus (who had fur as well) to join them in their fight against the Fish and the Birds. Wisely, Platypus told them that he'd think about it.

It doesn't surprise me that a few days later, Platypus was visited by the Fish as Platypus has some characteristics of a fish as well.

The Fish thought about this. And they agreed to visit Platypus, and ask him if he would join them in their fight against the Mammals and the Birds.

Platypus listened very carefully to all the Fish had to say. Then he replied, "Thank you for asking me to be one of your family. I'll think about it."

Next, the Birds held a meeting. Bungil, the Eagle, spread and flapped his wings. The sound was like a tree falling. "We Birds are the greatest!" he shouted. "We are special. Only we can fly and lay eggs."



Being as wise as an owl, Platypus once again told his second visitor (Fish) that he would think about it when he was asked to join the Fish group.

Amusingly, it wasn't long before Platypus was due another visitor ... the Birds!

Can you guess which characteristic Mrs Platypus has which birds have as well?

"What about Mrs Platypus?" said his wife. "She lays eggs."

The Birds thought about this. And they agreed to visit Platypus, and ask him if he would join them in their fight against the Mammals and the Fish.

Platypus listened very carefully to all the Birds had to say. Then he replied, "Thank you for asking me to be one of your family. I'll think about it."

Platypus thought and thought about what he should do. But no matter how hard he thought, he couldn't decide which group to join. After a while the animals got tired of waiting for him to make up his mind. They gathered outside his home on the bank of the billabong. The Mammals shouted, "Join us. We are the best!" The Fish shouted, "Join us. We are special!" The Birds shouted, "Join us. We are the best and special!"

At last, in the cool of the evening, Platypus came out. And all the animals fell silent.

"I've made up my mind," Platypus said. "I am part of each of you, and part of all of you. And that's how I want to stay. So thank you very much for asking me, but I've decided not to join any of you."

The animals didn't like this.

So Platypus went on, "Please let me explain. When the Creator first made us, he made each of us different. So each of us, in our own way, is special. But special doesn't mean better. None of us is better or worse than his neighbour. Only different. So we ought to respect each other's differences, and live together without fighting."

When the animals thought about this, they agreed that Platypus was very wise, and had made a good decision.



Now it so happened that, standing among the animals listening that evening to Platypus, was a hunter of the Pintubi tribe. This hunter was so impressed by what Platypus said, that he made his people promise never to harm such a wise creature.

Which is why no Aboriginal Australian will ever hunt and kill a Platypus – even if he is hungry.



Third reading - question the author

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