

## CHAPTER- 7

# Snakes

We see different kinds of creatures around us. Some are small, some big, some crawl, whereas some run very fast. There are some animals whose name itself scares people. One of them is the snake.



After all, what is there in a snake?

Why are we scared of snakes?

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Where do snakes live?

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Draw a snake you've seen.

Have you ever come across a snake in your house or your friend's house or in the neighbourhood?

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If a snake is seen in a house, what do people do to chase it out?

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What do people do if a snake bites? Discuss and write.

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You yourself must be having several questions in your mind regarding snakes. Make a list of some such questions that comes to your mind.

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Find out from your teachers or elders as to how many kinds of snakes are found in your area?

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Can snakes hear?

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Have you ever seen a cobra who seems to be dancing to the flute played by the snake charmer?

Do, you think snakes can hear?

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Actually, the cobra does not dance to the music of the flute. But, it dances as per the movement of the flute. The cobra considers the flute a threat to him. It can swing its head even at the sight of a moving stick or a piece of cloth.

To find out whether a snake can hear or not, a scientist conducted the following experiment.

- He bandaged a snake's eyes and played the flute in a room. The music of the flute had no effect on the snake.
- Then he pulled a cot kept on the floor of the room. The snake immediately raised its hood.
- He then removed the bandage from the snake's eyes and pretended to play the flute in front of the snake. The snake started swinging to the movement of the flute.
- He conducted the same experiment using a stick instead of a flute. The snake still moved in the same way.



On the basis of this experiment, think over the following questions.

Do snakes dance to the tune of the flute?

When farmers and labourers go to the jungle, they carry with them a stick or a long staff. This, they bang on the ground while walking. People believe that by banging the stick or the long staff on the ground, the snake senses danger and moves away from there.

Can the snakes hear the banging of sticks or long staffs on the ground. Find out from the farmers in your village.

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### Kinds of Snakes

Snakes are of two kinds:- a) poisonous, b) non-poisonous

The snake, on biting a person, injects poison into his body through its teeth which is hollow like that of a needle of an injection. In its upper jaw there are two pouches of poison.

When poisonous snakes bite they inject poison into a person's body. That poison can at times be fatal.

There is no poison in non-poisonous snakes. They only bite when they are teased. But their bite not fatal.

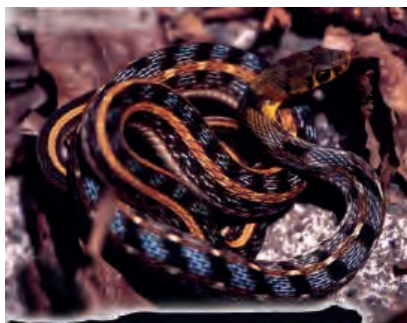
Let's identify the non-poisonous snakes with the help of pictures.



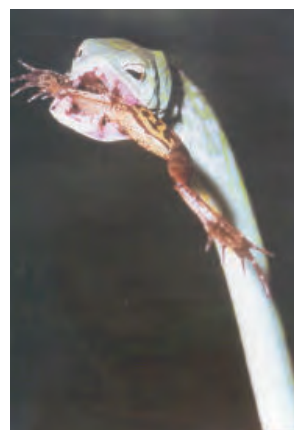
Green snake



Python



Pitpiti



Water snake

### Poisonous snakes

**Cobra-** This brownish black coloured snake can be found, all over India. It can be easily identified because of its hood. It is a deadly snake.

The symptoms of a Cobra bites are as follows:

- The bitten place gets swollen and sometimes there is a wound.
- The bitten person finds it difficult to see and his/her hands and feet start trembling.
- The tongue thickens and the person finds it difficult to speak. Froth starts coming out from the mouth.
- The person suffering from cobra bite feels sleepy and finds it difficult to breathe.



**Ordinary Krait**  $\frac{1}{2}$  The Krait comes out at night. It is extremely shiny and has white diagonal stripes. Apart from this, it has a row of hexagon shaped scales. They live beneath stones, between bricks in brick kilns, in the piles of fire-woods and cowdung cakes kept in the fields.



The symptoms of its poison is more or less the same as that of a Cobra, except that there is no swelling or wound. At times, the symptoms appear very late and suddenly the patient feels restless. Once the poison of krait reaches the body, the victim experiences severe pain in his stomach and joints, followed by vomitings.

Krait normally bites at night. Because the symptoms appear very late, the patient, at times go unnoticed. It is said that a person bitten at night by this snake, does not live to see the morning sun. Hence, immediate treatment is a must.

**Viper-** Viper is approximately 1 meter long and has a flabby body. It is light yellowish brown coloured and has a chain of round rings on its body. It has a pointed head and a thin neck. It is lazy and lies coiled up in one place. It bites farmers when they work in the fields during monsoons. Many bite cases of viper during the harvesting of soyabean, moong, urad etc. Its colour helps it to camouflage in the dried leaves and crops.



### The viper's poison affects the blood

- Its poisonous teeth are big, so they leave a deep wound.
- The blood flows out continuously from the wound.
- If timely vaccination is not given, the affected part gets infected.

**Phoorsa/ Saw-Scaled viper** - It is a small sized snake. This uneven-scaled snake has big eyes, broad head and a heavy body. It is commonly found in open places.

The symptoms of its poison are quite similar to that of a viper's. In comparison to the other poisonous snakes it ejects less poison and hence, its bite is not fatal.



### What should and what should not be done if bitten by a snake?

- Do not let the bitten person get excited. He/she should remain calm.
- Tie a piece of cloth, above and below the bitten place. Tie it in such that the index finger be put through.
- Give the person hot drinks like tea, coffee etc. Give him a pain killer and mental support.
- Rush the patient immediately to the hospital and do not waste time on charms and incantations and getting the evil spirits expelled.
- Do not let the person run, fall asleep or ride a bicycle or a motorcycle.



Vaccination given to neutralize the effect of a snake's poison is readily available in the hospital.



**Is the vaccination to neutralise the effect of snake's poison available in your nearest government hospital.**

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**If somebody is bitten by a snake, advice to rush him to the hospital.**

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**What do people who perform charms and incantations do to a person bitten by a snake? Find out. If bitten by a snake, do not believe in expelling the evil spirits.**

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In every village or town you'll come across someone who treats people bitten by snakes. Charms are commonly used to neutralize the affect of snake's poison. There are people in town who claim to neutralize its effect on telephones too. Such names can be seen on name board hanging here and there giving their contact address and numbers. Though people who indulge in driving away evil spirits claim to neutralize the snake's poison, many a time they fail to save the lives. **Now tell, if a person has been bitten by a non-poisonous snake, will the poison enter his/her body?**

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**If a person bitten by a non-poisonous snake is treated by a person who claims to be an expert in driving away evil forces, will he survive or not?**

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When a person bitten by a non-poisonous snake is taken to the hospital, he is not given any anti-poison vaccination. Only his wounds are treated and he given pain killers to over come the pain caused due to snake bite.

**Find out whether a person bitten by snake was cured after being taken to the person who drives away the evil spirits?**

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At times a person bitten by a non-poisonous snake dies or falls unconscious due to shock.

### **Snakes our Friends too**

Snakes are great friends of farmers. They eat the rats and other creatures who destroy the crops in the fields. Find out in what ways are snakes helpful.

### **What have we learnt?**

#### **Oral**

1. How can we protect ourselves from snakes?
2. Are all snakes poisonous?

## Written

1. What should one do if bitten by a snake?
2. Classify the snakes mentioned here into two categories- poisonous and non-poisonous.(Black cobra,Python Saw-scaled viper, Two headed snake, Krait viper,Green snake, Cobra )
3. Draw a Cobra and write its special features.
4. Write the difference between a viper and a karait.
5. What are the symptoms of snake bite?

## Look around

1. Find out from your elders, snakes found around you.
2. Who are the person other than snake charmers who depend on animals for their livelihood?

