

What to do today

IMPORTANT! Parent or Carer – Read this page with your child and check that you are happy with what they have to do and with any weblinks or use of the Internet required.

1. Reading time

Read and enjoy the poem, *The Snake Song* by John Mbiti.

2. Describing the poem

Discuss the structure and patterns in the poem.

3. Writing a poem about a deadly creature

Follow the *Instructions* and write a poem about an animal of your own choice based on *The Snake Song*.

- Use the *writing frame* if you wish to.
- Then make a ‘very best handwriting’ copy of your poem on the *poem paper*. You may need more than one sheet.
- Decorate the borders with imagery that goes with your animal.

Try these Fun-Time Extras

- Make a ‘word snake’, where the last letter of your first word is also the first letter of the next word you write. How many can you do? Can you make all the words ‘snake’ words (*hiss, slither, rattle, eggs*, etc.).
- We call the word used for a group of a particular animal its collective noun. The collective noun for birds is ‘flock’. The collective noun for cows is ‘herd’. Read the collective nouns for different animals at <https://jellyquest.com/collective-nouns-for-animals/>. **Do not look at the collective noun for snakes:** what do you think it could be? A slither of snakes? A hiss of snakes? Check to see what it really is!

The Snake Song



Neither legs nor arms have I
But I crawl on my belly
And I have
Venom, venom, venom!

Neither horns nor hoofs have I
But I spit with my tongue
And I have
Venom, venom, venom!

Neither bows nor guns have I
But I flash fast with my tongue
And I have
Venom, venom, venom!

Neither radar nor missiles have I
But I stare with my eyes
And I have
Venom, venom, venom!

I master every movement
For I jump, run and swim
And I spit
Venom, venom, venom!

John Mbiti

Answer these questions

- How many verses does the poem have?
- Which verse is the 'odd one out' in the poem? Can you explain what makes that verse different to all the others?
- What things get repeated in each of the verses?
- Is there any rhyming within a verse?

Writing Frame

Use the *writing frame* below to build your poem. Or, if you want a real challenge, try writing the poem without the writing frame!

The _____ Song

Neither _____ nor _____ have I

But I _____

And I can/have _____, _____, _____ !

Neither _____ nor _____ have I

But I _____

And I can/have _____, _____, _____ !

Neither _____ nor _____ have I

But I _____

And I can/have _____, _____, _____ !

I master every movement

For I _____, _____ and _____

And I can/have

_____, _____, _____

!

Instructions

1. Think of an animal that is very good at defending itself and/or is amazing at doing something. This is your title creature.
2. For each of the three main verses, think of two human tools, weapons or skills that the animal does **not** have or need. Put these on the first line of each verse.
3. Think of what amazing thing the animal **can** nevertheless do despite not having these tools or objects. Use this to write the second line of your poem.
4. Think of the repeated word you will use for the last line of your poem. This might be a noise your animal makes or something it does. You may need to replace *can* or *have* with something different for the line to make sense.
5. For the last verse of the poem, think of three actions or movements that your creature is very good at. Write these on the second line and then use your refrain from the earlier verses for the final line.

