

## “Poison” Study Guide

Please use English 9 style guide rules for format. Use complete sentences to answer the following:

1. What a strong line and a firm hook Roald Dahl has made for his plot here! Once we take it, our need to know what happens next pulls us straight to the last line. What clues tell us at once that something is wrong with Harry?
2. At what point do we learn precisely what the **conflict** is in the story? Why is this conflict so difficult to resolve?
3. See how the writer has his characters try to resolve their conflict by a succession of possible solutions. What is the exact plan for resolving the situation that Dr. Ganderbai finally puts into action?
4. As the plot unfolds, what details make us aware of Harry’s fear? (For example, his hoarse whisper is one thing.)
5. What is the outcome of the snake search? Is it possible that there really was a krait under the sheet, or do you think Harry imagined it? What evidence can you find in the story to support both interpretations?
6. Using the definition given in class, decide if there a **climax** in this story. Or do you think the climax is yet to come? Explain.
7. The major struggle in the story is an **external conflict (person versus nature)**, which takes place between the three characters and the supposed snake. But **internal conflicts** are also at work. What feelings are the characters trying to control?
8. By the story’s end, what surprising external conflict between two of the characters has come out in the open?
9. How would you explain Harry’s response to the generous native doctor? Now that you have finished the story, think again about Timber’s earlier observation that Harry was “very refined.” Explain how this comment is both true and false.
10. We might suspect that the title of the story refers to more than the venom of the krait. What other kinds of poison is the story about?