**How Poison Came into the World**

A long, long time ago when the world was still quite new, a plant grew in the shallow waters of slow waters. It grew where the Choctaw people often went to bathe and swim. The plant was a vine and very poisonous. When people touched the vine, they would become ill and die.

The vine however, liked the Choctaw people and hated how it caused so much sorrow and grief. It could not leave where it lived or make itself easy to see so the people could avoid it, so it decided to give away its poison. It called a meeting of the small creatures of the swamp: the bees, the wasps, the vipers and the rattlesnakes.

At the meeting, the small creatures decided they would take the vine’s poison because they were fed up of being squashed and stepped on by others.

The bee said, ‘I will take a little of your poison. I will only use it to defend my hive and I will always warn people with a buzz before I poison them. I will die if I use my poison and this will make me think carefully before I use it.

Next the wasp said, ‘I will only take a little poison too. I will use it to protect my nest. I will also warn people by buzzing close to them before I use the poison that I will keep in my tail.

The viper said, ‘I will take some of your poison and only use it if people step on me. I will keep the poison in my mouth. When I open my mouth, people will see how white it is and take a warning not to come near me.’

The rattlesnake spoke last. ‘I will take the rest of your poison – which is a lot. I will also hold it in my mouth. Before I use it though, I will warn them with my tail. I will rattle it to let them know that they have come too close.

And now the vine was happy. Where it once had poison it now grew flowers and the Choctaw people could bathe in the shallow waters safely. From that day on, only those that did not listen to the small creature’s warnings were hurt.

1. What happened when the people touched the plant? (1 mark)
2. Why did the plant not want to hurt the people? (1 mark)
3. What did the Choctaw people use the shallow waters for? (1 mark)
4. a) How did the plant decide to stop hurting the people? (1 mark)
5. What other ways had the plant thought it could stop hurting the people but decided they weren’t possible? (2 marks)
6. Why did the creatures decide to take the poison? (2 marks)
7. Which creature took the most poison? (1 mark)
8. Where did the creatures keep their poison? (2 marks)
9. How would the wasp and the bee use its poison? (1 mark)
10. How would each creature warn people that it was poisonous? (3 marks)
11. How does the vine feel at the end of the story? (1 mark)
12. Who would now be hurt by the poison? (1 mark)
13. What does this story explain? (1 mark)