



Poison or Venom? Difference and Medical Treatment

Listening Practice 2

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Instructions. Listen to the listening excerpt and fill in the missing blanks.

Speaker 1

Today we're digging into something, uh, really interesting where words often get a bit mixed up. Yeah, the whole "poison versus venom" thing.

They're both toxins, obviously dangerous, but _____ is fundamentally different, right?

Speaker 2

Exactly. And that how the delivery mechanism, that's really the core of it. Understanding that is key.

Speaker 1

Okay, so let's unpack poison first. What _____?
When we say that, what are we really talking about?

Speaker 2

Right. So, _____ when you interact with it.

Speaker 1

Interact how?

Speaker 2

Well by touching it or eating it. Maybe _____. The key point is _____.

Speaker 1

Ah! Can you give us some concrete examples? Make it real for us?

Speaker 2

Sure. _____ if eaten.

Even something like a stinging nettle. You brush against it. _____

_____. Still a form of poisoning through contact.

Speaker 1

Okay, that makes sense. _____ with the substance. So let's flip to the other side then. Venom. This sounds more active.

Speaker 2

It is. _____. Venom is _____ into another creature...

Speaker 1

Actively injects...

Speaker 2

... usually through a bite, like with fangs, or _____. The animal has to perform an action to deliver the venom into your body.

And these venoms can be nasty targeting different things. You have _____ or hemotoxins _____.

Speaker 1

So what are the classic examples here and how do they pull off this injection?

Speaker 2

Well, snakes are probably the most famous example, right? _____

Then you've got scorpions, bees, wasps. Scorpions inject venom. Bees and wasps often leave this stinger behind, still delivering that venom payload.

Speaker 1

Okay... Is there, like, a really simple rule of thumb for us listeners to keep this straight?



Speaker 2

Yeah, _____. Think of it like this: _____
_____.

Speaker 1

Okay. It acts on me.

Speaker 2

Right... And _____.

Speaker 1

Ah! I act on it. That actually clears it up perfectly. It bites you; it's venomous. You bite it; it's poisonous.

Speaker 2

That's the core distinction, yes.



Answer Key

Speaker 1

Today we're digging into something, uh, really interesting where words often get a bit mixed up. Yeah, the whole "poison versus venom" thing. They're both toxins, obviously dangerous, but how they work is fundamentally different, right?

Speaker 2

Exactly. And that how the delivery mechanism, that's really the core of it. Understanding that is key.

Speaker 1

Okay, so let's unpack poison first. What actually defines something as a poison? When we say that, what are we really talking about?

Speaker 2

Right. So, poison is basically a toxin that causes harm when you interact with it.

Speaker 1

Interact how?

Speaker 2

Well by touching it or eating it. Maybe breathing it in. The key point is the organism itself isn't injecting it.

Speaker 1

Ah! Can you give us some concrete examples? Make it real for us?

Speaker 2

Sure. Many types of mushrooms are fatally poisonous if eaten. Even something like a stinging nettle. You brush against it. You touch it, and its hairs cause that irritation. Still a form of poisoning through contact.

Speaker 1

Okay, that makes sense. It's all about us coming into contact with the substance. So let's flip to the other side then. Venom. This sounds more active.

Speaker 2

It is. That's the fundamental difference. Venom is a toxin that an animal actively injects into another creature...

Speaker 1

Actively injects...

Speaker 2

... usually through a bite, like with fangs, or a sting using a stinger. The animal has to perform an action to deliver the venom into your body. And these venoms can be nasty targeting different



things. You have neurotoxins that mess with your nervous system or hemotoxins that go after your blood or tissues.

Speaker 1

So what are the classic examples here and how do they pull off this injection?

Speaker 2

Well, snakes are probably the most famous example, right? Using their fangs during a bite. Then you've got scorpions, bees, wasps. They all have stingers. Scorpions inject venom. Bees and wasps often leave this stinger behind, still delivering that venom payload.

Speaker 1

Okay... This distinction is actually much clearer now. Is there, like, a really simple rule of thumb for us listeners to keep this straight?

Speaker 2

Yeah, there's a pretty neat way to remember it. Think of it like this: It's venomous if it bites or stings you.

Speaker 1

Okay. It acts on me.

Speaker 2

Right... And it's poisonous if you bite or touch it.

Speaker 1

Ah! I act on it. That actually clears it up perfectly. It bites you; it's venomous. You bite it; it's poisonous.

Speaker 2

That's the core distinction, yes.

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