Name: _____ Date: _____

Why Onions Make You Cry

Circle group

Sam helps in the kitchen. He cuts an onion. His eyes sting. Tears roll down. Sam is not sad!

Here is why. When you cut an onion, a puff of gas floats up. It goes to the eyes. It stings. So the eyes make tears to wash it away.

The tears help Sam. A grown-up has a trick. Chill the onion first. Then the sting is less.

Questions

1. What does Sam cut?

_____

_____

2. What floats up from the onion?

_____

_____

3. What do the eyes make to wash the gas away?

_____

_____

4. What trick makes the sting less?

_____

_____

5. Is Sam crying because he is sad?

_____

_____

Words to know

onion: a round vegetable with layers and a strong smell
sting: to hurt a little, like a sharp pinch
gas: something like air that you cannot always see
chill: to make cold

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Why Onions Make You Cry

Triangle group

Sam helps in the kitchen. Today he cuts an onion, and his eyes begin to sting. Tears roll down his face. Sam is not sad at all!

Here is why. When a cook cuts an onion, a tiny puff of gas floats up. The gas drifts to the eyes. It stings a little, so the eyes make tears to wash it away.

The tears do not hurt Sam. They help his eyes. A grown-up can show him a trick. Chill the onion first, and the sting is not so strong.

Questions

1. What does Sam cut in the kitchen?

_____

_____

2. What floats up when the onion is cut?

_____

_____

3. What do the eyes make to wash the gas away?

_____

_____

4. What trick makes the sting less strong?

_____

_____

5. Is Sam crying because he is sad?

_____

_____

Words to know

onion: a round vegetable with layers and a strong smell
sting: to hurt a little, like a sharp pinch
gas: something like air that you cannot always see
chill: to make cold

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Why Onions Make You Cry

Square group

Sam is helping out in the kitchen. Today he is slicing an onion, and soon his eyes begin to sting. Tears roll down his cheeks, but Sam is not sad at all!

Here is the reason. When a cook cuts into an onion, a tiny puff of gas floats up into the air. The gas drifts toward the eyes and stings them a little, so the eyes make tears to wash it away.

The tears do not harm Sam. They actually protect his eyes. A grown-up can show him a helpful trick: if he chills the onion first, the sting will not be as strong.

Questions

1. What is Sam slicing in the kitchen?

_____

_____

2. What floats up into the air when an onion is cut?

_____

_____

3. Why do the eyes make tears?

_____

_____

4. What helpful trick makes the sting weaker?

_____

_____

5. Is Sam crying because he feels sad? How do you know?

_____

_____

Words to know

onion: a round vegetable with layers and a strong smell
sting: to hurt a little, like a sharp pinch
gas: something like air that you cannot always see

chill: to make cold

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: Why Onions Make You Cry

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: Why Onions Make You Cry

Easier · 68 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade -0.5

1. An onion.
2. A puff of gas.
3. Tears.
4. Chill the onion first.
5. No. The gas makes his eyes sting.

Triangle: Why Onions Make You Cry

This passage · 91 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 0.7

1. An onion.
2. A tiny puff of gas.
3. Tears.
4. Chill the onion first.
5. No. The gas from the onion makes his eyes sting.

Square: Why Onions Make You Cry

Harder · 106 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.4

1. An onion.
2. A tiny puff of gas.
3. To wash away the gas that stings them.
4. Chilling the onion first.
5. No, he is not sad. The gas from the onion stings his eyes.