Name: _____ Date: _____

Gerald the Sourdough Starter

Circle group

When Kai's dad married Dev's mom, Kai got a stepbrother. He also got a jar of goo. The goo lived on the kitchen counter. Its name was Gerald. It was a sourdough starter. That is flour and water that bubbles and smells a little tangy. Dev fed it every morning, like a pet.

Kai thought it was gross. He held his nose when he walked by. He called it "the swamp."

One Friday, Dev left to spend the weekend with his dad. "Please feed Gerald," he said. "One spoon of flour, one spoon of water, and a stir."

Kai nodded, but he forgot. On Sunday, he looked at the jar. Gerald was flat. Gray liquid sat on top. Kai gulped. He measured the flour and the water. He stirred them in. "Sorry, Gerald," he whispered.

By Monday morning, small bubbles were rising again.

When Dev came home, Kai told him everything. Dev looked in the jar and grinned. "Gerald is tough," he said. "He was just hungry." Then he said, "Want to bake bread with him?"

Kai did. He got flour on his nose. The loaf had a crackly crust. Kai took a bite. "Not bad," he said, "for a swamp."

Questions

1. What is a sourdough starter?

_____

_____

2. What did Kai call Gerald at first?

_____

_____

3. How was Kai supposed to feed Gerald?

_____

_____

4. What did Kai see in the jar on Sunday?

_____

_____

5. Why did Kai whisper sorry?

_____

_____

6. How did Kai's feelings about Gerald change?

_____

_____

Words to know

starter: a bubbly mix of flour and water used to make bread rise
tangy: having a sharp, sour taste or smell
stepbrother: the son of your parent's new husband or wife
crust: the hard outside part of bread

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: _____

Gerald the Sourdough Starter

Triangle group

When Kai's dad married Dev's mom, Kai got a stepbrother and a jar of goo. The goo lived on the kitchen counter, and it was named Gerald. It was a sourdough starter, which is a mixture of flour and water that bubbles and smells a little tangy. Dev fed it every morning, the way a person would feed a pet.

Kai thought the whole thing was disgusting, so he held his nose when he walked past and called it "the swamp."

One Friday, Dev left to spend the weekend with his dad. "Please feed Gerald," he said. "One spoon of flour, one spoon of water, and a stir."

Kai nodded, but he forgot, and on Sunday he looked at the jar and saw that Gerald was flat, with gray liquid on top. Kai gulped. He measured the flour and the water, stirred them in, and whispered, "Sorry, Gerald."

By Monday morning, small bubbles were rising again.

When Dev came home, Kai told him everything. Dev looked in the jar and grinned. "Gerald is tough," he said. "He was just hungry." Then he asked, "Want to help me bake bread with him?"

Kai did. He ended up with flour on his nose. When the loaf came out with a crackly crust, he took a bite. "Not bad," he said, "for a swamp."

Questions

1. What is a sourdough starter?

_____

_____

2. What did Kai call Gerald at first?

_____

_____

3. How was Kai supposed to feed Gerald?

_____

_____

4. What did Kai see in the jar on Sunday?

_____

_____

5. Why did Kai whisper sorry to Gerald?

_____

_____

6. How did Kai's feelings about Gerald change?

_____

_____

Words to know

starter: a bubbly mix of flour and water used to make bread rise
tangy: having a sharp, sour taste or smell
stepbrother: the son of your parent's new husband or wife
crust: the hard outside part of bread

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: _____

Gerald the Sourdough Starter

Square group

When Kai's dad married Dev's mom, Kai acquired a stepbrother and a jar of goo. The goo lived on the kitchen counter, and its name was Gerald. It was a sourdough starter, which is a mixture of flour and water that bubbles and smells slightly tangy. Dev fed it every morning, the way a person might feed a pet.

Kai found the whole thing disgusting. He held his nose whenever he walked past, and he referred to it as "the swamp."

One Friday, Dev left to spend the weekend with his dad. "Please feed Gerald," he said. "One spoon of flour, one spoon of water, and a stir."

Kai nodded, but he promptly forgot. On Sunday, he looked at the jar and found Gerald flat, with gray liquid pooled on top. Kai gulped. He hurriedly measured the flour and the water, stirred them in, and whispered, "Sorry, Gerald."

By Monday morning, small bubbles were rising once more.

When Dev returned, Kai confessed everything. Dev peered into the jar and grinned. "Gerald is tough," he said. "He was just hungry." Then he asked, "Want to help me bake bread with him?"

Kai did, and he ended up with flour on the tip of his nose. When the loaf emerged with a crackly crust, he took a bite. "Not bad," he said, "for a swamp."

Questions

1. What is a sourdough starter?

_____

_____

2. What did Kai call Gerald at first?

_____

_____

3. How was Kai supposed to feed Gerald while Dev was away?

_____

_____

4. What did Kai find in the jar on Sunday?

_____

_____

5. Why did Kai whisper sorry to Gerald?

_____

_____

6. How did Kai's feelings about Gerald change over the story?

_____

_____

Words to know

starter: a bubbly mix of flour and water used to make bread rise
tangy: having a sharp, sour taste or smell
stepbrother: the son of your parent's new husband or wife
crust: the hard outside part of bread

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: Gerald the Sourdough Starter

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

Circle: Gerald the Sourdough Starter

Easier · 201 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 1.1

1. Flour and water that bubbles and smells a little tangy.
2. The swamp.
3. One spoon of flour, one spoon of water, and a stir.
4. Gerald was flat, with gray liquid on top.
5. He felt bad because he forgot to feed Gerald.
6. At first he found it gross. Later he cared for it and baked with it.

Triangle: Gerald the Sourdough Starter

This passage · 221 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.8

1. Flour and water that bubbles and smells a little tangy.
2. The swamp.
3. One spoon of flour, one spoon of water, and a stir.
4. Gerald was flat, with gray liquid on top.
5. He felt guilty because he had forgotten to feed it.
6. He went from thinking it was disgusting to caring for it and baking with it.

Square: Gerald the Sourdough Starter

Harder · 223 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.1

1. A mixture of flour and water that bubbles and smells slightly tangy.
2. The swamp.
3. One spoon of flour, one spoon of water, and a stir.
4. Gerald was flat, with gray liquid pooled on top.
5. He felt guilty because he had forgotten to feed it.
6. He went from finding it disgusting to caring for it and baking with it.