Name: _____ Date: _____

The Town That Lived in a Sourdough Jar

Circle group

Marisol kept a jar of sourdough starter on the shelf by the stove. It was a pasty mix of flour and water that bubbled when it was fed. Her father said it was alive, which she had always taken to mean that it was a kind of tiny plant.

She did not know that, deep inside the jar, there was a town.

It was a town of crumb-sized houses with roofs of dried crust. The bakers there had flour-white aprons and wore hats shaped like loaves. Every morning, a great pale cloud of flour drifted down from the lid, and the whole town cheered and ate.

Then Marisol went away for a week of camp and forgot to feed the jar. The flour cloud never came. The tiny bakers grew thin. Their bubbles, which were their windows and their doorbells, stopped popping.

On the eighth day, Marisol came home and looked at the jar. It was flat and quiet. She held it up to the light, and a single bubble rose and popped.

Pop. Pop-pop. Pop.

"That is a message!" she whispered. She tapped out three pops by drumming the glass, and the bubbles popped back at once. She understood. She spooned in flour, poured warm water and stirred slowly.

The jar began to bubble all over again. Inside, tiny bakers cheered, and a doorbell rang in every house.

Questions

1. What was sourdough starter made of?

_____

_____

2. What did the tiny bakers wear on their heads?

_____

_____

3. Why did the tiny town go hungry?

_____

_____

4. What did the bubbles do when Marisol came home?

_____

_____

5. How did Marisol understand what the popping bubbles meant?

_____

_____

6. What might Marisol do differently after this week?

_____

_____

Words to know

sourdough: bread made from flour and water that has bubbled for days
starter: the bubbly mix that makes sourdough bread rise
crust: the hard outside of a loaf of bread
pasty: thick, soft and sticky, like glue
message: words or signals sent from one to another

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: _____

The Town That Lived in a Sourdough Jar

Triangle group

Marisol kept a jar of sourdough starter on the shelf beside the stove. It was a pasty mixture of flour and water that bubbled enthusiastically whenever it was fed. Her father insisted that it was alive, which she had always taken to mean that it was a kind of tiny plant.

What she did not know was that, deep inside the jar, there was an entire town.

It was a town of crumb-sized houses with roofs of dried crust. The bakers who lived there wore flour-white aprons and hats shaped like loaves. Every morning, a great pale cloud of flour drifted down from the lid, and the whole town gathered to cheer and eat.

Then Marisol left for a week of camp and forgot to feed the jar. The flour cloud never came. The tiny bakers grew thin and weary, and their bubbles, which served as windows and doorbells alike, stopped popping.

On the eighth day, Marisol returned and examined the jar. It was flat and perfectly silent. She held it up to the light, and a single bubble rose slowly and popped.

Pop. Pop-pop. Pop.

"That is a message!" she whispered. She drummed three taps on the glass, and the bubbles popped back at once. She understood immediately. She spooned in fresh flour, poured warm water and stirred slowly.

The jar began to bubble all over again. Inside, tiny bakers cheered, and a doorbell rang in every house.

Questions

1. What was sourdough starter made of?

_____

_____

2. What did the tiny bakers wear on their heads?

_____

_____

3. Why did the tiny town go hungry?

_____

_____

4. What did the bubbles do when Marisol returned?

_____

_____

5. How did Marisol work out what the popping bubbles meant?

_____

_____

6. What might Marisol do differently after this week?

_____

_____

Words to know

sourdough: bread made from flour and water that has bubbled for days
starter: the bubbly mix that makes sourdough bread rise
crust: the hard outside of a loaf of bread
pasty: thick, soft and sticky, like glue
message: words or signals sent from one to another

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: _____

The Town That Lived in a Sourdough Jar

Square group

Marisol kept a jar of sourdough starter on the shelf beside the stove, a pasty mixture of flour and water that bubbled enthusiastically whenever it was fed. Her father insisted that the starter was alive, which she had always taken to mean that it was some kind of tiny plant.

What she did not realize was that, deep inside the jar, there was an entire town.

It was a town of crumb-sized houses with roofs made of dried crust. The bakers who lived there wore flour-white aprons and hats shaped like loaves. Every morning, a great pale cloud of flour drifted down from the lid, and the whole population gathered to cheer and to eat.

Then Marisol left for a week of camp and neglected to feed the jar. The flour cloud never arrived. The tiny bakers grew thin and weary, and their bubbles, which served as both windows and doorbells, stopped popping altogether.

On the eighth day, Marisol returned and examined the jar. It was flat and perfectly silent. She lifted it toward the light, and a single bubble rose slowly to the surface and popped.

Pop. Pop-pop. Pop.

"That is a message!" she whispered. She drummed three taps on the glass, and the bubbles popped back at once. She understood immediately. She spooned in fresh flour, poured in warm water and stirred gently.

The jar began to bubble all over again. Inside, the tiny bakers cheered, and a doorbell rang in every house.

Questions

1. What was sourdough starter made of?

_____

_____

2. What did the tiny bakers wear on their heads?

_____

_____

3. Why did the tiny town go hungry?

_____

_____

4. What did the bubbles do when Marisol returned?

_____

_____

5. How did Marisol work out what the popping bubbles meant?

_____

_____

6. What might Marisol do differently after this week?

_____

_____

Words to know

sourdough: bread made from flour and water that has bubbled for days
starter: the bubbly mix that makes sourdough bread rise
crust: the hard outside of a loaf of bread
pasty: thick, soft and sticky, like glue
message: words or signals sent from one to another

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: The Town That Lived in a Sourdough Jar

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

Circle: The Town That Lived in a Sourdough Jar

Easier · 232 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.9

1. Flour and water.
2. Hats shaped like loaves.
3. Marisol forgot to feed the jar while she was away at camp.
4. A single bubble rose and popped, and then more popped as a message.
5. She tapped back and the bubbles answered, so she knew the town needed food.
6. She will make sure the jar is fed before she goes away.

Triangle: The Town That Lived in a Sourdough Jar

This passage · 242 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 4.4

1. A mixture of flour and water.
2. Hats shaped like loaves.
3. Marisol forgot to feed the jar while she was away at camp.
4. A single bubble rose and popped, and then more popped as a message.
5. She tapped on the glass and the bubbles answered, so she knew the town needed food.
6. She will make sure the jar is fed before she goes away again.

Square: The Town That Lived in a Sourdough Jar

Harder · 248 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 5.2

1. A mixture of flour and water.
2. Hats shaped like loaves.
3. Marisol forgot to feed the jar while she was away at camp.
4. A single bubble rose and popped, and then more popped as a message.
5. She tapped on the glass and the bubbles answered, so she knew the town needed food.
6. She will make sure the jar is fed before she goes away again.