Name: _____ Date: _____

# Eleven Jars and One Quiet Lid

Circle group

Every August, Aunt Corazon turned her small kitchen into a pickle factory. This year Bram had to help. The garden had given so many cucumbers that he could not escape. By noon, twelve clean jars stood in a row on the counter. The whole house smelled of vinegar and garlic.

Bram's job was to pack each jar tight, pour in the hot brine, and screw on the lid. Aunt Corazon did the careful part. She used a big pot of simmering water and a pair of tongs. The jars sat in the hot bath for a while. Then she lifted them out and set them on a folded towel to cool.

"Now we listen," she said.

"For what?" asked Bram.

Soon there was a sharp little *pop* from one jar. Then another. "That is the sound of a lid sealing," his aunt said. "As the jar cools, the air inside shrinks. It pulls the lid down tight. A popping lid means the pickles will keep."

They counted twelve jars. They heard eleven pops. One jar was silent. Its lid was still springy when Bram pressed the middle with his thumb.

He felt guilty. He thought he had packed it wrong. But Aunt Corazon smiled. "It happens in the best kitchens. Maybe a drop of brine was on the rim." She put the silent jar in the refrigerator to be eaten first. She wrote a date on a piece of tape.

Bram looked at the eleven shiny jars on the shelf. "I think I like this job," he said, "now that I know what the popping means."

## Questions

**1. What was Bram's job in making the pickles?**

_____

_____

**2. Why did Aunt Corazon say they had to listen?**

_____

_____

**3. How many jars sealed and how many did not?**

_____

_____

**4. What did Aunt Corazon do with the silent jar?**

_____

_____

**5. Why does the air inside a cooling jar help seal the lid?**

_____

_____

**6. Why did Bram say he liked the job after the popping?**

_____

_____

## Words to know

brine: salty or vinegary liquid used to keep food fresh
simmering: cooking gently just below boiling
tongs: a tool with two arms used to grip hot things
sealing: closing tightly so that no air can get in or out
rim: the edge around the top of a jar

## 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: _____

# Eleven Jars and One Quiet Lid

Triangle group

Every August, Aunt Corazon turned her small kitchen into a pickle factory, and this year Bram was drafted as an assistant, because the garden had produced cucumbers in such quantity that there was no escaping the job. By noon, twelve clean jars stood in a row along the counter. The whole house smelled strongly of vinegar and garlic.

Bram's responsibility was to pack each jar tightly, pour in the hot brine, and screw the lid on, while Aunt Corazon handled the part that required careful attention, which involved a large pot of simmering water and a pair of tongs. After the jars had sat in the water bath for a while, she lifted them out and set them on a folded towel to cool, and then she announced that it was time to listen.

Within a few minutes there came a sharp little pop from one jar, and then another. His aunt explained that this was the sound of a lid sealing, because as the jar cools, the air inside shrinks and pulls the lid down tight. A popping lid meant that the pickles would keep. They counted twelve jars but heard only eleven pops. One jar sat silently, its lid still springy when Bram pressed the center with his thumb.

He felt a flash of guilt, convinced that he had packed it wrong. But Aunt Corazon only smiled and said that it happens in the best kitchens, since the rim might have had a drop of brine on it. She stored the silent jar in the refrigerator, where it would be eaten first, and wrote a date on a piece of tape. Bram counted the eleven glossy jars on the shelf and admitted that he liked the job now that he knew what the popping means.

## Questions

**1. What was Bram's role in making the pickles?**

_____

_____

**2. Why did Aunt Corazon say they had to listen?**

_____

_____

**3. How many jars sealed and how many did not?**

_____

_____

**4. What did Aunt Corazon do with the silent jar?**

_____

_____

**5. Why does the air inside a cooling jar help seal the lid?**

_____

_____

**6. Why did Bram say he liked the job after the popping?**

_____

_____

## Words to know

brine: salty or vinegary liquid used to keep food fresh
simmering: cooking gently just below boiling
tongs: a tool with two arms used to grip hot things
sealing: closing tightly so that no air can get in or out
rim: the edge around the top of a jar

## 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: _____

# Eleven Jars and One Quiet Lid

Square group

Every August, Aunt Corazon turned her modest kitchen into a pickle factory, and this year Bram was drafted as an assistant, because the garden had produced cucumbers in such quantity that there was no escaping the job. By noon, twelve clean jars stood in a row along the counter. The entire house smelled strongly of vinegar and garlic.

Bram's responsibility was to pack each jar tightly, pour in the hot brine, and screw the lid on, while Aunt Corazon handled the part that required careful attention, which involved a large pot of simmering water and a pair of tongs. After the jars had sat in the water bath for a while, she lifted them out and set them on a folded towel to cool, and then she announced that it was time to listen.

Within a few minutes there came a sharp little pop from one jar, and then another. His aunt explained that this was the sound of a lid sealing, because as the jar cools, the air inside shrinks and pulls the lid down tight. A popping lid meant that the pickles would keep, and they counted twelve jars but heard only eleven pops. One jar sat silently, its lid still springy when Bram pressed the center with his thumb.

He felt a flash of guilt, convinced that he had packed it wrong. But Aunt Corazon only smiled and said that it happens in the best kitchens, since the rim might have had a drop of brine on it, and she stored the silent jar in the refrigerator, where it would be eaten first, and wrote a date on a piece of tape. Bram counted the eleven glossy jars on the shelf and admitted that he liked the job now that he knew what the popping means.

## Questions

**1. What was Bram's responsibility in making the pickles?**

_____

_____

**2. Why did Aunt Corazon insist that they listen?**

_____

_____

**3. How many jars sealed, and how many failed to seal?**

_____

_____

**4. What did Aunt Corazon do with the silent jar?**

_____

_____

**5. Why does the air inside a cooling jar help seal the lid?**

_____

_____

**6. Why did Bram say he liked the job after hearing the popping?**

_____

_____

## Words to know

brine: salty or vinegary liquid used to keep food fresh
simmering: cooking gently just below boiling
tongs: a tool with two arms used to grip hot things
sealing: closing tightly so that no air can get in or out
rim: the edge around the top of a jar

## 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: Eleven Jars and One Quiet Lid

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

### Circle: Eleven Jars and One Quiet Lid

Easier · 266 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.3

1. He packed the jars, poured in hot brine, and screwed on the lids.
2. A pop shows that a jar's lid has sealed.
3. Eleven sealed and one did not.
4. She put it in the refrigerator to be eaten first.
5. The air shrinks as it cools and pulls the lid down tight.
6. Knowing what the sound meant made the work feel less mysterious.

### Triangle: Eleven Jars and One Quiet Lid

This passage · 297 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 8.2

1. He packed the jars, poured in the hot brine, and screwed on the lids.
2. A popping sound shows that a jar's lid has sealed.
3. Eleven sealed and one stayed unsealed.
4. She put it in the refrigerator to be eaten first.
5. The air shrinks as it cools and pulls the lid down tight.
6. Understanding the sound made the work feel meaningful and less mysterious.

### Square: Eleven Jars and One Quiet Lid

Harder · 299 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 9.7

1. He packed the jars, poured in the hot brine, and screwed on the lids.
2. A popping sound shows that a jar's lid has sealed.
3. Eleven sealed and one stayed unsealed.
4. She stored it in the refrigerator to be eaten first.
5. The air contracts as it cools and draws the lid down tight.
6. Understanding the sound made the work feel meaningful rather than mysterious.