PORTALS TO READING Jr.

THE CHALK BOX KID
Clyde Robert Bulla

Reading Skills Through Literature

Perfection Learning®
The Chalk Box Kid

Clyde Robert Bulla

Reproducible Activity Book
The *Portals Jr.* series accompanies time-tested literature that should be an important part of every child’s reading experience. The activities will reinforce a wide variety of language and reading skills which are generally part of the curriculum at the reading level of the book. In addition, the *Portals Jr.* pick-and-choose format gives you the final decision about which activities are most appropriate for the children in your classroom. Select those activities that meet the needs of the class, a reading group, or an individual reader.

Several of the pages in this guide have a symbol next to the activity title. These pages are especially appropriate to use as take-home or enrichment activities.

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Meet the Author

Clyde Robert Bulla

Clyde Robert Bulla was born January 9, 1914, on a farm near King City, Missouri. He attended a country school where his older sister Corrine was the teacher. From the start, Mr. Bulla was fascinated by words. Reading words introduced him to all kinds of people and places. He loved the magic of putting words together to say anything he wanted.

Mr. Bulla had no formal training as a writer. He learned by doing. His first story for children, The Donkey Cart, was published in 1946. Many of his stories have grown from his travels. Others are motivated by his interest in music and history.

Clyde Bulla describes the opening paragraph of a work as the most difficult to write. He states that the beginning of a story may go through as many as 50 to 60 revisions. He also explains that he asks himself questions to become better acquainted with his characters. He feels that once he has spent enough time getting to know his characters and how they relate to each other, he is ready to begin writing.

Mr. Bulla lives in Los Angeles, California. He appreciates the fact that the mountains, the ocean, and the desert are all near his home. In addition, Los Angeles offers cultural opportunities that he enjoys—theaters, museums, and concert halls.
The Story in Brief

When Gregory’s father loses his job at the factory, the family has to move. The new house is small, and there’s no yard. But Gregory is happy to have his own room. Then Uncle Max comes to live with them, and Gregory has to share his room. Searching for a place of his own, Gregory discovers the remains of a burnout building behind his house.

Gregory has trouble adjusting to his new school. His classmates, led by Vance, make fun of him. So Gregory finds solace in his building. Using chalk he finds from the building’s former days as a chalk factory, Gregory draws elaborate pictures on the fire-blackened walls. Following Mr. Hiller’s school visit to talk about gardens, Gregory’s building becomes a chalk garden, complete with vegetables, flowers, and even a fountain.

When his classmates hear of his garden, they conspire to follow him home and catch him in a lie. When they see his chalk garden, they walk off laughing. Gregory dreads school the next day. However, his teachers learn of his garden and are very impressed when they visit. Mr. Hiller also visits the garden and asks to display a picture of it in the plant nursery. In the end, everyone recognizes Gregory’s artistic ability and affords him the respect he deserves.
Consonant Sounds

Read the words in the word box. Think about the consonant sound at the beginning of each word. Then choose the word that makes sense in each sentence. You will not use all the words.

**Example:** When Gregory ________ **shook** ________ the gate, it didn’t open.

1. Gregory heard the clock ____________ ________ eleven.

2. The streetlight ____________ ________ on Gregory's new house.

3. Gregory saw his table, ____________, and bed in his new room.

4. Gregory ____________ ________ a cup of water from the kitchen.

5. Early the next morning, Gregory went into the kitchen for ____________ ________.

6. Gregory found a ____________ ________ store not too far from his house.

7. His new school was on the next ____________ ________.

8. Gregory hadn’t been ____________ ________.

9. ____________ ________ webs filled every corner of the building.

10. There were bricks all over the ____________ ________ of the burned-out building.

Now write your own sentence about The Chalk Box Kid. Use the word that is left in the word box.

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________
Short Vowels

Read the words in the word box. Think about the short vowel sounds you hear. Then choose a word that makes sense in each sentence. You will not use all the words.

Example: Dust covered everything in the burned-out building.

1. There was no time for Gregory’s birthday because his parents had to ________________ moving.

2. Gregory carried his ________________ with him to the car.

3. Gregory’s new home was ________________ town.

4. When Gregory ________________ the clock, he knew his birthday was over.

5. Gregory went to the ________________ for a cup of water.

6. When Gregory ________________ the gate, some paint fell off.

7. ________________ Max didn’t take Gregory to his new school.

8. Gregory thought that North Lake was a ________________ school than Dover.

9. The ________________ was behind Gregory’s house.

10. Gregory stacked the ________________ to make a chair.

Now write your own sentence about The Chalk Box Kid. Use the word that is left in the word box.
Read each sentence and look at the underlined word. Choose a word from the word box that rhymes with the underlined word. You will not use all the words.

**Example:** Uncle Max had a red beard.  

1. Cold air filled the room when Gregory opened the front door.  
2. Gregory thought he heard a car drive up.  
3. It had been Gregory’s worst birthday.  
4. Everything that Gregory owned was in a box beside his bed.  
5. Gregory used tacks to put his pictures on the walls.  
6. Gregory went outside to see the new neighborhood.  
7. Gregory’s dad worked as a guard in a bank.  
8. Gregory’s class was on the playground at noon.  
9. “I didn’t say it was better,” said Gregory.  
10. Gregory went outside to find something to do.  

Write a rhyming word for the word that is left in the word box.

Name _____________________________

**THE CHALK BOX KID**

**Rhyming Words**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>blue</th>
<th>lined</th>
<th>tune</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-said-</td>
<td>first</td>
<td>door</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they</td>
<td>card</td>
<td>soot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>socks</td>
<td>stare</td>
<td>bird</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapters 1-3
Contraction

Read each sentence. Find and underline the two words that can be made into a contraction. Write the contraction on the blank line after the sentence. Don’t forget the apostrophe!

Example: “It is not better, only bigger,” said Gregory.  _____ isn’t _____

1. “You will have to close that door,” said Aunt Grace.  _______________

2. Maybe Gregory’s mother did not remember what day it was.  ______________

3. “I am happy about my own room,” said Gregory.  _______________

4. “There is just no time for a party,” said Mother.  _______________

5. “You had better go with Uncle Max,” said Gregory’s mother.  _______________

6. Gregory was not ready for breakfast, so he painted pictures.  _______________

7. “I will help with breakfast,” said Gregory’s father.  _______________

8. “It is a nice school,” Gregory told his teacher.  _______________

9. “I have gone to a new school by myself before,” said Gregory.  _______________

10. “I do not like your posters,” Gregory told Uncle Max.  _______________
Read the compound words in the word box. Choose a word that makes sense in each sentence.

Example: Gregory walked _____________ to see the neighborhood.

1. At _____________, Gregory’s birthday would be over.
2. There was no time to celebrate his _____________.
3. Gregory hoped he’d get _____________ from his parents.
4. There was a tall _____________ in front of Gregory’s new house.
5. Their new house sat right on the _____________.
6. Gregory painted a picture of a _____________.
7. Gregory used _____________ to put his pictures on the wall.
8. Uncle Max called Gregory the _____________ Kid.
9. Gregory had to share his ________________ with Uncle Max.

10. Vance came up to Gregory on the ________________.

Now choose a compound word from the word box. Write the word on the blank line. Draw a picture of each part of the word.

____________________
Homophones

Read each sentence and the two homophones beneath it. Choose the homophone that fits in the sentence.

Remember: Homophones are words that sound the same but have different spellings and meanings.

Example: Gregory liked the pictures that Ivy ________made______.

made maid

1. Room 3 had art three times a _____________________.

weak week

2. There was ____________________ room for a flag on top of Gregory’s castle.

no know

3. Things weren’t going well for Gregory in his ____________________ school.

knew new

4. Gregory’s mother said things ____________________ get better.

would wood

5. Gregory showed one ____________________ of chalk to his mother.

piece peace

6. Ivy won the ____________________ ribbon.

blue blew (continued)
7. Ivy’s present was ________________ in gold paper.
   rapped                         wrapped

8. Gregory told his mother that school was all ________________.
   right                         write

9. “Mr. Hiller is ________________ to talk about plants,” said Miss Perry.
   here                          hear

10. Mr. Hiller showed the class a sweet pea vine on
    a ________________.
        poll                         pole

Now look at the homophones you didn’t use. Write a sentence that uses one of these words.

_______________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________
More Than One Meaning

Each word in the word box has more than one meaning. Choose a word that makes sense in each sentence. You will use each word more than once.

1. Gregory wasn’t sure he could _________________ in his new school.

2. Uncle Max moved into Gregory’s _________________.

3. Gregory liked the way Ivy held her _________________.

4. Ivy had won the blue ribbon at the art _________________.

5. Gregory had _________________ for lots of plants.

6. Gregory changed his _________________ and erased the alligator.

7. Soon it was time to _________________ home to his garden.

8. Gregory was the _________________ one to see what was inside the leather case.

9. “Ivy, aren’t you going to _________________ us your prize?” asked Miss Perry.

10. Gregory didn’t _________________ that Uncle Max was always in their room.
Thinking About the Story

Read the questions below. Think about what happened in The Chalk Box Kid. Write your answers on the lines below the questions.

1. Why couldn’t Gregory tell whether Ivy liked his picture of a castle?

2. Why didn’t Gregory mind that Uncle Max was always in their room?

3. Why did Gregory find so much chalk on the floor of the burned building?

4. Why did Room 3 have a party for Ivy?

5. What was Ivy’s prize?

6. Why didn’t Gregory plant a real garden?
What’s the Story?

Read the paragraphs below. Use the words in the word box to fill in the blanks. The first one is done for you.

All the kids in Room 3 were talking about their (1) **gardens**. So Gregory told (2) **Miss Perry** about his garden. He talked about the (3) **ladder** on the pole. “I have vegetables and a (4) **sweet peas** to the pool,” he added.

That afternoon, Gregory had plans to make his garden (5) **bigger**. He brought the (6) **lettuce** from the garage so that he could (7) **reach** the top of the walls. This way he could add trees to his garden. Gregory (8) **made** pear trees and walnut trees. He even added birds’ nests in the (9) **path**.

That night when it (10) **rained**, Gregory was very worried about his garden. He ran outside to check the next morning before school. He was happy that all he lost were a few rows of (11) **branches**.
Across-the-Curriculum

Planning a Garden

Use the information in the chart to answer the questions below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vegetable</th>
<th>When to Plant</th>
<th>How to Plant</th>
<th>Growing Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>carrots</td>
<td>early spring</td>
<td>2 inches apart</td>
<td>8 to 12 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>green beans</td>
<td>early spring</td>
<td>3 inches apart</td>
<td>8 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lettuce</td>
<td>early spring</td>
<td>6 to 8 inches apart</td>
<td>6 to 7 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>onions</td>
<td>spring</td>
<td>2 to 4 inches apart</td>
<td>14 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spinach</td>
<td>early spring</td>
<td>3 inches apart</td>
<td>6 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tomatoes</td>
<td>late spring</td>
<td>2 to 3 feet apart</td>
<td>8 to 12 weeks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. You don’t have much space for a garden. Which vegetable should you avoid planting? __________________________ Which four vegetables would work best? __________________________

2. You want carrots, lettuce, and tomatoes in your garden. Can you plant them all at the same time? Why or why not? __________________________

3. If you plant your onions at the beginning of May, when will they be ready to eat? __________________________

4. You have two rows in your garden for green beans. Each row is 4 feet long. How many green bean plants can you have in each row? __________________________
   How many green bean plants in all? __________________________

5. Which vegetables can be harvested first? __________________________

More Fun: Imagine that you can grow anything in a garden. Use the back of this paper to draw and label a garden plan. Be creative.
What’s the Order?

Read the first set of sentences below. Think about what happened first, second, and third. Number the sentences 1, 2, and 3. Do the same for the second set of three sentences.

Set 1

_______ Gregory drew rows of vegetables on the walls.

_______ Gregory asked his mother to come outside to see his garden.

_______ Gregory got rid of the ship and the alligator he had drawn.

Set 2

_______ Vance overheard Gregory talking about his garden.

_______ Vance and the other kids from school came to see Gregory’s garden.

_______ Vance asked Gregory where his garden was.

Now try writing some sentences of your own in order. Use what you know about the story as you write your sentences.

First, Ivy brought her leather case to school.

Then, ________________________________.

And finally, ________________________________.
Cause and Effect

Read each sentence and answer the questions about what happened and why it happened.

1. One night it rained and some of Gregory’s lettuce was washed out.
   What happened? ________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________
   Why did it happen? _____________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________

2. Vance asked Gregory where his garden was when he heard him talking about it.
   What happened? ________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________
   Why did it happen? _____________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________

3. Gregory wanted to add tall trees to his garden, so he brought the ladder from the garage.
   What happened? ________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________
   Why did it happen? _____________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________
You can be the author. Pretend that you are talking with someone who hasn’t read *The Chalk Box Kid*. In your own words, write a short description of the story on the lines below.
What Happens Next?

Think about how The Chalk Box Kid ended. Write about what you think might happen next.
Draw a Picture

Think about what happened in The Chalk Box Kid. Draw a picture of Gregory’s garden. Or you might want to draw a picture that shows what you would have drawn on the walls of the building. Then write one or two sentences that tell about your picture.

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
THE CHALK BOX KID

Answer Key

Word Attack Skills

Consonant Sounds (page 6)
1. strike; 2. shone; 3. chair; 4. brought; 5. breakfast; 6. grocery; 7. block; 8. bragging; 9. Spider; 10. floor

Short Vowels (page 7)
1. finish; 2. tablet; 3. across; 4. heard; 5. kitchen; 6. kicked; 7. Uncle; 8. bigger; 9. building; 10. bricks

Rhyming Words (page 8)
1. stare; 2. bird; 3. first; 4. socks; 5. soot; 6. blue; 7. card; 8. tune; 9. they; 10. lined

Contractions (page 9)
1. You’ll; 2. didn’t; 3. I’m; 4. There’s; 5. You’d; 6. wasn’t; 7. I’ll; 8. It’s; 9. I’ve; 10. don’t

Compound Words (page 10)
1. midnight; 2. birthday; 3. something; 4. streetlight; 5. sidewalk; 6. sunflower; 7. thumbtacks; 8. Paintbrush; 9. bedroom; 10. playground

Comprehension Skills

Homophones (page 12)
1. week; 2. no; 3. new; 4. would; 5. piece; 6. blue; 7. wrapped; 8. right; 9. here; 10. pole

More Than One Meaning (page 14)
1. last; 2. room; 3. head; 4. show; 5. room; 6. mind; 7. head; 8. last; 9. show; 10. mind

Thinking About the Story (page 15)
1. Ivy just touched Gregory’s picture and didn’t say anything. 2. Gregory had a place of his own to spend his time. 3. The building had been a chalk factory before it burned. 4. Ivy won the blue ribbon in the art show. 5. Ivy won a leather case filled with painting and drawing supplies. 6. Gregory didn’t have a place for a garden because there was only concrete around his house.

What’s the Story? (page 16)
1. gardens; 2. Miss Perry; 3. sweet peas; 4. path; 5. bigger; 6. ladder; 7. reach; 8. made; 9. branches; 10. rained; 11. lettuce
Across-the-Curriculum (page 17)
1. tomatoes/carrots, green beans, onions, and spinach;  2. No. Tomatoes need to be planted later in the spring than carrots and lettuce.  3. They will be ready in the middle of August.  4. 16 plants/32 plants;  5. spinach and lettuce

What’s the Order? (page 18)
Set 1:  2;  3;  1  
Set 2:  1;  3;  2

Cause and Effect (page 19)
1. Some of Gregory’s lettuce was washed out./One night it rained.  2. Vance asked Gregory where his garden was./Vance heard Gregory talking about his garden.  3. Gregory brought the ladder from the garage./Gregory wanted to add tall trees to his garden.

Creativity

In Your Own Words (page 20)
Answers will vary.

What Happens Next? (page 21)
Answers will vary.

Draw a Picture (page 22)
Answers will vary.