The Artists of Benin City

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Illustrations by Scott Mattern
Green Words and *Challenge Words:

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<td>quite</td>
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<td>quilts</td>
<td>*statues</td>
<td>*solid</td>
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<td>*bronze</td>
<td>*metal</td>
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Red Words to practice every day:

- people
- been
- break
- learn
- other
Quinto Osaquwe lives in Benin City in Nigeria. Nigeria is in Africa. It is quite hot because it is near the equator. It has a wet season and a dry season.
Benin City is a place where people trade products. Farmers near the city raise cocoa and rubber. They bring these products to the city and sell them at a big market. Quinto likes to visit the market and see the things for sale.
Quinto goes to the Benin City airport to see his dad. His dad is a pilot. He fills his airplane full of cocoa from the Benin City market. Then he flies to other lands to sell the cocoa. Quinto likes the taste of Benin cocoa!
Benin City is between two rivers. On the way to school, Quinto crosses a river. He stops to look at the hippos and crocodiles.

But then, he rushes on. He must be quick. This day, his teacher will tell Quinto’s class about the king and queen of Benin City.
At school, Quinto’s teacher says, “Years ago, our city was the capital of the Benin Kingdom. It is not a kingdom now. But our king and queen still live in their big, square palace in the middle of the city. Can you share a fact about our king and queen?”
Quinto quickly raises his hand and stands up. He says, “I can see the queen’s Arts and Crafts School from my home near the palace. I like to wave to the artists as they go in. I hope I can go one day!”
Quinto hopes to go to the queen’s school because he likes art class best of all. He takes a test. His test is to shape clay into a mask.

Quinto passes the test. The clay mask he makes looks like a real face!
Quinto’s teacher takes his mask to the queen. The queen invites Quinto to visit the palace. The queen tells Quinto, “The test you passed will help you get into my school when you are big.” Quinto is glad!
The queen takes Quinto to see the art school. She says, “For hundreds and hundreds of years, bronze statues have been made at the palace. These artists in my class are making a statue.”

Quinto is quiet as he looks at the artists. They sit on quilts to make a clay shape.
When the clay is shaped, the artists put it in an oven to heat. The clay is like a brick when it is heated.

Then the artists heat bronze metal in big black pots. The metal is so hot it melts into a liquid. Quinto takes care to stay back from the hot liquid!
The artists tip the liquid metal into the clay shape. They let the liquid get cold. When it is cold, it is solid. Then they break the clay shape. Inside is a bronze metal hippo! Quinto is thrilled!
Quinto says, “I like art. Can I learn to make a bronze metal hippo?”

The queen nods and says, “When you are fifteen, you may take a second test. If you pass, you may come to the palace art school. But you need to practice your art. Do not quit!”

Quinto smiles and promises the queen not to quit. He can’t wait to be a palace art student!
1. What does Quinto’s dad sell in other lands?

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

2. Write the answer on the blank line.
Benin City is hot. It is near the __________________ . flies
Farmers sell rubber and cocoa at the ________________ . equator
Quinto’s dad __________________ an airplane. market

1. What did Quinto make to pass the test?

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

2. Write the answer on the blank line.
The king and queen live in a __________________ . school
Quinto made a mask out of __________________ . clay
Quinto passed a test for the queen’s ________________ . palace

1. What happened when the artists heated the metal?

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

2. Write the answer on the blank line.
Bronze is a __________________ . liquid
Bronze can melt into a __________________ . metal
Bronze is __________________ when it is cold. solid
Reading Roots, Level 4

The Artists of Benin City

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Reading Roots Shared Stories were developed under the direction of Robert E. Slavin and Nancy A. Madden, codirectors of the Success for All Foundation Family of Programs.

Success for All Foundation is a nonprofit education reform organization that develops and disseminates research-based reading and math programs for students in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, elementary and middle schools. These programs were originally developed at Johns Hopkins University.

Illustrations for this book were colored digitally by Jason Lego.

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