

About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Interview Page Count: 22 Word Count: 1,915

Book Summary

Todd Cupell, a wildland firefighter in Arizona, is interviewed by the author. Todd recounts the most intense, frightening, and rewarding moments he experienced on the job fighting wildfires. Readers will enjoy the down-to-earth details and adventurous stories.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Connect to prior knowledge

Objectives

- Using the reading strategy of connecting to prior knowledge while reading to understand text
- Identify cause-and-effect relationships
- Identify context clues
- Recognize and use the prefix *un-*

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*The Firefighter* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- KWL chart, cause and effect, prefix *un-* worksheets
- Discussion cards



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting book on interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if books are reused.)

Vocabulary

*Bold vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on VocabularyA-Z.com.

- Content words:

Story critical: **arsonist** (n.), **brutal** (adj.), **competent** (adj.), **entrapment** (n.), **fire-retardant** (adj.), **tedious** (adj.)

Enrichment: **bladder bags** (n.), **briefing** (n.), **camaraderie** (n.), **fire line** (n.), **fusee** (n.), **mesmerizing** (adj.), **Nomex** (n.), **Pulaski** (n.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Involve students in a discussion about wildfires. Ask them to tell what a wildfire is, what the major cause of wildfires is, and what it might be like to fight a wildfire. Have them tell what kind of qualities they think it would take to be a wildland firefighter.
- Give students the [KWL worksheet](#). Have them write what they know about firefighters and wildfires in the first column (K).

Preview the Book

Introduce the Book

- Give students a copy of the book. Have them preview the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers and offer ideas as to what kind of book this is and what it might be about.
- Direct students to the table of contents. Remind them that the table of contents provides an overview of the book. Each chapter title provides an idea of what they will read about in the book.

Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Connect to prior knowledge**

- Explain to students that having some prior knowledge about a topic and making a connection with what they know while reading helps them understand and remember the information in the book.
- After reviewing the table of contents, model using it as a way to connect to prior knowledge. *Think-aloud: Before I begin to read, I look at the pictures on the covers of the book and read the title. On the front cover it tells that this is an interview with Todd Cupell. This information leads me to believe that Todd is the firefighter pictured. Then I think about what I know about the topic. For example, I read in another book, Grandpa Smoke Jumper, about a man who jumped out of airplanes to fight wildland fires that could not be reached because of the rugged terrain. He said it was very strenuous and dangerous work. I'll have to read to discover what this firefighter has to say about fighting wildfires.* (Tailor comments to fit personal experience.)
- Have students preview the rest of the book, looking at the photographs, captions, and the "Do You Know?" boxes. Explain that these sections provide additional information about firefighters. Explain that the instructions on pages 20 and 21 tell how to prepare for and prevent wildfires.
- Have students turn to the glossary on page 22. Have them read the glossary words and their definitions aloud. Next, have students turn to the pages indicated and read each glossary word in the sentence in which it appears. Use context clues in the surrounding sentences to work out unfamiliar vocabulary words, as necessary.
- Have students write questions they thought of while previewing the book in the middle column of their KWL chart (W).
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Vocabulary

- Remind students of the strategies they can use to work out words they don't know. For example, they can use what they know about letter and sound correspondence to figure out the word. They can look for base words within words, prefixes, and suffixes. They can use context clues within a sentence or in surrounding sentences to work out meanings of unfamiliar words.
- Model how to apply word-attack strategies. For example, point out the word *mesmerized* on page 5. Model how they can use prior knowledge of watching a fire burn to figure out the meaning of the unfamiliar word. Ask students to think of a time when they sat around a campfire or had a fire in the fireplace in their home. Ask students who have sat and stared at the flames to raise their hands. Explain that this is what the word *mesmerized* means. Tell students that it's difficult to determine what the word means from the context clues, so it's important to draw on their prior knowledge to understand the word. Have students follow along as you read the last sentence on the page, rewording the sentence to confirm the meaning of the word (*Many people stare at the smoke and flames.*)


Set the Purpose

- Have students think about what they know about fires and firefighting as they read the book. Tell them to look for details that will answer the questions about firefighters and wildfires on their KWL chart.

During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read to the end of page 7. Tell them to find words or phrases in the book that answer the questions on their KWL chart. If they finish before everyone else, they can go back and reread.
- When they have finished reading, ask students to tell what they learned so far about firefighters and wildfires. Ask them what information they found to help them answer the questions on their KWL chart.
- Use the information generated above to model connecting to prior knowledge.
Think-aloud: From reading, I can tell that even though Todd is not a smoke jumper, his job is still very strenuous and dangerous. From previous reading and experience, I know the loss of lives and property affects each firefighter deeply. I think that is one of the reasons firefighters choose this job—to save lives and property.
- Have students read the remainder of the book, looking for answers to their questions. Remind them that they can add questions to their KWL chart as they go.

 Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read each word and figure out its meaning.

After Reading

- Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- Ask if they found the answers to their KWL chart questions. If some questions are still unanswered, discuss where the students can find more information, such as at the library or on the Internet.
- Discuss how making connections with information in the text that they know something about keeps them actively involved in the reading process and helps them remember what they read.

Teach the Comprehension Skill: **Cause and effect**

- **Discussion:** Discuss cause-and-effect relationships. Explain that a *cause* makes something happen, and the *effect* is what happens because of, or as a result of, the action or event. For example, if the temperature drops below 32 degrees Fahrenheit, a puddle will freeze. The *cause* is the temperature dropping; the *effect* is the puddle freezing. Tell students the word *because* often indicates that they are going to find out the cause, or reason why, something happened. The effect, or what happened, usually comes before it. Explain that when the word *because* isn't used in the text, they can add it by changing the sentence around and then checking to see if it makes sense. (*The puddle froze because the temperature dropped below 32 degrees.*)
- Tell students that in addition to the word *because*, others words signal that the cause follows. Write the following on the board: *Cause: because, since, due to*. Tell students that signal words can also show that an effect follows. Write the following list on the board: *Effect: as a result, so, then*.
- **Introduce and model:** Have students find the first sentence in the third paragraph on page 4. Write *What happened?* and *Why?* on the board. Have students find the signal word (*so*). Using the signal words on the board, have students identify whether a cause or an effect follows (*effect*). Tell students that when they are unsure about the cause and effect, they can reword the sentence using the word *because*. (*Wildland firefighters try to control the fires by forcing them to move in a certain direction because wildfires are often simply too large to put out.*)
- **Check for understanding:** Have students **complete the cause-and-effect worksheet**, referring to the book as necessary. Discuss students' answers.

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: Context clues

- Review or explain that context clues can help students determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word. Explain that punctuation, specifically commas, can help identify context clues. For example, a comma is often placed before the cue word, the definition of the unfamiliar word, or an explanation of the word. Review the cue words: *which*, *this*, and *or*.
- Write the following sentences on the board. Have students identify the sentences in which a comma signals the use of a context clue. Have them explain why a comma cannot be used in the second sentence (it would create a run-on sentence).
 - Firefighters wear shirts and pants made of Nomex, which is a fire-resistant brand of clothing.*
 - Cleaning up after a fire is tedious. This is one of the most time-consuming and boring tasks a firefighter has.*
 - Camaraderie, or friendship among the firefighters, is an important part of the job.*
- Check for understanding:** Have students identify the cue words and definition context clues in Todd's reply on page 13 (*or PPE, which is...*). Explain that this sentence is unusual because it contains two definition context clues.



Independent practice: Have students go through the book and underline the sentences in which a definition context clue is used to help clarify the meaning of an unfamiliar word (*entrapment*: page 7, *fusees*: page 15, *safety zone*: page 15, *Pulaski*: page 16).

Word Work: Prefix *un-*

- Write the word *unfortunately* on the board. Ask students to name the base word (*fortunate*). Point out that the prefix *un-* has been added. Review or explain that when a prefix is added to a word, a new word with a new meaning is created. Explain that when the prefix *un-* is added to a word, the new word means *not* the base word. Ask students to tell what *unfortunately* means on page 9 (not fortunate).
- Write *uninsured*, *unacceptable*, and *unrest* on the board. Have students define each word and use it in a sentence.
- Check for understanding:** Have students complete the [prefix *un-* worksheet](#).

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently. Additionally, allow partners to take turns reading parts of the book to each other.

Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends.

Extend the Reading

Writing Connection

Have students use the interview format used in the book to conduct interviews with working adults about their jobs. If necessary, brainstorm ideas for questions that students can use in the interview. Have students conduct the interview, write the answers, and present the information to the class.

Social Studies Connection

Have a wildland firefighter, smoke jumper, or firefighter talk to the class about his or her job. Have students ask the questions asked in the book and write the firefighter's responses. After the firefighter's visit, have students compare their responses with those of the firefighter in the book. Then talk about why the answers are the same or different. Another option: Have students read Reading A-Z (level X) *Grandpa Smoke Jumper*. Compare and contrast the information about each firefighter.

Skill Review

Discussion cards covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Cut apart and use the cards as game cards with a board game.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

Assessment

Monitor students to determine if they can:

- connect to prior knowledge about firefighters and wildfires while reading to remember text
- identify cause-and-effect relationships in nonfiction text; identify relationships on a graphic organizer
- identify and locate context clues in text
- correctly use the prefix *un-* to write sentences and complete a worksheet

Comprehension Checks

- **Book Quiz**
- **Retelling Rubric**