



About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Informational Page Count: 24 Word Count: 1,924

Book Summary

The historical details and descriptions of city life in the past enhance the stories of three major urban fires. The fires of Rome, London, and Chicago led to tragic loss of life and property. The text explains how these fires led to reforms and the development of fire safety codes used in cities today. Fire safety tips conclude the book.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Connect to prior knowledge

Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of connecting to prior knowledge to remember information in text
- Compare and contrast information in text
- Understand and identify verbs and direct objects
- Locate word origins, roots, and meanings

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*Great City Fires* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- Compare and contrast, direct objects, word origins 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: *bucket brigade* (n.), *fire hook* (n.), *firestorm* (n.), *gasworks* (n.), *refugees* (n.), *thatched roofs* (n.)

Enrichment: *firebreaks* (n.), *lax* (adj.), *looting* (n.), *militiamen* (n.), *persecute* (v.), *slums* (n.), *stockyards* (n.), *unruly* (adj.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Ask students to tell what they know about building or city fires, especially historic fires. Ask students how fires start and how they think an entire city could catch on fire.

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.

- Show students the title page. Talk about the information on the page (title of book, author's name).
- Direct students to the table of contents on page 3. Remind students that the table of contents provides an overview of the book. Each section 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 of the topic they are going to read about and making a connection with what they know while they read helps them understand and remember the information in the book.
- Model how to use prior knowledge as you preview the book.
Think-aloud: When I look at the table of contents, I'm reminded of when my neighbor's house burned down because of a faulty electrical wire. The fire department arrived before the house burned to the ground, but the inside was completely ruined. The fire destroyed everything in its path. I'll have to read the book to find out how these three fires were started and how badly the cities were damaged. As I read, I'll try to connect what I already know with the new information I read.
- Have students preview the rest of the book, looking at photos, illustrations, and captions. Tell students the boxes titled "Do You Know?" provide more information about fires.
- Show students pages 21 through 23, "Fire Safety Tips," and explain that this section provides additional information about how people can help prevent fires and how to be safe if a fire occurs.
- Show students the glossary and explain its purpose.

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 a word. They can look for base words within words, prefixes, and suffixes. They can use the context to work out meanings of unfamiliar words.
- Model how to apply word-attack strategies. For example, have students find the bold word *persecute* on page 8. Tell students that the sentence with the word contains a definition context clue, or the meaning of the unfamiliar word directly following it. Have students follow along as you read the sentence using the meaning of the unfamiliar word. Ask students if the sentence makes sense.
- Model looking up the word in the glossary on page 24 for a more complete definition. Have students follow along as you reread the sentence on the page using the glossary definition of the word.
- Have students 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.

Set the Purpose

- Have students think about what they know about city fires as they read the book.

During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read to the end of page 8. Tell them to pay attention to information that tells how the fire of Rome began, why it spread, how the Roman firefighters and citizens tried to stop it, and what changes were made in the city because of it. Tell them they should go back and reread the pages if they finish before everyone else.
- When they have finished reading, ask students to tell the details they learned about the fire of Rome. Reinforce unfamiliar vocabulary by using words such as *unruly* and *persecute* in the discussion.
- Have students read the remainder of the book, continuing to think about what they know about city fires as they read.



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

- Discuss how making connections with events in the text that students know something about keeps them actively involved in the reading process and helps them remember what they read.

Teach the Comprehension Skill: **Compare and contrast**

- **Discussion:** Ask students which fire they think was the most destructive. Allow students to justify their opinions with information from the text. Point out that there may be different opinions about the worst fire and that it's important to respectfully listen to another student's opinion, even when it is different from their own.
- **Introduce and model:** Review or explain that comparing and contrasting details can help readers understand and remember what they read. Write *Who was blamed for starting the fire?* on the board. Have students find the first paragraph on page 8. Ask them to tell who was blamed for the fire in Rome. (Nero/Christians). Have students look at the last paragraph on page 9 to find who was blamed for starting the fire in London (Thomas Farynor). Have students find the third and fourth paragraphs on page 15, and ask them who or what was blamed for the fire in Chicago (Mrs. O'Leary's cow, firemen going to the wrong address).
- **Check for understanding:** Have students look at the information written on the board. Have them tell which fire was definitely started by a person (London) and which two fires may have been started by people (Rome, Chicago). Ask them to tell which fire may have been started by an animal (Chicago).
- **Independent practice:** Have students complete the **compare-and-contrast worksheet**. Discuss their responses.



Extend the discussion: Instruct students to use the inside cover of their book to write a short paragraph explaining which of the three fires has made the most important contribution to our lives. Have them support their selection with details from the book. Have students share their paragraph with the group.

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: **Verbs and direct objects**

- Have students turn to page 5. Have them find the following sentence: *After a great fire in ancient Egypt, the Egyptians invented a water pump and organized bucket brigades...* Write *Egyptians invented a water pump* on the board. Ask students to identify the *subject* and *verb*. Write the word *subject* above Egyptians and the word *verb* above *invented*. Review or explain that a *direct object* is a noun or pronoun that receives the action of the verb. Tell students they can find the direct object by first finding the verb and then finding the noun or pronoun that receives the action of the verb. Explain that in the above sentence, you can ask what the Egyptians invented. The answer is *water pump* (circle *water pump*).
- **Check for understanding:** Have students look at the first sentence in the second paragraph on page 7. Ask them to tell the verb (*organized*) and the direct object (*efforts*).
- **Independent practice:** Have students complete the **direct objects worksheet**. Discuss their responses.

Word Work: **Word origins**

- Pass out student dictionaries. Have students read the box titled “Do You Know?” on page 8. Tell students that the Romans, who spoke Latin, had an empire that stretched all the way from Italy to England. Early Christian churches conducted their services in Latin, and some Catholic churches still hold special masses in Latin. Explain that many words used today have Latin roots. For example, write the following words on the board (not the answers in parentheses): *audiologist* (*audio*: hearing), *cardiology* (*cardia*: heart), *cuticle* (*cuti*: skin), *hemisphere* (*hemi*: half), *pedestrian* (*ped*: foot). Have students try to determine the root of each word. Tell students that the study of word origins is called *etymology* (write on board). Show them how to verify their guesses by finding the word origin and root in their dictionary.
- Tell students that the following words have Greek roots: *aerospace* (*aero*: air); *bicycle* (*cyclo*: wheel); *geologist* (*geo*: earth). Have students try to determine the root and origin of each word by finding them in the dictionary.
- Tell students that other words (write *root* and *origin* on the board) used today come from Anglo-Saxon roots (*dear*: darling), French (*porc*: pig), or German (*schnoerkel*: snorkel).
- **Check for understanding:** Give students the [word origins worksheet](#) to complete. Have students use a dictionary to research the root and the origin(s) of the root. Discuss their answers.

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 books to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends.

Extend the Reading

Writing Connection

Have students select one of the fires and use the book and/or library and Internet resources to write an imaginary personal narrative from an eyewitness perspective. Tell them to use the personal pronouns *I*, *me*, *we*, and *us* to tell the story. Remind students to keep track of the sequence of their story and include time words such as *first*, *next*, *later*, *then*, *meanwhile*, and *after*. Have students share their narrative with the group.

Social Studies Connection

Discuss being a firefighter as a career choice. Provide print and Internet resources for students to learn what education, skills, training, etc. are required. Ask a representative from the local fire department to speak to the class about becoming a firefighter. Have students write what would be required to become a firefighter. Then have students write why they would or would not choose this as a career for themselves.

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:

- use the strategy of making connections to prior knowledge to understand text
- identify, compare, and contrast details in text to complete a worksheet
- identify verbs and their direct objects on a worksheet
- identify origins, roots, and meanings of words

Comprehension Checks

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