

Geography Alive: Bushfire hazards in Australia (Lesson 6)

Lesson 6: Fire		
<p>Content focus:</p> <p>In this lesson students develop their skills in identifying rhyming words (and rhymed couplets) and the use of metaphorical language. They may do this on their own or through discussion with adult story reader.</p> <p>Themes addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The power of natural forces in Australia The extremes of fire and flood The causes of bushfire The 'stay or go' policy Fire and the life cycle of Australian flora The courage of fire fighters The role of volunteers in Australian life Climate change Rhyming 		<p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Picture book – <i>Fire</i>, by Jackie French & Bruce Whatley, Scholastic (2014) <p>Fire is a moving and sensitive story of a natural disaster as seen through the eyes of a cockatoo. The fire engulfs homes and land, leaving a path of devastation. But from the ruins, courage, kindness and new life grows.</p> <p>Synopsis: Just one spark wakes the fire and as it leaps across the paddocks, the people in its path spring into action. The drill is familiar: estimate how far off the fire is burning, check that fire hazards to property have been removed wherever possible, pack the car and be ready to drive to safety. The fire races onward like a monster, devouring all obstacles, and it is time to leave.</p> <p>Escape is uncertain, though, with the smoke so thick that the headlights of the family ute prove useless. There are just two signs of hope: the speck of a helicopter approaching, and the team of fire fighters whose courage and strength hold the fire back. The unnamed family's home and possessions have been destroyed, and it seems that all they are left with is grief. But the text suggests that what they have instead is a wealth of support and friendship, from both professional rescue crews and volunteers. And the future regrowth of green shoots in the bush is envisaged as a metaphor for the continuing spirit of life in the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worksheet 6: Fire
<p>Key inquiry questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does the story of <i>Fire</i> tell us about the causes and impacts of bushfires? What does the story of <i>Fire</i> tell us about: how people should respond in that face of a bushfire threat; the role of volunteers in Australian life; human resilience in the face of disasters such as a bushfire? 	<p>Outcomes:</p> <p><i>A student:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates an understanding of rhyming words, simile and metaphors, and symbolism. identifies the dangers associated with bushfires from an illustrated story. appreciates the value of life and the work of volunteers. 	<p>Lesson sequence:</p> <p>Step 1: Show the students the books cover. Ask them what they can see and what this suggests about the type of story featured in the book. What does it tell us about this bushfire? What is the role of the cockatoo in the illustration? Why does the cockatoo look frightened?</p> <p>Step 2: Read the picture book, <i>Fire</i>, to the class and briefly discusses the key themes featured in the text – the power of natural forces in Australia; the extremes of fire and flood; the causes of bushfire; the 'stay or go' policy; fire and the life cycle of Australian flora; the courage of fire fighters; and the role of volunteers in Australian life. Discuss the order of events portrayed in the story.</p> <p>Step 3: Revise the concept of rhyming with students. Re-read the book and ask students to identify where rhyming is used. Complete Activity 1 on <i>Worksheet 6: Fire</i>. Have your students identify of rhyming words for those listed in Activity 2.</p> <p>Step 4: Revise the concepts of simile, metaphor and symbolism with the students. Show the students the first double-page spread. Discuss Jackie French's use of simile – a comparison that uses 'like' – Like a snake, fire changes direction quickly, is dangerous, the hissing sound of the fire etc. Discuss Jackie French's use of metaphor (the fire being likened to a living, threatening creature). Identify the words and phrases that help build this metaphorical image – 'fire awake'; flames snickered'; 'bushfire leapt'; 'licked by tongues of fire'; 'flames are laughing'; 'the beasts that ate it'; 'gulping smoke'; 'oven's breath swallows the day'; 'red monster'. Ask students to look for examples of symbolism – for example, the helicopter representative of hope; the grieving family, the young boy holding the hand of his father, and the volunteer giving the koala a drink reinforcing the importance of life – property can be replaced; green shoots and the cockatoo representing renewal and recovery.</p>



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		<p>Step 5: Ask the students to re-read the story and ask them to identify the ways in which it ends on a positive note.</p> <p>Step 5: Ask students to reflect on the illustrations in the book. In what ways do the illustrations capture the mood of the fire, as well as the contrasting landscape before and after the fire. How do the illustrations emphasise the importance of life and work of volunteer fire fighters. Study the image of the burning home. What would your reaction be if this was your home?</p>
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