

Geography Alive: Bushfire hazards in Australia (Lesson 1)

Lesson 1: Natural hazards and disasters (Bushfires)		
<p>Content focus:</p> <p>In this lesson students distinguish between natural hazards and natural disasters. They also explore fire-related terminology used in Australia and the difference between forest and grass fires. Students study the parts of Australia at greatest risk of bushfires and how the bushfire season varies from north to south. Finally, they have the opportunity to investigate one of the deadliest Australian bushfires using the internet.</p>		<p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youtube video: Splash ABC – <i>Devastating bushfires hit Victoria, 2009</i> (9 minutes, 20 seconds). http://splash.abc.net.au/home#!/media/31095/bushfires-disaster-victoria-2009 <p>Victoria's devastating bushfires of 2009 have been called Australia's worst-ever natural disaster. In this clip students will see the ferocious fires that ripped through parts of Victoria, destroying bushland, farms, houses, schools and cars.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worksheet 1: Natural hazards and disasters (Bushfires) Access to the internet
<p>Key inquiry questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the difference between a 'natural hazard' and a 'natural disaster'? What is the difference between a forest and grass fire? Which parts of the Australian continent are at greatest risk of bushfires? How does the bushfire season change as you cross the continent from north to south? Which have been the deadliest Australian bushfires. 	<p>Outcomes:</p> <p><i>A student:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> explains the difference between a 'natural hazard' and a 'natural disaster'. distinguishes between forest and grass fire identifies those parts of the Australian continent that experience the greatest bushfire threat. describes how the bushfire season varies as you cross the continent from north to south. acquires, processes and communicates geographical information about a selected Australian bushfire disaster using the internet to conduct an inquiry. 	<p>Lesson sequence:</p> <p>Step 1: Students view: <i>Devastating bushfires hit Victoria, 2009</i>.</p> <p>Key inquiry questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What were the weather conditions like on the 'weekend from hell'? How many fires 'ripped through the state'? How much land was burnt? How many houses were destroyed? How many people were killed? How many animals died? Why was the fire so deadly? How did the weather conditions experienced on the day affect the behaviour of the fire? How did the region's terrain and vegetation contribute to the deadly impact of the fires? Why is radiant heat said to be the most dangerous part of a bushfire? What were the fire's impact on people and communities? How did Australians respond? <p>Step 2: Class discussion focusing on the difference between a 'natural hazard' and 'natural disaster' and the difference between forest and grass fires.</p> <p>Step 3: Students study the text, table and maps on Worksheet 1 and complete Activities 1–6.</p> <p>Step 4: Students select one of the bushfire disasters listed in Table 1 and undertake internet research. They are asked to outline the circumstances under which the fires took place and describe the extent of the damage caused. They present their findings as a written report.</p> <p>Stage 5: Use questioning to determine level of student understanding.</p>