

Wildfire Detectives

Objectives:

- Understand what a fire is
- Understand how to stay safe and what the response steps are in case of forest fires
- Stimulate problem solving

Before starting

Wildfires are fascinating and sometimes surprising natural events.

The teacher introduces some interesting facts and trivia about wildfires:

What is a wildfire?

The teacher sits the children in a circle and places a poster large enough to write on in the center. Each is asked to share what they know about fires and write their ideas on the board (alternatively, the teacher may decide to simply use the interactive whiteboard). To lead the activity, the teacher can encourage children to think about what fires are caused by and how they can be prevented.

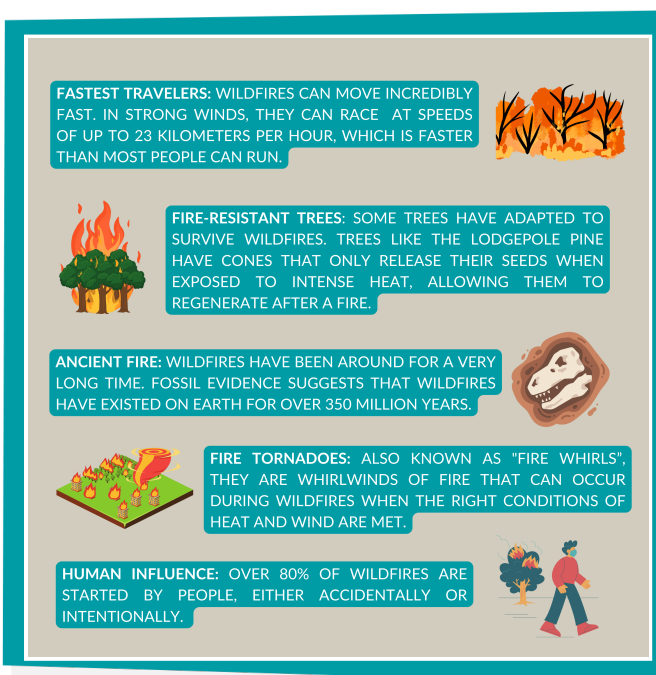
After some ideas have emerged and been shared, the teacher proceeds to explain what a wildfire is:

A wildfire, also known as a forest fire or vegetation fire, is an uncontrolled, rapidly spreading fire that occurs in wooded areas, such as forests, grasslands, or open fields. Forest fires can start and spread rapidly, often consuming trees, shrubs, grasses and other natural vegetation, as well as potentially threatening homes, property and lives. These fires can be caused by natural factors, such as lightning strikes, or by human activities, such as campfires or cigarettes thrown on the ground.

Fire safety educational pathway

The teacher now introduces the following activity by asking them to list three correct behaviors that can prevent a fire from occurring and three possible actions that can cause a fire. After a brief discussion, the teacher introduces an experiential game: children will explore a forest fire firsthand.

The teacher is advised to conduct the activity in a natural area (e.g., the school garden) or in a large room such as the school gymnasium.



FASTEST TRAVELERS: WILDFIRES CAN MOVE INCREDIBLY FAST. IN STRONG WINDS, THEY CAN RACE AT SPEEDS OF UP TO 23 KILOMETERS PER HOUR, WHICH IS FASTER THAN MOST PEOPLE CAN RUN.

FIRE-RESISTANT TREES: SOME TREES HAVE ADAPTED TO SURVIVE WILDFIRES. TREES LIKE THE LODGEPOLE PINE HAVE CONES THAT ONLY RELEASE THEIR SEEDS WHEN EXPOSED TO INTENSE HEAT, ALLOWING THEM TO REGENERATE AFTER A FIRE.

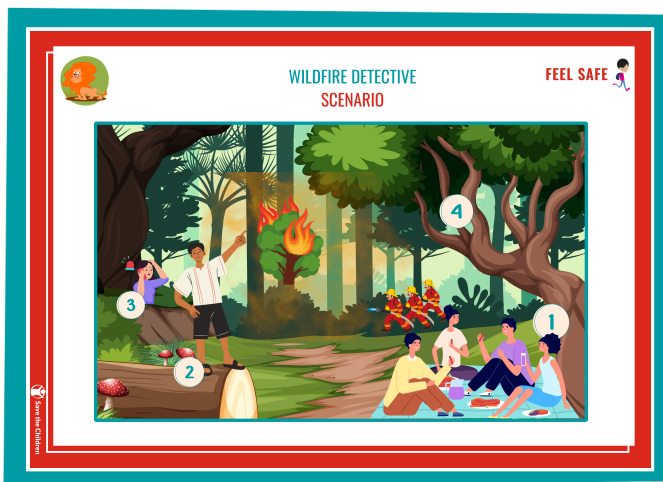
ANCIENT FIRE: WILDFIRES HAVE BEEN AROUND FOR A VERY LONG TIME. FOSSIL EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT WILDFIRES HAVE EXISTED ON EARTH FOR OVER 350 MILLION YEARS.

FIRE TORNADOES: ALSO KNOWN AS "FIRE WHIRLS", THEY ARE WHIRLWINDS OF FIRE THAT CAN OCCUR DURING WILDFIRES WHEN THE RIGHT CONDITIONS OF HEAT AND WIND ARE MET.

HUMAN INFLUENCE: OVER 80% OF WILDFIRES ARE STARTED BY PEOPLE, EITHER ACCIDENTALLY OR INTENTIONALLY.

Divided into groups, children create boards or panels with illustrations depicting all the stages of the Pathway (alternatively, the teacher can use the “Scenario” image and guide students through all the stages of the Pathway orally.

The image is also available as a downloadable attachment.



Step 1: Outdoor picnic (e.g., children sitting on mats or blankets, simulating a picnic).

Step 2: Locating the fire (e.g., showing a sign of someone seeing the fire in the distance).

Step 3: Calling the fire department (e.g., representing a cell phone or toy cell phone).

Step 4: Safe evacuation behaviors (e.g., picture of children walking away from the fire).

Once the drawings for each of the phases have been made, the teacher can arrange them around the designated area, generating a pathway. For each stage, the teacher may decide to set up a scenario using different materials to ensure a complete experience for the children (an indicative and non-exhaustive list is provided below):

1. Boards or panels with printed images depicting the different phases of the activity
2. Mats or blankets to simulate a picnic.
3. Backpacks or bags with small snacks for the picnic.

4. Cell phone or toy cell phone (to simulate calling the fire department).

At this point the teacher gathers the children together. The role play begins by showing the class the first phase, which represents the picnic. For each phase, the teacher moderates a brief discussion by asking some questions designed to understand the key concepts of preventing a fire and keeping safe, understanding what to do in case of a fire, how to act in case of a fire.

Step 1: Picnic

Objective: Prevent a fire and keep yourself safe

Stimulus questions:

- What is good to know before going on a picnic in the woods?
- What are the main things to pay attention to when outdoors?

Step 2: Spotted fire

Objective: To understand what to do in case of fire

Stimulus questions:

- What is good to do when someone sees a fire? (Teacher can use this document for input).
- Why is it important to report the situation immediately?

Step 3: Call the fire department

Objective: Understand what to do in case of a fire

Stimulus questions:

- Who should be called in case of fire?
- What information should you clearly state?
- How can you help the fire department find you?

This phase can be enhanced by dividing children into pairs to mimic a call to the fire department. One child will play the firefighter and the other the person in distress.

Step 4: Safety behaviors.

Objective: how to behave in the event of a fire

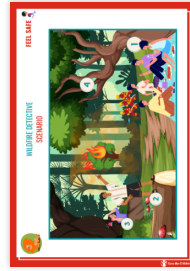
Stimulus questions:

- What can we do to stay safe in case of fire?
- What steps should be taken for safe evacuation from a fire?

Concluding thoughts

This activity provides children with a hands-on experience to learn fire safety behaviors and prepares them to respond appropriately in real-life situations. At the end of the activity, the teacher can summarize the key points of the activity by writing the three objectives of the experience on the interactive whiteboard, collecting children's responses at each stage and inviting them to share any thoughts or concerns.

ATTACHMENTS



PDF

Wildfire Detective - Scenario