

## **Destroyed or Reborn?**

Pat Lowe, Wasatch Range Writing Project

### **Summary:**

This lesson will help students understand the benefit of fires in the natural ecosystem. It also offers the opportunity to teach students about fire as a metaphor for adversity. The study will be in the context of historical and contemporary situations. Texts give examples of fire's devastation as well as human attitudes, actions and emotions concerning it. Students will understand that people share common feelings regarding adversity, and will come to validate their own diverse emotions. Thoughtful discussion will lead to an understanding of appropriate ways to express feelings about challenges and hardship. Personal reflections and writing will explore strategies in facing hardships. The general procedure could be used with many texts or situations.

### **Objectives:**

- Incorporate affective learning into science, language arts and social studies.
- Offer historical and scientific understanding of the environment in the context of fire.
- Present students with an opportunity to explore positive and healthy ways to respond to hardship and challenge in their own lives.
- Teach students to recognize metaphors in real life situations.

### **Context:**

This lesson could be used as part of a study of history, the environment, or in conjunction with the study of emotional health. It would be appropriate for upper elementary and secondary students.

### **Materials:**

- Books from the Resources list
- Copies of selected passages: individual sheets, posters, or pages to be projected on a screen
- Large sheets of poster paper for display in the classroom
- Paper or individual student notebooks/journals

### **Time Span:**

The material can be presented in multiple sessions of 30-45 minutes each, with time in between for student reflection and writing.

### **Procedures:**

1. Students will write in their journals about house, rangeland or forest fires, and their feelings and/or experience with them. Are there questions or situations about which they wonder?
2. Ask students to physically take a stand on a continuum between "Fires can be good," and "Fire is always bad." Write in their journals about their opinion on the opposing views.
3. Have students list and reflect on personal situations which seem as destructive as a fire. Ask them to include the emotions they experience, including fear, intimidation, confidence or anger.



4. As a class, list ideas on large pages of chart paper. Identify categories among the emotions listed, and expand the vocabulary of terms.
5. Discuss times and situations where feelings of helplessness or defeat seem to stop personal progress.
6. Read selections from texts or handouts. Students could choose to study the response of the natural environment after the Mount St. Helens volcanic eruption, the return of birds to a burned forest area, or the ecological revival after the forest fires of 1988 in Yellowstone National Park.
7. As a class, review the effects of fire on a natural environment. List them in chart form for future reference.
8. Introduce or review the literary device, metaphor. How might fire be a metaphor for adversity or challenge in someone's personal life?
9. Have students reflect in their journals about challenges they face. What could be considered adversity in their life, or the life of others?
10. As a class or in small groups, discuss the effectiveness of different attitudes and behaviors regarding personal hardships.
11. Analyze situations in current society which provoke responses to difficulties. Explore positive and socially responsible ways to respond.
12. Let students reflect and write about themselves; perhaps they have experienced or know of poverty, discrimination, or bullying at school or in their neighborhood. They may have a fear of war, terrorism, or personal and social violence.
13. Have students write about an experience with one of the situations or feelings identified on the chart. The format might be a poem, rap, essay, diary entry or letter and response in a newspaper editorial or advice column. Encourage them to identify a positive approach to resolving the incident.
14. Recreate the continuum of "good" and "bad" fires. Have student attitudes and opinions changed because of the study of wildfires and adversity? Discuss why that might be the case.

#### **Extensions:**

- Let students review their journal entry after the initial continuum activity. Write another reflection about their opinion after the study of wildfires and adversity.
- Ask students to reflect in their journals about why they selected their product format.
- Have students consider whether they would be victims, survivors or colonizers after a destructive event, and write about the reasons which support their opinion.
- Discuss the consequences of various attitudes and responses possible when faced with adversity.
- Challenge students to discover contemporary examples of positive reactions to difficult situations, and share with the class. Study might be limited to the school, neighborhood, or community, or expanded to include regional, national, or world-wide events.
- Allow students to role play an incident from the texts or contemporary life.
- Let students debate various nonviolent responses identified by class members.
- Invite students to choose a quotation on adversity, and find out about the individual to whom it is attributed. What is the context of the quote? What difficulties and hardships did the author experience personally which contributed to their perspective on adversity?

#### **Rationale:**

In the past, children were taught to "be tough," "let it go," "buck up" or not be a "wimp" when faced with difficult situations and challenges. Students can be taught that emotionally healthy, resilient individuals



face challenge with strength and the willingness to consider a variety of positive responses. Knowing about the natural response of the environment to wildfire can offer a metaphor for choices in personal behavior. Quotations by historic and literary figures offer positive perspectives.

**Resources:**

Collard, Sneed B. *Fire Birds: Valuing Natural Wildfires and Burned Forests*. Missoula, MT: Bucking Horse Press, 2015. Print.

Lauber, Patricia. *Volcano: The Eruption and Healing of Mount St. Helens*. New York: Simon and Shuster Books for Young Readers, 1986. Print.

Reinhart, Karen Wildung. *Yellowstone's Rebirth by Fire: Rising From the Ashes of the 1988 Wildfires*. Helena, MT: Farcountry Press, 2008. Print.

Rusch, Elizabeth. *Volcano Rising*. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge, 2013. Print

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## QUOTES ON ADVERSITY

“Sweet are the uses of adversity...” *Shakespeare As You Like It Act 2, scene 1, 12*

“The marvelous richness of human experience would lose something of rewarding joy if there were no limitations to overcome. The hilltop hour would not be half so wonderful if there were no dark valleys to traverse.” *Helen Keller*

“We don't develop courage by being happy every day. We develop it by surviving difficult times and challenging adversity.” *Barbara de Angelis*

“Hardships often prepare ordinary people for an extraordinary destiny.” *C.S. Lewis*

“The gem cannot be polished without friction, nor man perfected without trials.”  
*Chinese proverb*

“Show me someone who has done something worthwhile, and I'll show you someone who has overcome adversity.” *Lou Holtz*

“Difficulties strengthen the mind, as labor does the body.” *Seneca*

“The moment we believe that success is determined by an ingrained level of ability as opposed to resilience and hard work, we will be brittle in the face of adversity.” *Joshua Waitzin*

“He knows not his own strength who hath not met adversity.” *William Samuel Johnson*

“I know God won't give me anything I can't handle. I just wish he didn't trust me so much.”  
*Mother Theresa*



## Fire Metaphor Narrative Writing

Kristine Langford, Wasatch Range Writing Project

### Summary:

Students will discuss metaphor and extended metaphor through reading and discussion of the book *Fire Birds* and will then write a personal narrative using the idea of fire as their metaphor.

### Objective:

Students will be able to understand metaphors and be able to use a metaphor in their personal narrative writing.

### Context:

This is a middle school lesson, but can easily be used in high school or upper elementary with adaptation.

### Materials:

- Pen/Pencil
- Notebook/Writing Paper
- Copy of *Fire Birds*
- Whiteboard/Whiteboard Markers
- Graphic Organizer (Optional)

### Time Span:

One or two class periods

### Procedures:

1. Review what a metaphor is: a comparison not using like or as. Have students think of some examples of metaphors. For example: My house is a castle. Be sure that students understand what a metaphor is and how to write one before continuing on to the next step.
2. Next explain what an extended metaphor is. An extended metaphor is still a metaphor, but can be used throughout a paragraph, story, or poem.
3. Explain to students that today they will be writing an extended metaphor for a personal narrative. The metaphor they will be working with will be the metaphor of "Fire."
4. Using the book *Fire Birds*, read aloud to the class or distribute copies of the pages indicated below.
5. Read first the page titled "Inferno." Then ask students if they think fire is always devastating. Or can it also be good sometimes? Take a few responses.
6. Read the following sections to students: "World on Fire," pp. 15-17; "Birding in Burns," pp. 17-19; and "Not Just About the Birds," p. 30. (Other sections may work as well.) Ask students about the benefits of fire. Have students brainstorm a list of the good things fire does.



7. After you have come up with a list of things that fires can do, guide students to the understanding that fire creates change. You might use before and after pictures from the book to help them think about change.
8. Ask students to think about how this idea of fire and change can be used as a metaphor in their own lives. Discuss how challenges and trials can be like fires and how they have the ability to change us. Share an example from your life or a story you know to give the students an example.
9. Have students brainstorm in their journal examples from their life that they would qualify as a “Fire” and what change it brought about for them.
10. After students have brainstormed, hand out the Graphic Organizer (optional) or have students create their own to fill in the details of the story.
11. Ask students to begin writing their Fire Metaphor stories.
12. As students are filling out their brainstorm and graphic organizers, check on their work to make sure they are on the right track.

**Extensions:**

- Have students jigsaw read the selections from *Fire Birds*, and then discuss on their own about fire and the idea of change and how it can be used as a metaphor.
- Have students turn their personal narrative stories into extended metaphor poems.

**Rationale :**

The Utah Common Core states that students need to know how to use a metaphor and how to write a personal narrative. Using an extended metaphor allows students to make connections with the outside world in their everyday lives.

**Resources:**

Collard, Sneed B. *Fire Birds: Valuing Natural Wildfires and Burned Forests*. Missoula, Montana: Bucking Horse Books, 2015. Print.

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## Personal Narrative Graphic Organizer

Metaphor used throughout story:

Introduction.

Hook: \_\_\_\_\_

Body Paragraph 1:

Body Paragraph 2:

Body Paragraph 3:

Conclusion:







## Fire Poetry

Felicia Bedwell, Wasatch Range Writing Project

### Summary:

Students will read *The Firekeeper's Son* by Linda Sue Park. Students will recognize descriptive language and how it is used to help visualize a story.

### Objective:

Students can use specific descriptive language to write a poem.

### Context:

A 2-4<sup>th</sup> grade elementary lesson. Can be adapted for any grade.

### Materials:

- Paper
- Pen/pencil
- Colored pencils/crayons
- <http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/diamante/>

### Time Span:

One to two class period times, more or less as needed.

### Procedures:

1. Initiate a discussion with students about fire and what it is used for.
2. On the whiteboard, make a list of the different ways the students came up with.
3. Read the Korean tale, *The Firekeeper's Son*.
4. Instruct the students to make a t-chart.
  - a. Label one section Fire.
  - b. Label the other section Miscellaneous.
5. Instruct the students to write down words that are used by the author to describe fire in the fire column.
6. Instruct the students to write down other descriptive words used by the author in the miscellaneous column.
7. After reading the book, discuss the words the students wrote down. Some examples of miscellaneous descriptive words can be found on page 14 and descriptive words about fire on page 25.
8. Review the process of how to write a diamante poem from the following website:  
<http://www.readwritethink.org/parent-afterschool-resources/games-tools/diamante-poems-a-30185.html>.
9. If you have Internet access, the students can use the following to write their diamante poems:  
<http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/diamante/>.
10. Instruct students to use their list of descriptive fire words to create a diamante poem.



11. Students can share their poems with others in the class (optional).

**Extensions:**

- Write a Haiku.
- Look for uses of personification by the author.
- Find metaphors and similes, describing the differences between them.

**Rationale:**

Poetry allows students to express themselves in a creative, non-threatening way. Recognizing how descriptive language can enhance or show meaning when reading is a great step in increasing reading comprehension.

**Resources:**

Park, Linda Sue. *The Firekeeper's Son*. New York: Sandpiper, 2004. Print.

“Diamante Poems.” *Readwritethink*. International Reading Association, National Council of Teachers of English. 2010. Web. Accessed 8 Aug 2017.

<http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/diamante/>.

“Tool Diamante Poems.” *Readwritethink*. International Literacy Association, National Council of Teachers of English. N.d. Web. Accessed 8 Aug 2017. <http://www.readwritethink.org/parent-afterschool-resources/games-tools/diamante-poems-a-30185.html>.

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## Fire Safety

Kristine Langford, Wasatch Range Writing Project

### Summary:

Students will use information about fire safety to write a detailed plan to keep their homes safe from fire. They will then create a map of an exit plan for each person in the house. They will share this information with their families.

### Objective:

Students will be able to analyze a piece of informational text and then be able to use this knowledge to write an informational piece using evidence from the text.

### Context:

This lesson will be used during the study of informational text and how to read and analyze that text. This is a middle school lesson, but can be adapted for upper elementary and high school.

### Materials:

- A copy of *Wildfires: The Science Behind Raging Infernos*
- Pen/Pencil
- Notebook
- Computer/Chromebook (optional)

### Time Span:

One or two class periods

### Procedures:

1. Make copies of the section “Staying Safe” from the book *Wildfires*, pages 37-42. Pass out copies to students to read and annotate the main ideas of each section.
2. After students read “Staying Safe,” inform them that they will write a three-paragraph informative paper on how they will keep their own homes safe from fire. They will create an actual plan to make their home fire safe. They will create a picture of how each family member will get out of their home. They will go over the plan with their family and have one of their parents sign off on the paper.
3. Discuss with the class the information in “Staying Safe” they might use in their fire safety paper. Discuss how the main ideas they annotated might help shape their three paragraphs.
4. Ask them to write the plan in class, where you can help and encourage.



5. Divide the class into small groups to share their plan and to offer suggestions to each other.
6. Once students have a rough draft of their fire safety plan, ask them to draw a map of their home, showing how to get each person out of the home.
7. Make sure students cite their sources, including the book *Wildfires*. If students need more information, they can use a computer to find more information on home fire safety.
8. Once they complete their plans and maps, tell students to take them home and go over the information with their families and have a parent sign off that they went over their plan with their families.
9. When students return from talking to their families, have a class discussion on what happened at home. Perhaps family members had questions or suggestions for their plan.
10. Using these new ideas, ask students to write a final draft of their family plan.

**Extensions:**

- Students could create a general pamphlet on home safety and how to fireproof a home.
- Students could create a children's book that teaches children about how to be safe in their homes.

**Rationale:**

Students will learn how to read informational text and then be able to apply what they are learning directly into their life. They will also learn how to cite the sources where they gained their information.

**Resources:**

Silverstein, Alvin and Virginia, and Nunn, Laura S. *Wildfires: The Science Behind Raging Infernos*. New Jersey: Enslow Publishers, Inc., 2010. Print.

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**Good Guy? Bad Guy? *Volcano Rising***  
Judy Chesley, Wasatch Range Writing Project

**Summary:**

After reading a scientific text, students will take a position on the worth of volcanoes, using specific details from a text to support their position.

**Objective:**

- Students will read closely to determine what the text says explicitly.
- Students will make logical inferences from text.
- Students will cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusion drawn from the text.

**Context:**

A 6th grade elementary classroom, easily adapted for grades 4-8

**Materials:**

- *Volcano* by Elizabeth Rusch
- Paper and pencil
- Optional: Combine with the vocabulary lesson for this unit.

**Time Span:**

One or two class periods

**Procedures:**

1. Explain to students you will be reading *Volcano Rising*.
2. Instruct students to take “jot” notes (simple reference notes of two to three words) to use as reference.
3. After reading the text, instruct students to find evidence in their notes to support both of the following positions:
  - a. “Most people think volcanoes destroy everything around them.”
  - b. “Volcanoes can be creative too.”
4. Discuss both sides, reminding them they must choose a side.
5. When discussion seems finished, instruct students to write the statement they wish to support at the top of their paper and begin listing the evidence they find in their notes.
6. Divide the class in groups of three and give them time to read their papers to one another and to compare the evidence. If they wish to change sides, let them do so.

**Extensions:**

- Assign student writing to be an exact number of words, such as 80. This format requires them to be very specific and detailed.
- Using the template provided, color the outside and present their writing on the inside. You could add a bit of tissue paper to the top for fire coming out of the top of their volcano.



- Assign students to prepare a presentation on a particular volcano using #3D model, powerpoint, detailed drawings, etc., of their choice.

**Rationale:**

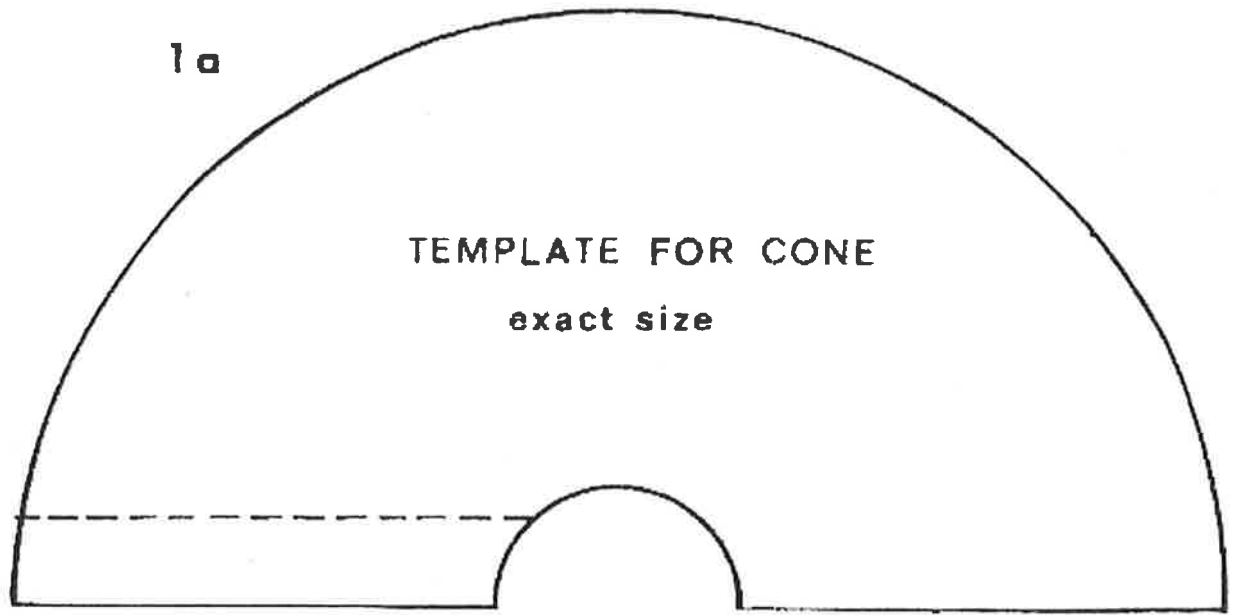
Building on and reinforcing their understanding of information from a text, students begin to develop the ability to think strategically, present information, and retell in their own words.

**Resources:**

Rusch, Elizabeth. *Volcano Rising*. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge, 2013. Print.

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**Note:** You may want to enlarge this template. Fold, do not glue, so writing can be done on the inside.







## **The Great Fire: Text Jigsaw**

Gwen Romero, Wasatch Range Writing Project

### **Summary:**

Students will study, synthesize, and share part of a work to help them achieve greater understanding of the text/event/concept.

### **Objectives:**

- Work collaboratively.
- Read, discuss, and synthesize informational text.
- Present/share synthesized information with the whole class.
- Make inferences and draw conclusions from the work as a whole, based on each group's information.

### **Context:**

A grade 4-12 English/Language Arts, science, or social studies class. **Note:** Based on text complexity, this work is better for independent work in grades 5-9; however, it is appropriate thematically for older grades and ELL as well as for grade 4, with more monitoring for understanding as groups work through the text.

### **Materials:**

- Copies of Jim Murphy's *The Great Fire* (or other appropriate text).
- Pens/pencils, lined paper, markers, and butcher/poster paper (one sheet per group).

### **Time Span:**

Two 45-minute sessions, plus one 25-minute session (discussion).

### **Procedures:**

1. Introduce the jigsaw activity: the class will be divided into groups to study different parts of an important event and to share their findings with the whole class so that everyone can better understand the event.
2. Have each student create a graphic organizer for notes on a sheet of lined paper by dividing the paper into 8 boxes and labeling each box: Intro, Chap.1, Chap. 2, etc., through Chap. 7. Add the heading *The Great Fire* and the student's name across the top of the paper. **Note:** Younger grades may need more help here.
3. Divide the class into seven groups (class of 21 to 25 students), or into fourteen groups (class of 28 or more).
4. Distribute copies of text and clarify that they will be looking for key facts/details, cause-effect and other patterns, and the significance of each.
5. Teacher reads "Introduction" with class and models processing and synthesizing information (summary statement, date, other key facts). Briefly discuss context and range of effect of fire.
6. Assign each group a chapter from the book to read, take notes (who, what, when—chronology, where, why, and other significant details), organize information, and present to the class as a



whole (assignments will be repeated for larger classes, i.e., two pairs/groups will read and present on each chapter). They should include commentary on the significance of their details—relevance, mistakes, etc. **Approximately one session.**

7. At the beginning of the second session, give groups a few minutes to review their chapters, details, and presentations. *For large classes, have the two groups for each chapter take a few minutes to coordinate and decide which group will present which details.* Then, have groups present their chapters in order. *For large classes, ask both groups if they have anything to add to what the other group said/presented, i.e., clarifications, omitted details, etc.* At the end of each presentation, allow a few minutes for students to ask clarification questions and to discuss relevance and patterns in the details. Students should complete notes for each chapter.
8. After the last presentation, have students compare notes with their groups: what stood out to each student, what patterns they noticed, and what issues and lessons were raised in each part.
9. The last 25-minute session is for whole group discussion on the patterns, issues, and lessons of the event/the book. Focus on *why the fire happened*, fire safety and response (preventive measures that were and were not used, or that failed—and why), community characteristics, trends in social class divisions and building construction, and similarities and implications for modern society.
10. Optional final activity: have students write a written response about the biggest lesson from the event/book or opinion of the event. Include specific examples/evidence to support the reasoning.

#### **Extensions:**

- Have students print pictures/make posters for their chapters to create a story wall that can be exhibited in the hall.
- Have students research other fires and their effects.
- Have students research other reforms/improvements based on tragedies or problems (workplace regulations, housing regulations, vaccinations, etc.).
- Use same activity for a chapter book about a different event.

#### **Rationale:**

Independent study, followed by discussion with others and presentation of information, strengthens students' understanding, as well as developing communication skills.

#### **Resources:**

Murphy, Jim. *The Great Fire*. New York: Scholastic Press, 1995. Print.

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## **I Was There!**

Judy Chesley, Wasatch Range Writing Project

### **Summary:**

Students will be able to write a point of view piece on the Great Baltimore Fire of 1904.

### **Objective:**

Students will write a diary entry from the point of view of someone or something, using tone, purpose, and perspective, constructing an evidence-based writing, based on the reading of *Goliath: Hero of the Great Baltimore Fire*.

### **Context:**

A 6th grade elementary classroom, easily adapted for grades 4- 8

### **Materials:**

- *Goliath: Hero of the Great Baltimore Fire* by Claudia Friddell
- Writing Paper
- Pencil

### **Time Span:**

One or two class periods, or more as needed

### **Procedures:**

1. Tell students that they will need to listen carefully. After you read the story, they will write a point-of-view, diary entry for someone or something involved with the fire, such as Goliath, Captain Kahl, one of the other horses, fire alarm, fire wagon, the fire, the building, etc.
2. Tell students to have paper/journal and pencil ready to record notes.
3. Read aloud, *Goliath: Hero of the Great Baltimore Fire*.
4. Be sure the students are listening carefully to the details of the story.
5. Pause every page or so to point out significant details.
6. Check occasionally to be sure the students are taking simple notes of details as they listen. This will assist them in writing their diary entry.

**Note:** You may want to read the book once for enjoyment and a second time for the note-taking.

### **Extensions:**

- Have students make an illustration to go along with their diary entry.
- Have students share their diary entries with the class or a small group of students.

### **Rationale:**

Students will have an opportunity to express their understanding through the viewpoint of another person or thing. First person is used when the main character or thing is telling the story. This is writing that



uses the "I" narrator. As a writer, the student expresses the experience of the story through this person's or thing's eyes.

**Resources:**

Friddell, Claudia. *Goliath: Hero of the Great Baltimore Fire*. Ann Arbor: Sleeping Bear Press, 2010. Print.

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