

Reading Comprehension Worksheet: Integrate Two Texts

Read the short story and answer each question.



How Wildfires Start and Spread

Wildfires are large, uncontrolled fires that burn forests, grasslands, and other natural areas. They can begin naturally—often from lightning strikes during dry weather—or from human actions like campfires left unattended or sparks from power lines. Once a wildfire starts, it spreads quickly, especially in hot, windy, or dry conditions. Dead leaves, dry grass, and pine needles act like fuel, helping the fire grow. Some wildfires can move at speeds faster than a person can run. Smoke can travel for miles and affect people's breathing, even if they aren't near the flames. Firefighters use water, fire retardants, and even bulldozers to stop fires from spreading. In some cases, they remove dry plants before a fire starts, which is called fire prevention. Wildfires can destroy homes, harm animals, and pollute the air, but understanding how they begin helps people stay safe and reduce the damage. Education and prevention are key to protecting communities.

The Role of Wildfires in Nature

Although wildfires can be dangerous, they also play an important role in nature. In forests, fire helps clear out dead trees and old plants, making room for new growth. Some trees, like the giant sequoia, need fire to release their seeds. The heat from a wildfire opens special cones, allowing seeds to fall to the ground. Fires also return nutrients to the soil, helping plants grow stronger after the fire ends. Many animals flee wildfires, but some, like woodpeckers and beetles, move into burned areas to feed on dead trees or insects. Scientists use satellite images and controlled burns—small, planned fires—to manage forests and prevent larger wildfires. While wildfires can be scary and destructive, they are also part of Earth's natural cycle. Learning how fire helps ecosystems grow gives us a better understanding of how to protect nature and live safely alongside it.



Name:

How Wildfires Start and Spread & The Role of Wildfires in Nature

1. What is one similarity between both texts?

- A. Both explain how smoke causes eye problems.
- B. Both describe ways fire helps people cook food.
- C. Both show that wildfires can affect the environment in different ways.
- D. Both suggest people should avoid going near forests.

2. What is one way the second text adds to what you learned in the first text?

- A. It describes the tools firefighters use.
- B. It explains how fire helps plants and trees.
- C. It warns about breathing problems.
- D. It shows how to stop all wildfires.

3. Fill in the blank:

Some trees, like the giant sequoia, need the _____ from wildfires to release their seeds.

4. How do the two texts give different perspectives on wildfires?

5. After reading both texts, how would you explain why wildfires are both dangerous and helpful?



Parent and Teacher Guide

Guide Reading Level: T

Lexile Level: 900L-1050L

Grade Level: 5th Grade, Beginning of the Year

Genre: Informational Text / Earth Science & Environmental Studies

Introducing the Text

“Today we’re reading two short texts about wildfires. One explains how they start and cause damage, and the other explains how wildfires can help nature. As we read, we’ll look at how these two texts work together to give us a deeper understanding of wildfires.”

Vocabulary: uncontrolled, fuel, prevention, nutrients, ecosystem

Before Reading Discussion Questions

1. What do you already know about wildfires?
 2. Why do you think they are considered dangerous?
 3. Can anything good come from something destructive like a wildfire?
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During Reading Discussion Questions

1. What are the main causes of wildfires?
 2. How do fires help forests and animals in some cases?
 3. What do both texts say about how people respond to wildfires?
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After Reading Discussion Questions

1. How did reading both passages change or deepen your understanding of wildfires?
 2. Do you think it’s important to teach kids both sides of this issue—why or why not?
 3. What is one thing you would want to do to prevent or manage wildfires?
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Activity Idea

Have students create a “Wildfire Double-Side Poster.” On one side, they draw how wildfires harm people and animals; on the other, they show how wildfires help nature grow. Under each side, they write a sentence using facts from the two texts to explain each point of view.

