



Bushfire Safety



Raking up Twigs and Leaves – Lower Primary

Introduction

The 'Raking up Twigs and Leaves' safety message explores the importance of ensuring that vegetation and rubbish are cleared away from homes. Reducing, removing and managing vegetation, such as long grass, dead branches, leaves, twigs and undergrowth, within a 20-metre radius of your home and five metres of any sheds or garages, helps to protect your property during a bushfire.

It is recommended that you read the 'Background Information For Teachers' before undertaking this lesson.

Links to Australian Curriculum

Geography

- Understanding that environments are special to people and animals and we need to look after them.
- Recognising the impact that bushfires and other natural disasters have on families, environments and communities.
- Developing ideas about how to prepare and respond to natural disaster events.

Health and Physical Education

- Identify, plan and practise strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing of self and others in various situations.

English

- Accessing relevant prior knowledge or personal experiences to make meaningful connections to events, issues and ideas in a text.
- Sharing ideas and points of view relating to a text.



Bushfire Safety



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Learning outcomes

Participating in this lesson will help students to achieve the following learning outcomes:

- Students will discover the three elements needed for a fire to burn and identify what items around their yard could be fuel for a fire.
- Students will learn how they can help protect their home and school from bushfire damage by ensuring that the surroundings are clean and tidy.

Resources

You will need:

- 'Raking up Twigs and Leaves' safety message video <http://vimeo.com/31059638> (running time: 30 sec)
- interactive whiteboard (IWB)
- 'Fire Triangle' diagram (to display on an interactive whiteboard)
- 'Complete the Fire Triangle' activity sheet
- clean-up equipment (e.g. hats, buckets, gloves, old tongs, etc.).

Lesson steps

As a class, watch the video 'Raking up Twigs and Leaves' <http://vimeo.com/31059638>

Discuss:

- What was the video about?
- What needed to be cleaned up around the yard?
- Amy said "Raking up leaves and twigs helps to prevent bushfires from getting close to the house." How do students think this helps?

Explain that fire needs three things to burn: heat, fuel and oxygen, also known as the 'fire triangle'. Display the 'Fire Triangle' diagram on the IWB. Discuss each of the elements (there is more information about these in the 'Background Information For Teachers' document). Explain that if one (or more) of these things is taken away, fire cannot stay alight.



Bushfire Safety



In the safety message, leaves and twigs are examples of 'fuel'. Ask students if they can explain what they know about 'fuel' and record these on the board. Explain that even though things like leaves and twigs may be small, they are still 'fuel' which can catch fire, become embers and then cause more fires. As a class, brainstorm some more examples of items that could fuel a fire, make a class list on the board. Then brainstorm examples of things that generate heat and record these. Discuss that oxygen is part of air and is also sometimes contained in fuel.

Students to complete the '**Complete the Fire Triangle**' activity sheet.

As a class, walk around the school to identify potential 'fuels' and collect samples to display in the classroom (remind students to wash their hands when finished). Discuss whether it was easy to find potential 'fuels'. Is it dangerous having these around? Why is it important to keep yards tidy?

Organise a time to conduct a school clean up, allocating areas to small groups. Encourage students to go home and speak to their family members about checking their own yards.

Further activities

Here are some suggested extra activities to extend the students' learning.

- Brainstorm a list of equipment needed to keep a yard tidy.
- Design a poster that reminds people to keep their yards clean and tidy and/or of the dangers of having vegetation close to their house or shed.
- Invite someone from your local bushfire service to speak to the class about ways to prepare for bushfire season.

Extra resources

For more information visit your state or territory fire agency website:

- ACT Rural Fire Service
<https://esa.act.gov.au/actrfs/>
- Country Fire Authority (CFA)
<http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/>
- Northern Territory Fire and Rescue Service
www.pfes.nt.gov.au/Fire-and-Rescue.aspx
- NSW Rural Fire Service
www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/
- Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES)
www.qfes.qld.gov.au/



Bushfire Safety



- South Australian Country Fire Service
www.cfs.sa.gov.au/
- Tasmania Fire Service
<http://www.fire.tas.gov.au/>
- WA Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES)
www.dfes.wa.gov.au/