



Bushfire Safety



Raking up Twigs and Leaves – Upper 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 important to people and animals and that we have a responsibility to look after them.
- Recognising the impact that bushfires and other natural disasters have on 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.



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Learning outcomes

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

- Students will discuss the notion of 'fuel' and determine what items around their yard at home could be fuel for a fire.
- Students will understand the fire triangle and explain how removing one element can help to extinguish a fire.
- Students will learn how they can help protect their home from bushfire damage by ensuring that their yard is clear 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 be displayed on an IWB)
- copies of school map
- A4 paper (or relevant workbook)
- 'Yard Clean-Up Plan' activity sheet (optional homework activity).

Lesson steps

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

Discuss:

- What was the aim of the 'race' in the safety message?
- What needed to be cleaned up from around the yard?
- Why did the yard need to be kept tidy?
- In the message, Amy says that raking up leaves and twigs helps to prevent bushfires from getting close to the house. How do students think this helps?



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Introduce the topic of 'fuel'. Explain that fire needs three things to burn: heat, fuel and oxygen, also known as the 'fire triangle'. Discuss that if one (or more) of these things is taken away, fire cannot stay alight. Display the '**Fire Triangle**' diagram on the IWB. Discuss each element, what it means and how it could be removed to extinguish a fire (e.g. covering a fire with a fire blanket to remove access to oxygen).

In the safety message leaves and twigs are examples of fuel. Small leaves and twigs are sometimes referred to as 'fine fuels'. Explain that when they catch fire and are carried by the wind, they are called embers. Embers can travel long distances and start new fires in their path. As a class, brainstorm some more examples of items that could fuel a fire. Have students justify their contributions (i.e. why it could be classified as fuel) and make a class list on the board.

Provide small groups of students with a map of the school. Groups to walk around the school and identify areas that have items which could be considered fuel for a fire. Colour code the map using separate colours for areas that have fuel (e.g. vegetation) and areas that do not (e.g. cemented quadrangles). Use these maps to determine which areas of the school need to be monitored for fuel safety. Students may wish to involve the groundsperson (if applicable) in creating a plan or schedule to ensure these areas are kept clear and tidy.

Students can repeat this activity for their own yard and complete a copy of the '**Yard Clean-Up Plan**' activity sheet at home.

Further activities

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

- Discuss how the seasons can affect the job of cleaning up the yard.
- Brainstorm a list of equipment needed to keep a yard tidy.
- As a class, walk around the school and identify 'fuel' for a fire, or bushfire hazards that may need to be managed.
- Not all plants provide the same 'fuel' for a fire. Research to find out which plant types are more suitable for planting in bushfire prone areas and which are not.
- Make an advertisement (print, TV or radio) that reminds people to keep their yards clear 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.



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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/
- 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/