
THREE-GENRE LESSON PLANS

The Great Chicago Fire

Grade/Subject: 6th grade ELA

Mengyan Wang
Peabody College, Vanderbilt University

ENED 3400 Reading & Learning with Print & New Media



RATIONALE

This mini-unit of multiple genres is designed for a 6th grade English Language Arts class. The unit presents three 60-minute lessons around the topic of *the Great Chicago Fire* that burned from Sunday, October 8, to early Tuesday, October 10, 1871. The fire is regarded as one of the largest U.S. disasters of the 19th century as it took nearly 300 lives away, left more than 100,000 residents homeless and destroyed approximately 3.3 square miles of land in Chicago, Illinois. I chose this topic because I think it is an important part of U.S. history that 6th graders should know about and the book *The Great Fire* by Jim Murphy is a great material for students to learn literacy skills.

For this unit, I use multi-genre texts including a prose, a poetry, a video and songs to activate students' background knowledge, engage students in the reading comprehension using different reading strategies, and deepen students' understanding of this historical event. This three-lesson unit is also designed for the full implementation of the Common Core State Standards in the classroom, as students get many opportunities to practice reading multi-genre texts and writing journal entries in response to these texts.

STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.2

Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.3

Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.6

Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.7

Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.7

Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they "see" and "hear" when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2.A

Introduce a topic; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2.D

Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

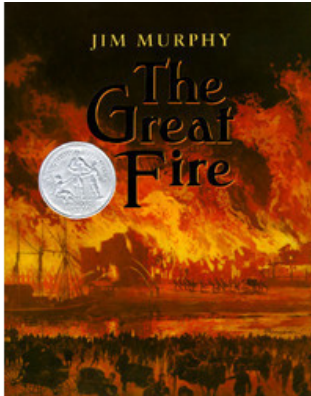
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.6

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of three pages in a single sitting

OBJECTIVES

1. SWBAT analyze different kinds of texts (print, video, song, etc.) around the topic of *the Great Chicago Fire* and present the key ideas through writing journal entries (e.g. a 25-word summary).
2. SWBAT clarify the meaning of key vocabulary related to the Great Chicago Fire with the help of vocabulary tools online such as *Wordsift* and apply the vocabulary to their own writing.
3. SWBAT create a timeline to show the sequence of the fire event based on the information provided by the video and the poem.
4. SWBAT analyze the poem and lyrics and compare and contrast points of view about the Great Chicago Fire.
5. SWBAT compare and contrast different points of view among themselves and group member and agree on the best way to present the story of the excerpt of the book *The Great Fire*.
6. SWBAT use the information gathered from the multi-genre texts to describe the fire event as well as to write from another person's point of view.
7. SWBAT use technology and online resources such as *Glogster* to synthesis the information and knowledge they gained from this unit.
8. SWBAT interact and collaborate in pairs and in groups to work on a project (e.g. timeline, poster, etc.).

TEXTS



The Great Fire by Jim Murphy

The Great Fire of 1871 was one of the most colossal disasters in American history. Overnight, the flourishing city of Chicago was transformed into a smoldering wasteland. The damage was so profound that few people believed the city could ever rise again.

It all began one Sunday evening when a small fire broke out inside the O'Learys' barn. The panic was slow to build at first. People ignored the danger signals, and even the fire department was unable to locate the fire. This city, built of wood, was connected by hundreds of miles of wooden sidewalks and roads. In time, wild flames, fueled by a steady wind, engulfed everything in their path. As people took to the crowded streets, hours of mounting chaos, fear, and panic followed before the relentless flames were halted. When at last they were, a new kind of drama was only just beginning. Nearly 100,000 people were homeless and searching through the burnt rubble for their families.

By weaving personal accounts of actual survivors together with the carefully researched history of Chicago and the disaster, Jim Murphy constructs a riveting narrative that recreates the event with drama and immediacy. And finally, he reveals how, even in a time of deepest despair, the human spirit triumphed, as the people of Chicago found the courage and strength to build their city once again.

(Summary Retrieved from <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/book/great-fire#cart/cleanup>)

Julia A Moore (1847-1920 / United States)



The Great Chicago Fire

The great Chicago Fire, friends,
Will never be forgot;
In the history of Chicago
It will remain a darken spot.
It was a dreadful horrid sight
To see that City in flames;
But no human aid could save it,
For all skill was tried in vain.

The Great Chicago Fire by Julia A. Moore

<http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/the-great-chicago-fire/>

The American poet Julia Ann Moore was inspired by the Great Chicago Fire and wrote this poem. Students will read this poem for two purposes: understanding the sequence of the Great Chicago Fire and determining the author's point of view of the fire.

THE GREAT CHICAGO FIRE & THE WEB OF MEMORY

The Great Chicago Fire The Web of Memory Touring the Fire Spec

Home > Songs from the Fire

Songs from the Fire

Passing Through the Fire



Pity the Homeless



Songs from the Fire

Available from the Great Chicago Fire & the Web of Memory
<http://www.greatchicagofire.org/songs>

1. Found in "Passing Through the Fire," by George F. Root
One of three songs in this library by George F. Root, of the Chicago firm of Root & Cady. Note that the verses are to be sung *con fuoco* (with fire). It is performed by Patrice Michaels, soprano.

2. Found in "Pity the Homeless, or Burnt Out," by James R. Murray
A waltz published in Boston. The song is performed by Patrice Michaels, soprano.

Students will analyze these two songs and determine the authors' feelings towards the Great Chicago Fire. They will also write a journal on the postcard based on the lyrics of the songs.

(Introductions Retrieved from
<http://www.greatchicagofire.org/songs>)

TECHNOLOGY/WEBSITES

Pictures: Great Chicago Fire 1871: The Second City Goes Up In Flames, 141 Years Ago (PHOTOS)

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/10/08/great-chicago-fire-1871-the-sec_n_1948792.html#slide=1616645

Poem: The Great Chicago Fire by Julia A. Moore

<http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/the-great-chicago-fire/>

Songs from the Fire

<http://www.greatchicagofire.org/songs>

Video Clip: *Great Chicago Fire 1871*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3Q3wwRAGiw>

Web Tools:

<http://wordsift.com/visualize>

<http://www.thefreedictionary.com> (Words & Dictionary)

<http://www.tiki-toki.com>

<http://timeglider.com> (Timeline)

<http://www.glogster.com/> (Glogster)

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

LESSON 1

Blasting Fuse: Do you know about the Great Chicago Fire that happened in 1871? According to your own experience, what may cause a fire? What can lead to the spread of a fire?

LESSON 2

Visualizing the Fire: Look at the pictures *Great Chicago Fire 1871*: What is your impression of the fire? Was it serious? How much damage do you think the fire caused?

LESSON 3

What do you think?: Imagine you were in the 1871 Chicago. How would you feel as a survivor of the fire? Whom or what did think of when facing the fire?

READING LOG/RESPONSES TO TEXT

LESSON 1

25-Word Summary: For students to complete while reading the excerpt of the book *The Great Fire* by Jim Murphy.

LESSON 2

Comprehension Constructor "Tips for Reading a Poem": Students will use this comprehension constructor to build on their prior knowledge and track their thinking about the poem.

LESSON 3

Signature Line: A form for students to write down the lines from the lyrics that they think resonate with them most or that they think are the most important.

Glogster: Students will create a Glogster using different genres of information they have learned from this mini-unit.

GROUP ACTIVITIES

- Pair-Share
- Small group discussion
- Large group discussion
- Small group presentations
- Large group presentations

ASSESSMENTS

LESSON 1

25-Word Summary: Completed in class.

Exit Card Reflection: Write about something new you learned today about the Great Chicago Fire and your predictions for the story.

LESSON 2

Comprehension Constructor of the Poem: Students track their own thinking and guide their understanding of the poem.

Timeline of the Great Chicago Fire: Students will create a timeline of the event based on the poem they read and the video they watch. It can examine the information they get from text.

LESSON 3

Signature Line: Students fill in the form to track their own thinking and determine what they think is the most important information the lyrics convey.

Postcard Reflection: The writing of a postcard can help students reflect on what they have learned in this mini-unit about the Great Chicago Fire and use information gathered from multi-genre text to write from another person's point of view.

Glogster: Students will create a Glogster as a multi-media synthesis of information they have learned from this mini-unit.

LESSON PLANS

Lesson 1: A City Ready to Burn

60-minute block

LESSON 1 MATERIALS	
Copies of the excerpt of the book <i>The Great Fire by Jim Murphy</i> ; Smartboard/projector; computers and Internet access; exit cards; poster sheet	

TIME	STUDENT ACTIONS	TEACHER ACTIONS
3 minutes	Pre-Reading Activity: Do you know about the Great Chicago Fire that happened in 1871? According to your own experience, what may cause a fire? What can lead to the spread of a fire?	Walk around; answer questions
2 minutes	Participate in <i>large group discussion</i> : Share your answer with the whole class	Write on the board the brainstorming ideas from students
30 minutes	Read the excerpt <i>A City Ready to Burn</i> from <i>The Great Fire</i> individually; highlight unfamiliar vocabulary and the indicators that a fire may break out; share with group of four the highlighted vocabulary and sentences; clarify the meaning of the words in small groups with the help of <i>Wordsift</i> and <i>Free Dictionary</i> .	Distribute the excerpts to students; ask students to read the story; model how to highlight unfamiliar vocabulary and sentences relevant to the question on the board, and how to use the online tools to understand the vocabulary; walk around; answer questions
8 minutes	Write a 25-word summary of the excerpt	Walk around; observe students working; answer questions
12 minutes	Share the summary with the group of four; discuss the differences among the summaries and then agree on and construct a group summary of 25 words or less on a poster; present group summaries	Explain the 25-Word Summary activity to students; pass out a poster sheet to each group; invite students to share their summary within the group and then share the group summaries with the whole class
5 minutes	Exit Card: What did you learn today? What do you think will happen next in the story?	Collect exit cards as students exit

Lesson 2: Fire!

60-minute block

LESSON 2 MATERIALS	
Copies of the poem <i>The Great Chicago Fire</i> by Julia A. Moore; Copies of the comprehension constructor <i>Tips for Reading a Poem</i> ; Smartboard/projector; access to computers and Internet	

TIME	STUDENT ACTIONS	TEACHER ACTIONS
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2 minutes	Pre-Reading Activity: Look at the pictures from <i>Great Chicago Fire 1871</i> : What is your impression of the fire? Was it serious? How much damage do you think the fire has caused?	Show students pictures of the fire on the Smartboard; walk around; answer questions
3 minutes	Pair-Share: Share the answer to the question with a partner	Ask students to share their answer in pairs; listen to students answering each other's questions; observe students engaging in pair-share activity
20 minutes	Listen to the teacher explain the day's activity and read the poem <i>The Great Chicago Fire</i> by Julia A. Moore; read the poem in pairs; imitate the rhythm and tone of the teacher; complete the comprehension constructor <i>Tips for Reading a Poem</i>	Explain to students that the day's activity is to create a timeline of the Great Chicago Fire based on a poem and a video; pass out the poem and the comprehension constructor; model reading the poem
8 minutes	Watch video clip <i>Great Chicago Fire 1871</i>	Play video clip on Smartboard/projector
20 minutes	Create a timeline of the fire based on the poem and the video in groups of four; use <i>Tiki Toki</i> or <i>Timeglider</i> online	Ask students to create a timeline in groups; explain how to use the online timeline-making tools
7 minutes	Share the timelines with the whole class	Observe students sharing their timelines

Lesson 3: How Would I feel?

60-minute block

LESSON 3 MATERIALS
Copies of the lyrics of <i>Passing Through the Fire</i> and <i>Pity the Homeless</i> ; Copies of the poem <i>The Great Chicago Fire</i> by Julia A. Moore; <i>Signature Line</i> form; access to computers and the Internet; printer; loudspeaker; a postcard sample

TIME	STUDENT ACTIONS	TEACHER ACTIONS
2 minutes	Pre-Reading Activity: Imagine you were in the 1871 Chicago. How would you feel as a survivor of the fire? Whom or what did you think of when facing the fire?	Walk around; answer questions
3 minutes	Participate in <i>small group discussion</i>	Observe students engaging in small group discussion
22 minutes	Listen to the teacher explain the day's activity; ask questions; read the poem by Moore again; listen to the two songs	Explain that the day's activity is to determine the views about the Great Chicago Fire held by different authors

	the teacher plays; analyze the lyrics and determine the authors' points of view about the Great Chicago Fire; complete the <i>Signature Line</i> form	and to sympathize with the people who suffered the fire; explain what the <i>Signature Line</i> is for
30 minutes	Write a postcard: Imagine you witnessed and survived the fire. What are you eager to say to the people who are most important to you? Pick your favorite picture from <i>Great Chicago Fire 1871</i> and print it out. Write what you want to say most about the fire on the other side so that you can make it a postcard.	Show students what a postcard is like; explain the day's activity; walk around; observe students working; answer questions
3 minutes	Turn in postcards	Collect postcards as students exit
Homework: <i>Glogster</i> : Students will create a Glogster by themselves that includes a collection/collage of pictures, video clips, captions, written pieces related to the Great Chicago Fire. It serves as a synthesis of what they have learned about the Great Chicago Fire in the class as well as their own resources and views about the fire. Students will present their Glogsters to the class.		

APPENDIX A

Excerpt from THE GREAT FIRE
by Jim Murphy

A City Ready to Burn

It was Sunday and an unusually warm evening for October eighth, so Daniel "Peg Leg" Sullivan left his stifling little house in the West Side of Chicago and went to visit neighbors. One of his stops was at the shingled cottage of Patrick and Catherine O'Leary. The one-legged Sullivan remembered getting to the O'Leary's house at around eight o'clock, but left after only a few minutes because the O'Leary family was already in bed. Both Patrick and Catherine had to be up very early in the morning: he had to set off for his job as a labourer; she to milk their five cows and then deliver the milk to neighbors.

Sullivan ambled down the stretch of land between the O'Learys' and their neighbor, crossed the street, and sat down on the wooden sidewalk in front of Thomas White's house. After adjusting his wooden leg to make himself comfortable, he leaned back against White's fence to enjoy the night.

The wind coming off the prairie had been strong all day, sometimes gusting wildly, and leaves scuttled along the street; the sound of laughter and fiddle music drifted through the night. A party was going on at the McLaughlins' to celebrate the arrival of a relative from Ireland. Another neighbor, Dennis Rogan, dropped by the O'Learys' at eight-thirty, but he, too, left when he learned the family was in bed.

Fifteen minutes later, Sullivan decided to go home. As the driver of a wagon, he would need every ounce of strength come morning. It was while pushing himself up that Sullivan first saw the fire — a single tongue of flame shooting out the side of the O'Learys' barn.

Sullivan didn't hesitate a second. "FIRE! FIRE! FIRE!" he shouted as loudly as he could. Running clumsily across the dirt street, Sullivan made his way directly to the barn. There was no time to stop for help. The building was already burning fiercely and he knew that in addition to five cows, the O'Learys had a calf and a horse in there.

The barn's loft held over three tons of timothy hay, delivered earlier that day. Flames from the burning hay pushed against the roof and beams, almost as if they were struggling to break free. A shower of burning embers greeted Sullivan as he entered the building.

He untied the ropes of two cows, but the frightened animals did not move. On the other side of the barn, another cow and the horse were tied to the wall straining to get loose. Sullivan took a step toward them, then realized that the fire had gotten around behind him and might cut off any chance of escape in a matter of seconds. The heat was fiercely intense and blinding, and in his rush to flee, Sullivan slipped on the uneven floorboards and fell with a thud.

He struggled to get up and, as he did, Sullivan discovered that his wooden leg had gotten stuck between the two boards and come off. Instead of panicking, he began hopping toward where he thought the door was. Luck was with him. He had gone a few feet when the O'Learys' calf bumped into him, and Sullivan was able to throw his arms around its neck. Together, man and calf managed to find the door and safety, both frightened, both badly singed.

A shed attached to the barn was already engulfed by flames. It contained two tons of coal for the winter and a large supply of kindling wood. Fire ran along the dry grass and leaves, and took hold of a neighbor's fence. The heat from the burning barn, shed and fence was so hot that the O'Learys' house, forty feet away, began to smolder. Neighbors rushed from their homes, many carrying buckets or pots of water. The sound of music and merrymaking stopped abruptly, replaced by the shouts of "FIRE!". It would be a warning cry heard thousands of times during the next thirty-one hours.

From *The Great Fire*. Copyright © by Jim Murphy

(Excerpt Retrieved from http://aam.govst.edu/projects/bwinicki/Documents/murphy_excerpt.doc)

APPENDIX B

The Great Chicago Fire

by Julia A. Moore

The great Chicago Fire, friends,
 Will never be forgot;
In the history of Chicago
 It will remain a darken spot.
It was a dreadful horrid sight
 To see that City in flames;
But no human aid could save it,
 For all skill was tried in vain.

In the year of 1871,
 In October on the 8th,
The people in that City, then
 Was full of life, and great.
Less than four days it lay in ruins,
 That garden City, so great
Lay smouldering in ashes,
 In a sad and pitiful state.

It was a sad, sad scene indeed,
 To see the fire arise,
And hear the crackling of the flames
 As it almost reached the skies,
And sadder still, to hear the moans,
 Of people in the flames
Cry for help, and none could get,
 Ah, die where they remained.

To see the people run for life;
 Up and down the blazing streets,
To find then, their escape cut off
 By the fiery flaming sheets,
And others hunting for some friend
 That perhaps they never found,
Such weeping, wailing, never was known,
 For a thousands miles around.

Some people were very wealthy
 On the morning of the 10th.
But at the close of the evening,
 Was poor, but felt content,

Glad to escape from harm with life
With friends they loved so well,
Some will try to gain more wisdom,
By the sad sight they beheld.

Five thousand people were homeless,
Sad wanderers in the streets,
With no shelter to cover them,
And no food had they to eat.
They wandered down by the lake side,
Lay down on the cold damp ground,
So tired and weary and homeless,
So the rich, the poor, was found.

Mothers with dear little infants,
Some clinging to the breast.
People of every description
All laid down there to rest,
With the sky as their covering,
Ah, pillows they had none.
Sad, oh sad, it must have been,
For those poor homeless ones.

Neighboring Cities sent comfort,
To the poor lone helpless ones,
And God will not forget them
In all the years to come.
Now the City of Chicago
Is built up anew once more,
And may it never be visited
With such a great fire no more.

(Poem Retrieved from <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/the-great-chicago-fire/>)

APPENDIX C

Lyrics of Songs from the Fire

Passing Through the Fire by George F. Root

1. Flames! flames! terrible flames!
How they rise, how they mount, how they fly.
The heavens are spread with a fierce lurid glare,
Red heat is filling the earth with air,
While, mercy! mercy! We hear the despairing ones cry.

Passing thro' the fire! passing thro' the fire,
And it is our Father's hand,
Tho' we may not understand
Why we're passing thro' the fire,
passing thro' the fire!

2. Flames! flames! terrible flames!
How they sweep, how they rush, how they roar.
See the hideous tongues round the roof,
tree and spire,
As swells their wild carnival higher and higher,
Till falling! crashing! Our glorious
city's no more.

3. Flames! flames! terrible flames!
What a fearful destruction they bring.
What suffering and want in their train follow fast,
As forth on the streets homeless
thousands are cast,
But courage! courage! From the mid'st of the
furnace we sing.

Pity the Homeless, or Burnt Out by James R. Murray

1. Pity the homeless, pity the poor,
By the fierce Fire fiend forced to your door;
List to their pleading, list to their cry,
Pass them not heedlessly by,
Roused from their slumbers, peaceful and sweet,
Hastening in terror into the street,
Leaving behind them treasure most dear,
Flying in anguish and fear...

Pity the homeless, pity the poor,
By the fierce Fire fiend forced to your door;
List to their pleading, list to their cry,
Pass them not heedlessly by.

2. See how the Fire king leaps in his joy!
As his dead minions haste to destroy;
See how the homes, once peaceful and fair,
Wrapped in the flames, melt in air.
Haste then, and help them, who from their home
Shelterless, foodless, wearily roam.
Pity their anguish, list to their prayers,
Lighten their labors and cares.

(Lyrics Retrieved from <http://www.greatchicagofire.org/songs>)

APPENDIX D

Signature Line Form

Most Important Information

Name: _____

Name of Text: _____

Signature Line	Text Page #	This is a signature line because:
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

APPENDIX E

Tips for Reading a Poem

1. Read the poem all the way through, twice.
2. Think about any background knowledge that you have that will help you connect to the people, animals, or objects in the poem.
3. Try to make a picture in your head of what's happening in the poem.
(Insert Poem)
4. What do you think the poem is about?

Textual evidence

Background knowledge

APPENDIX F

Pictures: Great Chicago Fire 1871: The Second City Goes Up In Flames, 141 Years Ago (PHOTOS)



TO THE HOMELESS.

The Head Quarters of the **General Relief Committee** are at the

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,
Cor. Washington & Ann Sts.,

All of the Public School Buildings, as well as Churches, are open for the shelter of persons who do not find other accommodations. When food is not found at such buildings it will be provided by the committee on application at Head Quarters.

R. B. MASON, Mayor.	
J. H. McAYDY, South Division.	
S. E. FAIRBANKS, do.	
W. S. BATHAM, West Division.	General Relief Committee.
ORRIN E. MOORE, do.	
M. A. DEWEE, North Division.	
JOHN HERBURN, do.	
	C. T. HOTCHKISS, Secretary.

Chicago, October 10, 1871.





(Photos Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/10/08/great-chicago-fire-1871-the-sec_n_1948792.html#slide=1616645)