



<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/object/article?i=/c/a/2008/11/15/MN8V144NUS.DTL&o=14>

California "Tea Fires"
NewsDepth, November 20, 2008
Classroom Activities
Online Lesson Plans
Additional Resources

Overview:

Since last Thursday, three major fires driven by powerful Santa Ana winds have left a smoldering trail of destruction in and around Los Angeles County in Southern California. Authorities said on Tuesday that a bonfire built by a group of young adults caused the weekend fire that destroyed over 200 homes, including multimillion dollar mansions, and injured more than two dozen people. The fire is being called the "Tea Fire" because it was started on a property in Santa Barbara known as the "Tea House." It has been determined that the young adults believed they had extinguished the bonfire, but it is not uncommon for fires of this type to have an ignition potential for a few days. Due to the weather conditions on Thursday, the fire reignited. Students will learn about fire safety, hazards, and prevention.

Grade Level: Classroom Activities 4-6 Online Lesson Plans 6-8

Subject Matter: Science and Language Arts

Classroom Activities:

1. Activity #1: Fire Safety Discussion (15- 20 minutes)

- How many of you have ever been to a bonfire? Did you cook over the fire or roast marshmallows? Did the fire keep you warm? Did you stay until the end of the fire and watch it slowly burn down and extinguish itself? Did you notice the burning embers at the very end of the fire? Were you sure it was completely extinguished? How did you know?
- Read the overview above and collect comments and reactions from your students.
- More questions for them: How many of you have ever been in the woods somewhere, perhaps even in your own backyard, and put a few branches and leaves together and made your own little bonfire along with one of your parents or another adult? Have you ever done that unsupervised? What do you think the dangers are of doing that? Will what you saw in the NewsDepth feature help influence your decision to ever do that again?

- Visit a couple of these sites and have students view some of the aftermath of this devastating fire:
 - <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/object/article?f=/c/a/2008/11/15/MN8V144NUS.DTL&o=14>
 - <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-sbfire14-2008nov14-pg.0.5936188.photogallery> 46 excellent photos provided by the LA Times

2. Activity #2 Writing activity: “Putting Out the Fire” (1 class period)

- Exhausted firefighters in Southern California said Tuesday the Tea Fire was contained, and that they were gaining control of the other two wildfires, all of which have scorched more than 42,000 acres and hundreds of homes and other structures. Each year, thousands of firefighters put their lives at risk battling blazes like this.
- Write a one page story with these criteria:
 - You are a firefighter battling a fire somewhere in your own community.
 - Use descriptive language to describe the fire, what you are doing to contain or put the fire out, and what damage occurred as a result of the fire.
 - In your last couple of sentences, comment on what could have been done to prevent the fire.



3. Activity #3 Family Interactive

- Thanksgiving is the top day of the year for home cooking fires. There were 1,400 home structure fires involving cooking equipment on Thanksgiving Day in 2006, more than three times the daily average.
- Cooking is the leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries. Each year, hundreds of people in the United States are killed in fires that involve cooking equipment and thousands more are injured. Annually, these fires result in more than half a billion dollars in direct property damage to homes and their contents.
- Distribute the handout and have students take them home and share them with their parents, family partners, or grandparents.
- With not just Thanksgiving, but the Christmas holidays approaching, encourage students to sit down and discuss fire safety at home. Here are some resources that can be recommended:
 - <http://www.nfpa.org/newsReleaseDetails.asp?categoryID=488&itemID=41219> This website is provided by the National Fire Prevention Association.
 - <http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/kids/parents-teachers/resources.shtm> Resources for parents and teachers.
 - <http://www.sparky.org/news.html> Holiday season is unfortunately a time when there are many home fires. This site “Sparky the Fire dog” provides valuable information about what families can do to prevent fires.

Online Lesson Plans

Subject Matter: Science

Grade Level: 6-8

Standards included in lessons

1. http://www.pbs.org/americanfieldguide/teachers/fires/fires_unit.html Fires and fire suppression - In this lesson, students will examine their assumptions about forest fires. They will learn about the conflicts involved with the forest service's new strategy, and they will study one case where a prescribed natural burn had a significant impact on a later, uncontrolled wildfire.
2. <http://www.wnet.org/edonline/lessons/fire/b.html> Taking a stand: The Pros and Cons of Forest Fires. Students will first examine the positive and negative effects of forest fires. Even though there is enough work in this lesson to take up to 3 class periods, it can be broken down into 1 class period segments.

Additional Resources

http://www.wildlandfire.com/docs/wildfire_edu.htm

Wildfire education website with numerous wildfire study resources

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/emergency/teacher-resources/47554.html>

Fire safety and prevention Teacher Resources.

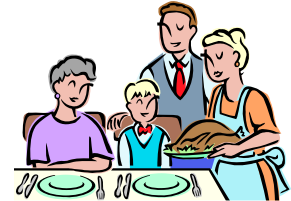
<http://www.cnn.com/2008/US/11/18/california.wildfires/index.html> CNN's account of the "Tea Fire"

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2008/11/15/MN8V144NUS.DTL>

Detailed account in the San Francisco Chronicle of the "Tea Fire"

Safe Cooking on Thanksgiving

The NFPA offers these tips for safer cooking over the holidays, especially if children will be helping in any way with the dinner preparations.



Stand by your pan

- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food.
- If you must leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- If you are simmering, baking, boiling or roasting food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that the stove or oven is on.
- Keep in mind that you should avoid wearing loose clothing or dangling sleeves while cooking. Loose clothing can catch fire if it comes in contact with a gas flame or electric burner.

Take Special Precautions with your Kids

- Kids should be closely supervised if helping in any way with meal preparations.
- Keep kids away from cooking areas by enforcing a "kid-free zone" of 3 feet (1 meter) around the stove.
- If you have young children, use the stove's back burners whenever possible, and turn pot handles inward to reduce the risk that pots with hot contents will be knocked over.
- Never hold a small child while cooking.

Keep it clean

- Keep anything that can catch fire—pot holders, oven mitts, wooden utensils, paper or plastic bags, food packaging, towels or curtains—away from your stove top.
- Clean up food and grease from burners and the stove top.

Enjoy your Holiday Meal knowing that you all took careful precautions to ensure everyone's safety!!