

Read closely and think clearly and creatively! Common Core Literacy Frames and Activities

This set of resources supports applying the competencies of the Common Core to The Great Chicago Fire.

It emphasizes the use of graphic organizers to guide students' thinking about the story. PARCC TECRs (Technology Enhanced Constructed Responses) use graphic organizers to assess students' comprehension and interpretation. These are "paper" TECRs that will help students analyze the story so they can create their own reports, plays, and artwork based on this important event in Chicago's history.

The Literacy/Thinking\History Connection

Every history contains answers to these questions.

- What challenges did people face?
- What choices did people make?
- What effects did they have?
- What ideas can we learn by thinking about this history?

Historical fiction helps students imagine that history from the point of view of people who were there. The following activities will help students answer these big questions based on The Great Chicago Fire.

Learning Activity List

Comprehend and Infer:

Draw Vocabulary—word-picture charts and/or matching games

Make up text-based questions about **characters, places, events**, that other students answer with evidence, citing the page number.

Add more to the Pictures: What else could be part of that picture?

Draw pictures of actions characters take—add what might happen

Summarize: Write a **summary** that supports the theme

Construct: PARCC includes the **Prose Constructed Response (PCR)** as a culminating part of each sequence of questions about a reading. Students can write constructed responses based on the PARCC formats:

- Write the journal of one of the characters
- Write the next part of the story—the sequel
- Explain how Mrs. O'Leary makes a claim and supports it with evidence.
- Dramatize the story—use dialogue from the story and your own added dialogue.

Create:

Communicate the theme of the book in a...**Song Collage Poem Play** or **Exhibit** --Visit the Chicago History Museum to see their exhibit, then create yours.

Create a **story about your own community—how people met challenges with grit.**

Expand Vocabulary

CCSSRL3.4. **Determine** the **meaning of words and phrases** as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from **nonliteral** language.

Students can contribute to a display of words from the book. They can infer their meaning by looking closely at the drawings and reading the text on the page where they occur.

Infer Meaning from Context

Each student can contribute pictures to a “Pictionary” or sentences to a glossary. *We sorted these words into categories to help students think about the ways the writer uses words to communicate about the people, places, and events in the story.*

Place Words: landmark, route, building, bridge, side street, shack, beach, shore, rooftop

Words about People: occupation, brave, courage, grateful, spirit, burden, grit

Words about Events: discover, cause, effect, explosion, escape, challenge, discover, journey, collapse

Objects that People Had or Found: steam, object, belongings, trunk, carriage, relic, wreckage, debris, combination, lantern, bundles

Adjectives that Describe Things: fused, twisted, limp, giant, overloaded

Analyze Nonliteral Language

The writer uses vivid images to help students understand the story.

Students can infer what they mean by reading the text and looking closely at the illustration.

- Gem of the Prairie (p. 7)
- sea of people (p. 23)
- beast of fire (p. 28)

Complete the Story Map

CCSSRL3.3. **Describe characters** in a story (e.g., their **traits**, **motivations**, or **feelings**) and **explain** how their **actions** contribute to the sequence of **events**. Then figure out the theme

Sequence Events

Draw or tell how it started, what happened next, how it ended.

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Infer how one character **feels** at different times during the story.

Character: _____

When	How I Feel	Evidence from the Story
The fire starts.		
I am on the bridge.		
I get to the lake.		

Infer Traits

Character	Trait	Action that Shows this Trait

Infer the Theme (CCSSRL3.2): What is the message or lesson of the story?

Why do you think that is the message the writer wants you to understand?

Show Causes and Effects

CCSSRI3.3 Analyze relationships—Describe the relationship between a series of historical events...using language that pertains to ...cause/effect.

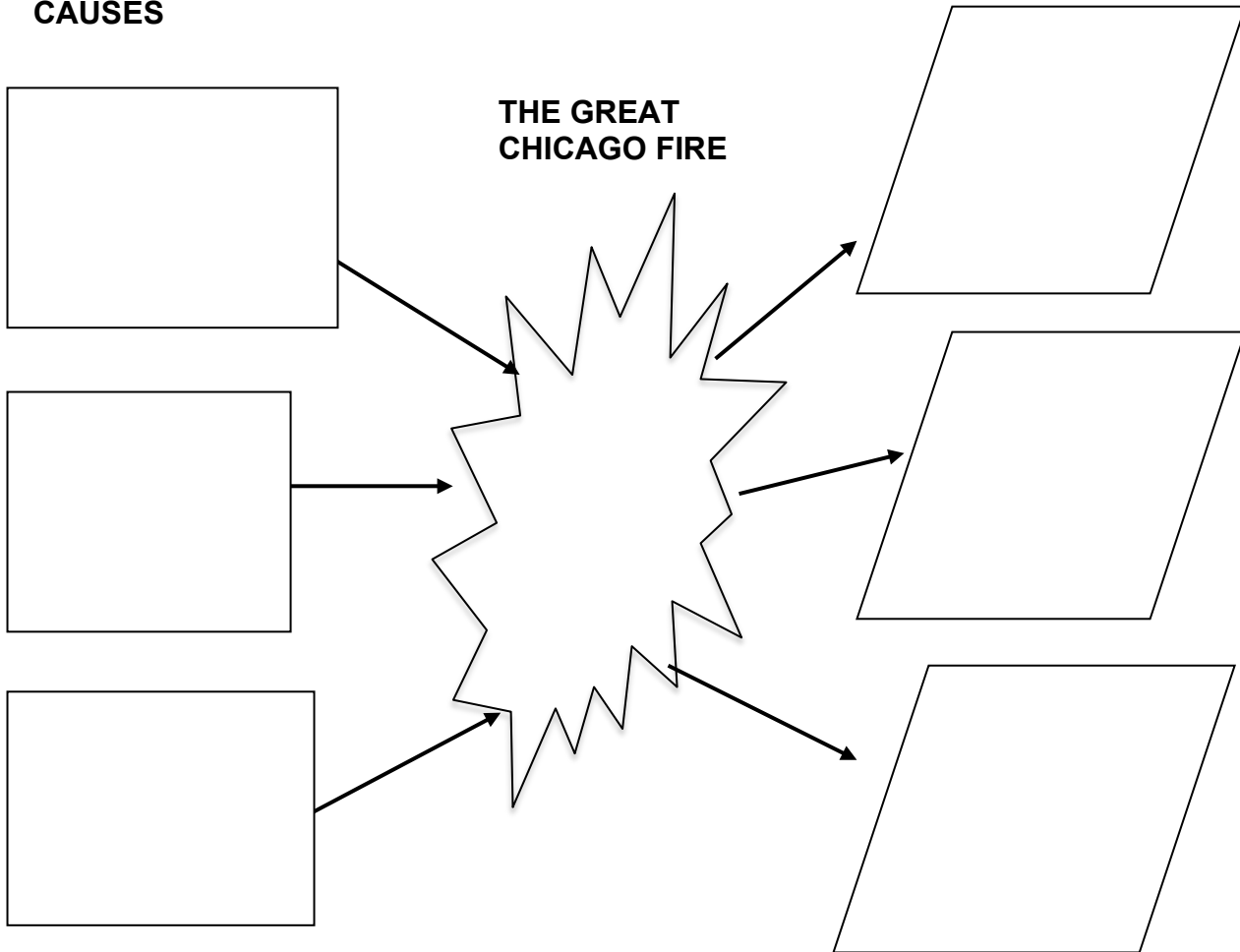
Construct this diagram with words or pictures.

Tell causes of the fire.

Tell its effects on the city.

EFFECTS

CAUSES



What did people need most after the fire?

_grit _stores _carriages _water

Support your choice with evidence from the story.

Interpret Illustrations

CCSSRL3.7 Explain how specific aspects of a text's **illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story** (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting).

Choose any page that shows people. Page: _____

List what the illustration shows about the story.

Category	What the Illustration Shows Me
the place	
actions	
feelings	

Mood means how the writer and illustrator want the reader to feel.
For example, look closely at the picture on pages 24 and 25.

How do you feel when you look at that illustration?

What does the artist do to help you feel that way?

- Look at the faces of the characters. What feelings do they show?
- Look at how the characters are standing. How do they make you feel?
- Look at the kinds of colors and shades the artist uses. Why did the artist use those colors?
- What else does the artist do to help you feel that way?

The writer helps, too.

What details does the writer use that help make that mood clear?

Plan Your Own Historical Fiction

CCSSW3.3 Write narratives in which they:

- a. Establish a situation, introduce a narrator and/or characters, and organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
- b. Employ dialogue and descriptions of characters' actions, thoughts, and feelings.
- c. Use temporal words and phrases to signal event sequence.
- d. Provide a sense of closure.

What is the time and place of your historical story?

When: _____ **Where:** _____

What is your **message or theme**?

Who are your characters? _____

What **challenge or problem** will the characters face?

List the main events.

First, _____

Then, _____

Then, _____

At the end, _____

What are two characters' **main traits**—and **how will their actions show those traits**?

Character	Trait	Actions

Write the story! Use techniques that the writer of *The Great Chicago Fire* used—dialogue, descriptions of the characters' actions, thoughts, and feelings.

Chicago History Museum Exhibit, Activities, and Resources

At the museum, your students will learn about the fire in the Chicago at the Crossroads exhibit.

They can participate in two learning activities:

The Great Chicago Fire—at the museum, students in grades 3-5

Use an oversized map, icons, photographs and first-hand accounts to trace the events of October 8–10, 1871, and collaboratively tell the story of the fire.

Painted Memories: The Great Chicago Fire—Student Workshop

Although there are no photographs of the Great Chicago Fire, artists recorded their memories of it so vividly that today, more than a century later, we can understand this important event through their work. This workshop invites students to share written and physical responses to *Memories of the Chicago Fire*, a historic painting by Julia Lemos. Then, using excerpts from Lemos's written account, take their analysis one step further, gaining insight into the lives of the people who experienced the fire. The workshop concludes with an opportunity for students to create a cover for their own fire narrative. *45-minute experience (per class); recommended for grades 3 and 4. Available on Tuesdays and Thursdays.*