

# CORE READING GUIDE

## **The Great Fire**

By

Jim Murphy

Grade 6



THE  
LEARNING  
INSTITUTE

## **About The Learning Institute**

The Learning Institute (TLI) is dedicated to helping school districts improve student achievement. TLI provides curriculum alignment and support, Interim Assessments, research, consulting, and technology services to help teachers, administrators, and policymakers more effectively meet the needs of all students.

For more information about TLI or our services, visit our home on the Web at [www.tli.net](http://www.tli.net) or contact us at our offices, located in Hot Springs, AR.

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## TLI Core Reading Guides

TLI’s Core Reading Guides offer elementary and secondary English Language Arts (ELA) teachers a consistent, in-depth, and multifaceted approach to teaching significant works of literature. TLI developed a list of challenging, engaging, and content-rich texts spanning grades 3 – 12, many of which also appear in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) exemplar list. While meant to encompass only a portion of any rich ELA curriculum, these works clearly focus on core concepts and building knowledge. The Core Reading Guides for these titles provide critical information, activities, and support for teachers and students to meet the demands of the CCSS in the classroom. The concepts and activities in the Core Reading Guides are tagged with the dominant CCSS for English Language Arts on which they focus (reading [RF, RI, RL], writing [W], Language [L], and Speaking/Listening [SL]). In addition, many of the ideas and tasks in the Grade 6-12 nonfiction Core Reading Guides may also address the Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies (RH) and/or the Reading Standards for Literacy in Science/Technical Subjects (RST). For information concerning reading standards in literacy outside the domain of ELA, please see [CCSS ELA.pdf](#) (60-62).

TITLE	AUTHOR	GENRE
<i>1776</i>	David McCullough	NF
<i>1984</i>	George Orwell	F
<i>A Christmas Carol</i>	Charles Dickens	F
<i>A Day No Pigs Would Die</i>	Robert Newton Peck	F
<i>A Farewell to Arms</i>	Ernest Hemingway	F
<i>A River Runs Through It</i>	Norman Maclean	NF
<i>A Wrinkle in Time</i>	Madeleine L'Engle	F
<i>America’s Constitution: A Biography</i>	Akhil Reed Amar	NF
<i>And Then There Were None</i>	Agatha Christie	F
<i>Animal Farm</i>	George Orwell	F
<i>Bud, Not Buddy</i>	Christopher Paul Curtis	F
<i>Charlotte’s Web</i>	E.B. White	F
<i>Cry, the Beloved Country</i>	Alan Paton	F
<i>Discovering Mars: The Amazing Story of the Red Planet</i>	Melvin Berger	NF
<i>Frankenstein</i>	Mary Shelley	F
<i>Freckle Juice</i>	Judy Blume	F
<i>Freedom Walkers</i>	Russell Freedman	NF
<i>Great Amer. Short Stories</i> (Dover)	Poe, Twain, Harte, etc.	F
<i>Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railroad</i>	Ann Petry	NF
<i>Hatchet</i>	Gary Paulsen	F
<i>If You Lived 100 Years Ago</i>	Ann McGovern	NF
<i>If You Sailed on the Mayflower in 1620</i>	Ann McGovern	NF
<i>Into the Wild</i>	Jon Krakauer	NF
<i>Island of the Blue Dolphins</i>	Scott O'Dell	F
<i>James and the Giant Peach</i>	Roald Dahl	F
<i>Julius Caesar</i> (Signet Classic)	William Shakespeare	D
<i>King Lear</i> (Signet Classic)	William Shakespeare	D

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>AUTHOR</b>	<b>GENRE</b>
<i>Life on the Mississippi</i>	Mark Twain	NF
<i>Lord of the Flies</i>	William Golding	F
<i>Macbeth</i> (Signet Classic)	William Shakespeare	D
<i>Mythology</i>	Edith Hamilton	NF
<i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i>	Frederick Douglass	NF
<i>Native Son</i>	Richard Wright	F
<i>Othello</i> (Signet Classic)	William Shakespeare	D
<i>Out of the Dust</i>	Karen Hesse	P
<i>Pride and Prejudice</i>	Jane Austen	F
<i>Quest for the Tree Kangaroo: An Expedition to the Cloud Forest of New Guinea</i>	Sy Montgomery	NF
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (Signet Classic)	William Shakespeare	D
<i>Stone Fox</i>	John Reynolds Gardiner	F
<i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>	Mark Twain	F
<i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i>	Mark Twain	F
<i>The Bean Trees</i>	Barbara Kingsolver	F
<i>The Book of Three</i>	Alexander Lloyd	F
<i>The Crucible</i>	Arthur Miller	D
<i>The Diary of Anne Frank</i>	Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett	D
<i>The Great Fire</i>	Jim Murphy	NF
<i>The Hobbit</i>	J.R.R. Tolkien	F
<i>The House of the Spirits</i>	Isabel Allende	F
<i>The Lightning Thief</i>	Rick Riordan	F
<i>The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe</i>	C.S. Lewis	F
<i>The Magic School Bus: Inside the Earth</i>	Joanna Cole	NF
<i>The Miracle Worker</i>	William Gibson	D
<i>The Odyssey</i> (Fagles translation)	Homer	F
<i>The Once and Future King</i>	T.H. White	F
<i>The Outsiders</i>	S.E. Hinton	F
<i>The Pearl</i>	John Steinbeck	F
<i>The Power of Myth</i>	Joseph Campbell and Bill Moyers	NF
<i>The Prince</i>	Machiavelli	NF
<i>The Story of Sacajawea: Guide to Lewis and Clark</i>	Della Rowland	NF
<i>The Tempest</i> (Signet Classic)	William Shakespeare	D
<i>The Trumpet of the Swan</i>	E.B. White	F
<i>Things Fall Apart</i>	Chinua Achebe	F
<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>	Harper Lee	F
<i>Travels with Charley: In Search of America</i>	John Steinbeck	NF
<i>Twelve Angry Men</i>	Reginald Rose	D
<i>Walk Two Moons</i>	Sharon Creech	F
<i>What's the Big Idea, Ben Franklin?</i>	Jean Fritz	NF

F – fiction; NF – nonfiction; D – drama

# TLI CORE READING GUIDE

## GRADE 6

### *THE GREAT FIRE* by Jim Murphy

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## INTRODUCING THE TEXT

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Title: *The Great Fire*

Author: Jim Murphy

Genre: Nonfiction – narrative

Lexile: 1130L

Educators: Please be sure to read the book to determine its appropriateness for use with your students.

### Summary

*The Great Fire* is a nonfiction account of one of the most devastating disasters in American history. In October, 1871, a fire that began in a barn on Chicago’s southwest side spread throughout much of the city. The catastrophic event killed hundreds of people, destroyed thousands of buildings, and left almost 100,000 people homeless. Author Jim Murphy uses historical research and eyewitness accounts to tell the story, including explanations of how the fire started, why it spread so quickly, and how class conflict affected the city during the disaster and in its aftermath. Sources include newspaper articles, drawings, maps, photographs, and first-person accounts from survivors.

### Author Biography

“One of my goals in writing about events from the past is to show that children weren’t just observers of our history. They were actual participants and sometimes did amazing and heroic things.”

—Jim Murphy

Jim Murphy became interested in Chicago’s Great Fire when he happened upon the first book ever written about it while browsing in an old bookstore. The story was a natural fit for Murphy, who has a passion for American history and for bringing that history to life for young readers. The award-winning author has written more than 30 books.

### Genre and Structure [CC: RI.6.3 - 6.5]

Tell students that *The Great Fire* is an example of **narrative nonfiction**. That means the writer is telling a story that is true, or factual.

Explain that the term **text structure** refers to how writing is organized. The text structure of *The Great Fire* is **chronological**. This means that the story unfolds in the same order or sequence in which events happened. Ask students to think of other writing they have read that uses chronological order. Students may suggest short stories, memoirs, or biographies.

Show students examples of **signal words** in the book that indicate sequence or time order, such as “It was Sunday,” “October eighth,” and “around eight o’clock” in the first paragraph. Encourage students to find other signal words and phrases that help them follow the order of events.

**Pacing Chart**

Section 1: Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2

Section 2: Chapters 3–5

Section 3: Chapters 6 and 7

## PRE-TEACHING THE TEXT

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### Introduce the Essential Question

Share and discuss the Essential Question that students should keep in mind as they read.

***What lessons can we learn from disaster?***

### Connect to the Essential Question

As a “way in” to the book and to the Essential Question, use the following Quick Write to get students thinking about what they know about disasters and their causes and effects.

#### **Quick Write [CC: W.6.1 - 6.3, W.6.10]**

Ask students to think about a disaster that happened in their town or region, or one they learned about from the news. Have them consider what caused the disaster and what effects the event had. Could the disaster have been prevented? Were there any positive results? What lessons were learned? Have students write a few ideas in their Reading Journals.

#### **Class Discussion [CC: SL.6.1, SL.6.6]**

After students complete the Quick Write, ask them to share their ideas in a class discussion. Then, direct students to take notes on the Essential Question and record their ideas in their Reading Journals as they read.

#### **Reading Journal [CC: RI.6.10, W.6.9, W.6.10]**

Assign students to keep a notebook to be used as a **Reading Journal** as they read the book.



Make copies of the provided **Reading Journal Checklist SAS**. Have students tape the checklist to the inside cover of their Reading Journals and refer to it as they read. They may also use it as a bookmark.

Based on the passage and focus of classroom instruction, you may want to limit the number of options that students have for individual journal entries.

#### **Checklist**

1. Essential Question
2. Purpose for Reading
3. Text Features/Elements, and/or Text Structure
4. Significant Facts or Passages
5. My Questions (generate questions about the text, questions to the author, or self-monitoring questions about comprehension or vocabulary)
6. Writing Activity, Assessment Essay, Cross-Curricular Connection, Media Connection (for prewriting, planning, and drafting)

Let students know that you will be assessing their Reading Journals for quality and completeness.

## TEACHING THE TEXT

### SECTION 1 (Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2)

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#### SECTION 1: Before Reading

##### Introduce Vocabulary [CC: RI.6.4, L.6.6]



Read aloud each vocabulary word and sample sentence below. Then direct students to the **Section 1: Vocabulary SAS**. Review the directions with students, help them complete any example items, and then instruct them to do the activities on their own.

##### ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

**locate** ('lō kāt) *v.* to find a specific place or site

*Can you **locate** the river on the map?*

##### KEY VOCABULARY

**consume** (kən 'süm) *v.* to completely ruin or destroy

*The raging fire **consumed** an entire city block.*

**cumbersome** ('kəm bər səm) *adj.* burdensome or difficult to handle

*The heavy sandbags were **cumbersome** to carry.*

**extinguish** (ik 'stin (g)wish) *v.* to put out a flame or to end

*Before you leave the room, be sure to **extinguish** all the candles.*

**ignite** (ig 'nīt) *v.* to set on fire

*At sunset, the park district engineer began to **ignite** the fireworks.*

**inquiry** ('in kwīr ē) *n.* an investigation to uncover the facts

*The city began an **inquiry** to determine the cause of the accident.*

##### Section 1: Vocabulary SAS Answer Key

**A. Learn the Words [CC: L.6.3, L.6.4]:** Sentences will vary.

**B. Use the Words [CC: L.6.3, L.6.5, L.6.6, W.6.10]:** Answers will vary, but they should reflect an understanding of the vocabulary words.

##### Text Feature: Maps [CC: RI.6.5, RI.6.7]

Explain that **text features** are elements that writers use to help readers better understand the ideas and events presented in the text. **Maps** are one type of text feature. Maps can be used to locate where events take place. Maps usually contain a **legend**, or a key, that explains the symbols on the map.

Provide an example of a nonfiction book that students are familiar with that includes a map, such as a social studies textbook. Discuss how the map complements or extends information in the text. Ask students to suggest different kinds of maps they have encountered or used.

Explain that *The Great Fire* contains several different versions of the same street map. Students can use these maps to understand where the events in the book take place and to track the spread of the fire and its destruction over time. As students read the Sections and their respective chapters, encourage them to compare the maps as the fire progresses.



Distribute the **Section 1: Text Feature SAS** and direct students to complete it as they read this Section.

### **Set a Purpose for Reading [CC: RI.6.1 – 6.3, RI.6.10, W.6.9, W.6.10]**

Assign students to read Section 1 with this purpose in mind:

*Read to discover how fire hazards, weather conditions, and a series of mistakes lead to disaster for the people and city of Chicago.*

Students may use their Reading Journals to record their purpose for reading and take notes on what they discover, predict/confirm, learn, etc., as they read.

## **SECTION 1: After Reading**

After students have read Section 1, use the activities below to review the Text Feature and assess students' understanding of the text.

### **Review the Text Feature [CC: SL.6.1, SL.6.2]**

After students have read Section 1, review the Text Feature that was introduced in the Before Reading pages. Have students take out their completed **Section 1: Text Feature SAS**. Explore the maps that the author uses to narrate the story of the Great Fire. Call on several volunteers to share their answers to the questions on the **SAS**.

### **Section 1: Text Feature SAS Answer Key**

#### **A. Analyze the Maps:**

**1. What do you learn from reading the street map and legend in Chapter 1? [CC: RI.6.3, RI.6.5, RI.6.7, W.6.9, W.6.10]**

*Sample answer: The map shows the area of the city destroyed by the fire that took place on Saturday, October 7. That fire occurred between Adams and Van Buren Streets and between Clinton Street and the Chicago River. The fire covered about four city blocks before it was extinguished.*

**2. Compare the map in Chapter 1 to the map in Chapter 2. What new information do you learn from reading the map and legend in Chapter 2? [CC: RI.6.3, RI.6.5, RI.6.7, W.6.9, W.6.10]**

*Sample answer: You learn where the fire that began on the night of Sunday, October 8 occurred. It occurred at the home of Patrick and Catherine O'Leary, on DeKoven Street and Jefferson Street. The fire spread five blocks north and one block east.*

## **B. Draw Conclusions About the Maps**

**3. How do the maps aid your understanding of the events in the narrative? How would your understanding be different without the maps? [CC: RI.6.1 – 6.3, RI.6.5, W.6.9, W.6.10]**

*Sample answer:* The maps help readers picture the city of Chicago in 1871. Readers can follow the story by using the maps to find specific places and buildings where the events took place, such as the O’Leary home. The maps also help readers locate the people mentioned in the story, such as Bruno Goll, Claire Innes, and Horace White, and they show where they are in relation to the fire. Without the maps, it would be hard to keep track of where everything happens.

## **Comprehension and Analysis**



Distribute the **Section 1: Comprehension and Analysis SAS** and have students work individually to complete it. You may choose to have students complete the writing portion as homework, depending on time constraints.

### **Section 1: Comprehension and Analysis SAS Answer Key**

**1. How was the fire in the O’Learys’ barn discovered? How were the O’Learys able to escape? [CC: RI.6.1, W.6.9, W.6.10]**

*Sample answer:* Daniel “Peg Leg” Sullivan was outside sitting on the sidewalk when he spotted the fire in the O’Learys’ barn around 8:45 p.m. and shouted “Fire!” Another neighbor, Dennis Rogan, heard his cries and awoke the O’Learys in time for them to escape.

**2. What type of building construction was chiefly used in Chicago during 1871? How did this construction allow the fire to consume the city so quickly? [CC: RI.6.3, W.6.9, W.6.10]**

*Sample answer:* Two-thirds of the city’s 59,500 buildings were made of wood. Buildings with stone exteriors had interior wooden frames and floors. Church steeples were made of wood, as were the decorations on building exteriors. Houses and barns were made of wood and built close together. Even the streets and sidewalks were made of wood. Wood burns easily, so the fire spread rapidly and consumed the buildings quickly.

**3. Use the map in Chapter 2 to locate the fire and the neighborhood where Claire Innes lived. Based on the information in the map, explain why Claire’s family did not seem worried about the fire. In which direction was the fire moving? [CC: RI.6.5, RI.6.7, W.6.9, W.6.10]**

*Sample answer:* At the time, the fire seemed far enough away not to pose a threat to Claire’s neighborhood. However, the fire was moving northeast in the general direction where Claire lived.

**4. As one firefighter later stated, “From the beginning of that fatal fire, everything went wrong.” What were some of the things that went wrong for the firefighters as they tried to extinguish the fire? What effect did those events have? Cite examples from the text to support your response. [CC: RI.6.1 – 6.3, RI.6.8, W.6.9, W.6.10]**

**Sample answer:** *The fire was so intense that despite their best efforts, the firefighters often had to back away from the heat and flames. The fire was aided by the wind that carried burning objects and sparks through the air. At one point some hoses burst, and that stopped the flow of water on the fire. All of these incidents caused the fire to spread out of control and to create a sense of chaos and confusion.*

**5. Despite the early mistakes that led to the fire spreading so rapidly, what events happened that were a help? Explain. [CC: RI.6.1, RI.6.2, W.6.9, W.6.10]**

**Sample answer:** *Although there were many mistakes made and there was lots of confusion, many people acted fast and bravely. Sullivan reacted quickly to shout an alarm and try to free the O’Learys’ animals. His cries alerted neighbors and saved many lives. Chief Williams worked with his firefighters as well as spectators to organize efforts to stop the fire.*

**Writing Activity: Textual Analysis [CC: RI.6.1, W.6.2, W.6.4, W.6.5, W.6.8 – 6.10, L.6.1 – 6.3, L.6.6]**

On the day of the fire, an editorial in the *Chicago Tribune* warned of conditions in which “a spark might set a fire which would sweep from end to end of the city.” Even with this warning, why were people so slow to react to the dangers when the fire broke out on Sunday evening? Use specific details from the book to support your answer.

*Answers will vary, but students should cite specific details to support their opinions.*

#### **Criteria for the Writing Activity**

Before students complete the writing portion of the assignment, clarify the criteria and expectations. Students should be sure that

- their opinion is clearly stated in the first paragraph;
- they include sufficient details from the book to support their opinion;
- their writing is free of errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and mechanics.

## TEACHING THE TEXT

### SECTION 2 (Chapters 3–5)

#### SECTION 2: Before Reading

##### Introduce Vocabulary [CC: RI.6.4, L.6.6]



Read aloud each vocabulary word and sample sentence below. Then direct students to the **Section 2: Vocabulary SAS**. Review the directions with students, help them complete any example items, and then instruct them to do the activities on their own.

##### ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

**communicate** (kə 'myü nə kāt) *v.* to pass along or give information

*It was difficult to **communicate** with others when we lost power during the storm.*

##### KEY VOCABULARY

**collapse** (kə 'laps) *v.* to completely crumble and fall

*People wondered whether their roofs might **collapse** from the weight of the snow.*

**debris** (də 'brē) *n.* the remains of something that has been destroyed

*Workers hauled away the **debris** after the earthquake.*

**embers** ('em bərs) *n.* slowly burning ashes or remains from a fire

*Only the **embers** burned in the fireplace.*

**opposition** (ä pə 'zi shən) *n.* something that stops or offers resistance

*The **opposition** prevented our team from scoring a single goal in the soccer game.*

**velocity** (və 'lä sə tē) *n.* speed

*The **velocity** of the jet fighter was fast enough to set a new record.*

##### Section 2: Vocabulary SAS Answer Key

**A. Learn the Words [CC: L.6.3, L.6.4]:** Sentences will vary.

**B. Use the Words [CC: L.6.3, L.6.4, L.6.6, W.6.10]:** Answers will vary, but they should reflect an understanding of the vocabulary words.

##### Text Feature: Photographs and Illustrations [CC: RI.6.5, RI.6.7]

In addition to maps, the author uses other **text features**, such as **photographs** and **illustrations**, to help readers better understand the ideas and events presented in the text. Since photography was not widely used in 1871, newspapers and magazines often included **illustrations**, or drawings, to visually supplement the text. **Captions** appeared below the photographs and illustrations to explain the content.

Provide an example of a photograph or illustration that students are familiar with from a science or social studies textbook. Discuss how the photograph or illustration complements or extends information in the text. Ask students to suggest different kinds of photographs and illustrations they have encountered.

Explain that *The Great Fire* contains several photographs and illustrations that help explain the text. Students can use them to understand how the fire raged through the city and forced its residents to flee for their lives. As students read the Sections and their respective chapters, encourage them to pause in their reading to examine each photograph and illustration, and to read the captions.



Distribute the **Section 2: Text Feature SAS** and direct students to complete it as they read this Section.

### **Set a Purpose for Reading [CC: RI.6.1 – 6.3, W.6.9, W.6.10]**

Assign students to read Section 2 with this purpose in mind:

*Read to discover how four eyewitnesses—Joseph E. Chamberlin, Horace White, Alexander Frear, and Claire Innes—reacted as the Great Fire raged through the city.*

Students may use their Reading Journals to record their purpose for reading and take notes on what they discover, predict/confirm, learn, etc., as they read.

## **SECTION 2: After Reading**

After students have read Section 2, use the activities below to review the Text Feature and assess students' understanding of the text.

### **Review the Text Feature [CC: SL.6.1, SL.6.2]**

After students have read Section 2, review the Text Feature that was introduced in the Before Reading pages. Have students take out their completed **Section 2: Text Feature SAS**. Explore the photographs and illustrations that the author uses to narrate the story of the Great Fire. Call on several volunteers to share their answers to the questions on the **SAS**.

#### **Section 2: Text Feature SAS Answer Key**

##### **A. Analyze the Photographs and Illustrations**

**1. Examine the illustration on page 44 and read the caption. What do you learn from the illustration? What new information do you learn from reading the caption? Now consider the small illustration of the firefighter and the fire-fighting wagon on page 43. How effective do you think this equipment would be in fighting a blaze like the one depicted on page 44? Explain. [CC: RI.6.1, RI.6.3, RI.6.5, RI.6.7, W.6.9, W.6.10]**

**Sample answer:** *The entire building is burning. Some people are running down the street away from the fire. Other people are watching the fire from a short distance. The caption says that the building is Crosby's Opera House. You also learn from the caption that just a few moments before the fire, a restaurant in the building was serving*

customers. The fire wagon on page 43 does not look like it would be able to put out the fire at Crosby's Opera House. It looks too small and doesn't have enough firefighters or equipment to put out the fire.

**2. Examine the illustration on page 61. What do you learn from the illustration about people's means of escape from the burning city? How does the caption help explain what the people heading back into the city and those along the shoreline are doing? [CC: RI.6.3, RI.6.5, RI.6.7, W.6.9, W.6.10]**

*Sample answer:* It was difficult to escape from the burning city because people had to cross narrow, crowded bridges to reach a safe place. The caption explains why empty wagons are being driven back into the city. It also tells you that the people on the bridges are spectators watching the fire, which was still several blocks away.

### **B. Draw Conclusions About the Photographs and Illustrations**

**3. Look at the photograph on page 88 and read the caption. How does a photograph differ from an illustration? Why might a photograph be considered a more reliable source of information than an illustration? [CC: RI.6.1, RI.6.3, RI.6.5, RI.6.7, W.6.9, W.6.10]**

*Sample answer:* A photograph is a picture of exactly how a place looked at a specific moment in time. An illustration is a drawing of how someone might see or picture a place. A photograph might be considered more reliable because it is objective. It shows what was actually in a scene. An illustration is subjective. The illustrator might add something to the drawing that he or she did not actually see.

### **Comprehension and Analysis**



Distribute the **Section 2: Comprehension and Analysis SAS** and have students work individually to complete it. You may choose to have students complete the writing portion as homework, depending on time constraints.

### **Section 2: Comprehension and Analysis SAS Answer Key**

**1. What problems in communication made it difficult for firefighters to organize their efforts to put out the fire? [CC: RI.6.1, RI.6.2, W.6.9, W.6.10]**

*Sample answer:* Some time before ten o'clock on Sunday night, William Brown, the alarm operator, sent in a second incorrect alarm. He sent the fire fighters to the same wrong location, Box 342, without his supervisor's permission. At about 10:30 P.M., Brown sent in a third alarm to Box 342, repeating his mistake for the third time.

**2. How was it possible for the burning embers of the fire to spread across the Chicago River? How did the rising convective heat contribute to the rapid spread of the fire? [CC: RI.6.1 – 6.3, W.6.9, W.6.10]**

*Sample answer:* The tall, wooden steeple of St. Paul's Church caught fire. The wind carried the burning embers, and the fire spread quickly. As the fire burned, it heated the air. The hot air rose in a column. Oxygen-rich air rushed into the base of the column and mixed with the burning fuel. That caused more hot air to rise, twist, and whirl. This whirlwind picked up burning objects and carried them from one block to the next.

**3. Examine the illustrations on pages 48 and 50 and read the captions. What conclusion can you draw from these illustrations about how the city was evacuated during the Great Fire? Explain. [CC: RI.6.5, RI.6.7, W.6.9, W.6.10]**

*Sample answer: The illustrations show people fleeing with their loved ones and possessions down crowded, smoky streets. There was no orderly evacuation of the city. No one was in charge.*

**4. What do you think of the decision made by nearly 30,000 residents to flee to Lincoln Park to escape the fire? What eventually saved these people? [CC: RI.6.1, RI.6.3, W.6.9, W.6.10]**

*Sample answer: Lincoln Park was an open stretch of land, so that may be why people gathered there. Since the park contained trees and shrubs, which would probably burn easily, Lincoln Park may not have been a good choice. On the other hand, the Park was on the edge of Lake Michigan, and perhaps people thought they could go out into the lake to escape the fire, if necessary. It began to rain, and that stopped the spread of the fire.*

**5. The Tribune Building stood in opposition to the fire longer than many other city buildings, but it was eventually destroyed. What lesson did people learn about “fireproof” buildings from the Tribune Building? [CC: RI.6.1, RI.6.3, W.6.9, W.6.10]**

*Sample answer: The exterior of the Tribune Building was made of granite, the ceilings were iron, and the partition walls were brick, but the roof was wooden and covered with tar. The building could have withstood the fire if not for the wooden roof that caught fire. The roof also needed to be made of fireproof material for the building to be completely fireproof.*

**Writing Activity: Textual Analysis [CC: RI.6.1, RI.6.3, W.6.2, W.6.4, W.6.5, W.6.9, W.6.10, L.6.1 – 6.3, L.6.6]**

Why was it so difficult for Alexander Frear to keep track of the whereabouts of his sister-in-law and her children? Cite details to support your answer.

*Answers will vary, but students should cite specific details to support their opinions.*

#### **Criteria for the Writing Activity**

Before students complete the writing portion of the assignment, clarify the criteria and expectations. Students should be sure that

- their opinion is clearly stated in the first paragraph;
- they include sufficient details from the book to support their opinion;
- their writing is free of errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and mechanics.

## TEACHING THE TEXT

### SECTION 3 (Chapters 6 and 7)

#### SECTION 3: Before Reading

##### Introduce Vocabulary [CC: RI.6.4, L.6.6]



Read aloud each vocabulary word and sample sentence below. Then direct students to the **Section 3: Vocabulary SAS**. Review the directions with students, help them complete any example items, and then instruct them to complete the activities.

##### ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

**investigate** (in 'ves tə gāt) *v.* to observe or study  
*The detective's job is to **investigate** each and every clue.*

##### KEY VOCABULARY

**consequence** ('kän(t) sə kwən(t)s) *n.* effect or result  
*One **consequence** of the thunderstorm was that the baseball game was cancelled.*

**culprit** ('kəl prət) *n.* someone guilty of a crime  
*The **culprit** ran away when he heard the alarm sound.*

**hazard** ('ha zərd) *n.* something causing danger or risk  
*Insect bites can be a **hazard** of working outdoors.*

**shortage** ('shör tij) *n.* lack  
*The room's **shortage** of windows made the air feel warm and heavy*

**temporary** ('tem pə rer ē) *adj.* lasting for a limited time  
*Many stores hire **temporary** workers to help out during the busy holiday season.*

##### Section 3: Vocabulary SAS Answer Key

**A. Learn the Words [CC: L.6.3, L.6.4]:** Sentences will vary.

**B. Use the Words [CC: L.6.3, L.6.5, L.6.6, W.6.10]:** Answers will vary, but they should reflect an understanding of the vocabulary words.

##### Text Feature: Political Cartoons [CC: RI.6.5, RI.6.7]

The author includes a **political cartoon** from the era to help readers better understand the ideas and events presented in the text. Political cartoons are illustrations with a political or social message. They usually focus on a person or event in the news at the time. Many political cartoons use **humor**, **caricature** (exaggeration of a certain

characteristic), and **symbols** (objects that exist on a literal level but also represent something else) to make their points.

Provide an example of a political cartoon from a social studies textbook or a newspaper. Identify the issue or person the cartoon is targeting, and discuss how the cartoon uses humor, caricature, and/or symbols to convey its message. Ask students to recall other political cartoons they have encountered.

Explain that *The Great Fire* contains a political cartoon that helps explain the content of the chapter. Students can examine the cartoon to learn about what some people believed about the cause of the fire.



Distribute the **Section 3: Text Feature SAS** and direct students to complete it as they read this Section.

### **Set a Purpose for Reading [CC: RI.6.1 – 6.3, W.6.9, W.6.10]**

Assign students to read Section 3 with this purpose in mind:

*Read to learn about the immediate and lasting effects of the Great Fire on Chicago and its citizens.*

Students may use their Reading Journals to record their purpose for reading and take notes on what they discover, predict/confirm, learn, etc., as they read.

## **SECTION 3: After Reading**

After students have read Section 3, use the activities below to review the Text Feature and assess students' understanding of the text.

### **Review the Text Feature [CC: SL.6.1, SL.6.2]**

After students have read Section 3, review the Text Feature that was introduced in the Before Reading pages. Have students take out their completed **Section 3: Text Feature SAS**. Explore the political cartoon that the author uses to depict what some people believed about the cause of the fire. Call on several volunteers to share their answers to the questions on the **SAS**.

#### **Section 3: Text Feature SAS Answer Key**

##### **A. Analyze the Political Cartoon:**

**1. Who is the woman in the cartoon? What is she doing? [CC: RI.6.1, RI.6.3, W.6.9, W.6.10]**

*Sample answer: The woman is Catherine O'Leary. She is sitting on the floor because she was kicked by her cow.*

**2. Political cartoons often use symbols to help convey their message. What might some of the animals in the cartoon symbolize, or represent? [CC: RI.6.3, RI.6.5, W.6.9, W.6.10]**

*Sample answer: The black cats might symbolize witchcraft; witches are said to keep black cats. The mice and pig might represent slovenly, unkempt conditions.*

**B. Draw Conclusions About the Political Cartoon: [CC: RI.6.5, RI.6.6, W.6.9, W.6.10]**

**3. Based on your answers above, what do you think the cartoonist believed about the cause of the Great Fire?**

*Sample answer: The cartoonist believed that a witchlike O'Leary was responsible for the fire. Her cow kicked her over, kicked a pail of milk over, and then probably kicked the lantern over and thus started the fire.*

**Comprehension and Analysis**



Distribute the **Section 3: Comprehension and Analysis SAS** and have students work individually to complete it. You may choose to have students complete the writing portion as homework, depending on time constraints.

**Section 3: Comprehension and Analysis SAS Answer Key**

**1. Why was there a water shortage in the days following the fire? Why was this a problem? [CC: RI.6.1, W.6.9, W.6.10]**

*Sample answer: The Waterworks were destroyed, so the water supply was cut off. It was a big problem because people needed drinking water and were at risk if they drank unclean water.*

**2. In the days after the fire, why did so many people rebuild using wood, a fire hazard, instead of sturdier brick or stone? [CC: RI.6.1, W.6.9, W.6.10]**

*Sample answer: Though wood burns easily, it was cheaper and more abundant than brick or stone. Bricklayers and masons were in short supply. Also, architects knew how to build and decorate with wood and there wasn't always time to think about new designs.*

**3. How did newspapers treat Catherine O'Leary after the fire? Was this treatment fair? Cite examples from the text to support your response. [CC: RI.6.3, RI.6.8, W.6.9, W.6.10]**

*Sample answer: The newspapers unfairly attacked O'Leary. The Chicago Evening Journal printed a story claiming that her cow kicked over a lamp while she was milking. The Chicago Times said she purposely set the fire.*

**4. If a cartoonist wanted to show that firefighters were to blame for the rapid spread of the fire, how might the cartoonist portray the firefighters? [CC: RI.6.1, RI.6.3, RI.6.6, RI.6.7, W.6.9, W.6.10]**

*Sample answer: Some writers said the firefighters were confused and useless. Some said they celebrated rather than worked. A political cartoon might show firefighters sleeping or attending a party while the fire burned nearby.*

**5. What lessons about emergency planning could be learned from an investigation of the 1871 Chicago fire? [CC: RI.6.1, RI.6.2, W.6.9, W.6.10]**

*Sample answer: Chicago didn't have effective emergency planning and so had more problems than necessary during and after the fire. Lessons include that cities should have a disaster preparedness plan that takes into account water, food, power, and housing.*

**Writing Activity: Textual Analysis [CC: RI.6.1 – 6.3, RI.6.8, W.6.2, W.6.4, W.6.5, W.6.9, W.6.10, L.6.1 – 6.3, L.6.6]**

According to the author, why did book and newspaper writers blame poor people for the fire? Use specific details from the book to support your answer.

*Student responses will vary, but students should cite specific details to support their opinions.*

**Criteria for the Writing Activity**

Before students complete the writing portion of the assignment, clarify the criteria and expectations. Students should be sure that

- their opinion is clearly stated in the first paragraph;
- they include sufficient details from the book to support their opinion;
- their writing is free of errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and mechanics.

# ASSESSING STUDENT UNDERSTANDING

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## Assessing Student Understanding: Book Test



Administer the **SAS: Book Test**, which is a two-part assessment consisting of a set of objective questions and two short-answer questions.

## Answer Key

### Book Test/Part A-B

**A. Multiple Choice:** Circle the letter of the correct answer.

[CC: RI.6.1]

1. Chicago's Great Fire burned for
- A. ten hours.
  - \*B. thirty-one hours.
  - C. seven days.
  - D. twenty-six days.

[CC: RI.6.1]

2. Which of these factors helped the fire grow so large?
- A. Weather conditions were cool and wet.
  - B. People didn't know how to fight fires.
  - C. Most buildings were constructed of stone.
  - \*D. Streets and sidewalks were made of wood.

[CC: RI.6.1]

3. Chicagoans were dismayed when the fire
- A. burned deep into Lake Michigan.
  - \*B. leaped across the Chicago River.
  - C. raced through the city's suburbs.
  - D. generated no aid from other cities.

[CC: RI.6.1]

4. To create a firebreak, James Hildreth used
- \*A. explosives.
  - B. marshland.
  - C. water hoses.
  - D. piles of furniture.

[CC: RI.6.1]

5. Which of these factors was **most** important in halting the spread of the fire?
- A. The fire ran out of fuel.
  - \*B. Rain began to fall steadily in the area.
  - C. Firefighters from other cities came to help.
  - D. The Chicago Fire Department used advanced equipment.

[CC: RI.6.1]

6. What happened to Julia Lemos during the fire?
- \*A. She fled with her five children and elderly parents from the city to the prairie.
  - B. She died in a struggle with her landlord who refused to return her rent money.
  - C. She remained in her home with her children because her parents refused to leave.
  - D. She left her children behind in the Half-Orphan Asylum as she and her parents fled.

[CC: RI.6.1]

7. Claire Innes was reunited with her father when they found each other
- A. in Lincoln Park.
  - B. at a relief society.
  - \*C. near the ruins of their house.
  - D. through an ad in the newspaper.

**[CC: RI.6.1]**

**8.** The idea that Catherine O’Leary and her cow were to blame for causing the Great Fire was

- A. a story invented by the Mayor’s office.
- B. proved during the city’s official inquiry.
- \*C. a rumor printed by a Chicago newspaper.
- D. confirmed by Mrs. O’Leary’s confession.

**[CC: RI.6.1]**

**9.** The firefighters were

- \*A. overworked and understaffed.
- B. praised by the public as heroes.
- C. hailed by city leaders for their efforts.
- D. interested more in arguing than fighting fires.

**[CC: RI.6.1]**

**10.** One effect of the Great Fire was

- A. most Chicago industries relocated to St. Louis.
- B. many Chicago newspapers went out of business.
- \*C. fewer new buildings were constructed out of wood.
- D. rich and poor people learned to respect one another.

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**B. Short Answer:** Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper. Include enough details from the book to demonstrate a thorough understanding of each question.

- 1. Murphy points out that the upper classes were quick to blame the poor for the Great Fire: “The poor and slovenly people of De Koven Street—specifically Mrs. O’Leary and her cow—were the cause of the fire and the destruction of Chicago.” Agree or disagree that the O’Learys were responsible for destroying the city. Write two paragraphs in which you use examples from the text to support your opinion. [CC: RI.6.1, RI.6.8, W.6.1, W.6.4, W.6.9, W.6.10, L.6.1 – 6.3, L.6.6]**

*Answers will vary, but students should cite specific details to support their opinions.*

- 2. Compare and contrast how both the rich and poor reacted as the fire swept through their neighborhoods. Use examples from the text to support your answer. [CC: RI.6.1 – 6.3, W.6.2, W.6.4, W.6.9, W.6.10, L.6.1 – 6.3, L.6.6]**

*Answers will vary, but students should cite specific details to support their opinions.*

### Assessing Student Understanding: Essay



Below are two essay writing prompts. You may write them on the board or administer them as part of the paper Book Test (see **SAS section**). As you prefer, assign both prompts or ask students to choose one.

You may choose to administer this part of the test as an in-class essay or as a take-home assignment, depending on the amount of class time available. Students will need to use their books for this part of the test, because they must support their opinions and ideas with specific examples from the text.

#### **A. The Essential Question Prompt [CC: RI.6.1, RI.6.3, W.6.2, W.6.4, W.6.5, W.6.9, W.6.10, L.6.1 – 6.3, L.6.6]**

Think about the errors and conditions that contributed to the widespread destruction caused by the fire. Compare these to the consequences of the fire. What lessons or benefits came out of the Great Fire? Cite specific examples throughout the text to support your ideas.

#### **B. Text Analysis Prompt [CC: RI.6.1, RI.6.3, RI.6.5 – 6.8, W.6.2, W.6.4, W.6.5, W.6.8 – 6.10, L.6.1 – 6.3, L.6.6]**

Jim Murphy uses facts, personal accounts and interviews, quotations from newspapers, maps, photos, and illustrations to tell the story of the Great Fire. Explain how these elements and features provide important information and help the reader follow the sequence of events. Give specific examples of the author's use of these elements.

Before students begin writing, be sure to go over the ***TLI Writing Scoring Rubric for Common Core*** with them.

**Grade 6 Writing Scoring Rubric for Common Core - Argumentative**

**Standard 1 – Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.**

<b>DOMAIN</b>	<b>FEATURES</b>	<b>4</b> Consistent control of almost all of the domain's features	<b>3</b> Reasonable control of most of the domain's features	<b>2</b> Inconsistent control of several of the domain's features	<b>1</b> Little or no control of most of the domain's features
<b>Introduction</b>	Introduce claim(s).				
<b>Organization</b>	Organize the reasons and evidence clearly.				
<b>Support</b>	Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.				
<b>Sentence Formation</b>	Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons.				
<b>Conventions and Style</b>	Establish and maintain a formal style. Conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grade 6.				
<b>Conclusion</b>	Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.				

**Grade 6 Writing Scoring Rubric for Common Core – Informative/Explanatory**

**Standard 2 - Write informative/ explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.**

<b>DOMAIN</b>	<b>FEATURES</b>	<b>4</b> Consistent control of almost all of the domain's features	<b>3</b> Reasonable control of most of the domain's features	<b>2</b> Inconsistent control of several of the domain's features	<b>1</b> Little or no control of most of the domain's features
<b>Introduction</b>	Introduce a topic.				
<b>Organization</b>	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.				
<b>Support</b>	Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.				
<b>Sentence Formation</b>	Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.				
<b>Conventions and Style</b>	Establish and maintain a formal style. Conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grade 6.				
<b>Conclusion</b>	Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented.				

**Grade 6 Writing Scoring Rubric for Common Core – Narrative**

**Standard 3 – Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.**

<b>DOMAIN</b>	<b>FEATURES</b>	<b>4</b> Consistent control of almost all of the domain's features	<b>3</b> Reasonable control of most of the domain's features	<b>2</b> Inconsistent control of several of the domain's features	<b>1</b> Little or no control of most of the domain's features
<b>Introduction</b>	Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters.				
<b>Organization</b>	Organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.				
<b>Narrative Techniques</b>	Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.				
<b>Narrative Sequence</b>	Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one timeframe or setting to another.				
<b>Conventions and Style</b>	Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events. Conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grade 6.				
<b>Conclusion</b>	Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.				

## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

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**Teacher Note:** Some of these activities may be extended to create opportunities for in-depth student research, incorporation of digital media, and oral presentations.

**Cross-Curricular Connection [CC: RI.6.1 – 6.4, RI.6.7, RI.6.9, RI.6.10, SL.6.1, SL.6.2, SL.6.4, SL.6.6]**

In *The Great Fire*, Jim Murphy wrote, “At that time, newspapers often launched vicious personal attacks, even going so far as to make up entire stories.” Could that happen today? Have students find out to what extent news reporting has or hasn’t changed since 1871. Have them locate specific examples to help answer these questions:

1. What is “libel”? How have libel laws influenced what news sources can print?
2. “Ethics” are the rules of conduct that a particular group follows. What are journalistic ethics? How do they influence what journalists write? Explain.

Ask students to research this issue in pairs and be prepared to share their findings in a class discussion or a formal presentation.

**Media Connection [CC: RI.6.1, RI.6.3, RI.6.6 – 6.10, W.6.2, W.6.4, W.6.5 – 6.10, L.6.1 – 6.3, L.6.6]**

For a modern-day examination of the Great Fire’s beginning, have students explore the Web site “Did the Cow Do It? A New Look at the Cause of the Great Chicago Fire” at <http://www.thechicagofire.com/index.php>. (Preview the site first to determine its appropriateness for use with your students.)

Have students take notes from the site. Then instruct them to answer the questions below.

1. Consider how Jim Murphy portrays the O’Leary family and their neighbors and how the Web site portrays them. In what ways are the portrayals similar? In what ways are they different?
2. How does the information you learned from the Web site add to the knowledge you learned from *The Great Fire*? Give examples.
3. Which source do you think makes a stronger case for what caused the fire? Why?

**Suggestions for Further Reading**

For more information about the history of Chicago, students might enjoy *Chicago History for Kids: Triumphs and Tragedies of the Windy City* by Owen Hurd (Chicago Review Press, 2007).

Students may also be interested in reading other nonfiction books by Jim Murphy, including *Blizzard!*, about the New York City blizzard of 1888, or *An American Plague*, about the yellow fever epidemic of 1793.



# ***SAS: The Great Fire***

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Student Activity and Assessment Sheets



## READING JOURNAL CHECKLIST

As I read, I should take notes on:

1. The Essential Question: *What lessons can we learn from disaster?*
2. Purpose for Reading:  
**Section 1** (Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2): *Read to discover how fire hazards, weather conditions, and a series of mistakes lead to disaster for the people and city of Chicago.*  
**Section 2** (Chapters 3-5): *Read to discover how four eyewitnesses—Joseph E. Chamberlin, Horace White, Alexander Frear, and Claire Innes—reacted as the Great Fire raged through the city.*  
**Section 3** (Chapters 6 and 7): *Read to learn about the immediate and lasting effects of the Great Fire on Chicago and its citizens.*
3. Text Features/Elements  
Text Structure
4. Significant Facts or Passages
5. My Questions
  - Do I have questions for the author?
  - Do I have questions about the text?
  - Do I understand what is happening?
  - Are there words I do not understand?
6. Information I need for writing activities and/or projects (for prewriting, planning, and drafting)

*The Great Fire* by Jim Murphy

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  - Do I have questions for the author?
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*The Great Fire* by Jim Murphy

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher/Period \_\_\_\_\_



## SAS/ *The Great Fire*

### Section 1: Vocabulary

**A. Learn the Words:** Define the words below and write an original sentence using each. Use a dictionary to confirm definitions.

1. **consume** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. **cumbersome** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. **extinguish** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. **ignite** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. **inquiry** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. **locate** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**B. Use the Words:** Complete each sentence below.

1. A small fire might become large enough to *consume* a home if \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

2. A task that involves *cumbersome* objects or machines is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

3. An effective way to *extinguish* a fire is to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

4. While camping in the woods, one might accidentally *ignite* a fire by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

5. The purpose of an *inquiry* about an earthquake might be \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

6. She tried to *locate* her missing keys by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher/Period \_\_\_\_\_



## SAS/ *The Great Fire*

### Section 1: Text Feature: Maps

**Text features** help readers better understand the ideas and events presented in the text. **Maps** are one type of text feature. Maps can be used to **locate** where the events take place. Maps usually contain a **legend**, or a key, that explains the symbols on the map.

**A. Analyze the Maps:** Use the maps in Section 1 to answer the questions below.

1. What do you learn from reading the street map and legend in Chapter 1? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Compare the map in Chapter 1 to the map in Chapter 2. What new information do you learn from reading the map and legend in Chapter 2?

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**B. Draw Conclusions About the Maps:** Reflect on the maps in Section 1 to answer the question below.

3. How do the maps aid your understanding of the events in the narrative? How would your understanding be different without the maps?

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(Use the back of the sheet if more space is needed.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher/Period \_\_\_\_\_

 **SAS/ *The Great Fire***

**Section 1: Comprehension and Analysis**

1. How was the fire in the O’Learys’ barn discovered? How were the O’Learys able to escape?

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2. What type of building construction was chiefly used in Chicago during 1871? How did this construction allow the fire to **consume** the city so quickly?

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3. Use the map in Chapter 2 to **locate** the fire and the neighborhood where Claire Innes lived. Based on the information in the map, explain why Claire’s family did not seem worried about the fire. In which direction was the fire moving?

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4. As one firefighter later stated, “From the beginning of that fatal fire, everything went wrong.” What were some of the things that went wrong for the firefighters as they tried to **extinguish** the fire? What effect did those events have? Cite examples from the text to support your response.

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5. Despite the early mistakes that led to the fire spreading so rapidly, what events happened that were a help? Explain.

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(Use the back of the sheet if more space is needed.)



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher/Period \_\_\_\_\_

 **SAS/ *The Great Fire***

**Section 2: Vocabulary**

**A. Learn the Words:** Define the words below and write an original sentence using each. Use a dictionary to confirm definitions.

1. collapse \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. communicate \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. debris \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. embers \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. opposition \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. velocity \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**B. Use the Words:** Study and complete the example below. Then use index cards to create study cards for the vocabulary words.

**FRONT OF CARD:** word, part of speech, pronunciation

**BACK OF CARD:** definition, sample sentence, synonym(s) and antonym(s) when possible

casual, *adj.*  
( 'kazh-oo-uhl)

**definition:** *not serious*  
**sample sentence:**  
**synonym:** *informal*  
**antonym:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher/Period \_\_\_\_\_

 **SAS/ *The Great Fire***

**Section 2: Text Feature: Photographs and Illustrations**

**Photographs and illustrations**, or drawings, visually supplement the information presented in the text. They usually contain **captions** that explain the photograph or illustration.

**A. Analyze the Photographs and Illustrations:** Use the photographs and illustrations in Section 2 to answer the questions below.

1. Examine the illustration on page 44 and read the caption. What do you learn from the illustration? What new information do you learn from reading the caption? Now consider the small illustration of the firefighter and the fire-fighting wagon on page 43. How effective do you think this equipment would be in fighting a blaze like the one depicted on page 44? Explain.

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2. Examine the illustration on page 61. What do you learn from the illustration about people's means of escape from the burning city? How does the caption help explain what the people heading back into the city and those along the shoreline are doing?

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**B. Draw Conclusions About the Photographs and Illustrations:** Reflect on the photographs and illustrations in Section 2 to answer the question below.

3. Look at the photograph on page 88 and read the caption. How does a photograph differ from an illustration? Why might a photograph be considered a more reliable source of information than an illustration?

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(Use the back of the sheet if more space is needed.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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 **SAS/ *The Great Fire***

**Section 2: Comprehension and Analysis**

1. What problems in **communication** made it difficult for firefighters to organize their efforts to put out the fire?

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2. How was it possible for burning **embers** of the fire to spread across the Chicago River? How did the rising convective heat contribute to the rapid spread of the fire?

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3. Examine the illustrations on pages 48 and 50 and read the captions. What conclusion can you draw from these illustrations about how the city was evacuated during the Great Fire? Explain.

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4. What do you think of the decision made by nearly 30,000 residents to flee to Lincoln Park to escape the fire? What eventually saved these people?

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5. The *Tribune* Building stood in **opposition** to the fire longer than many other city buildings, but it was eventually destroyed. What lesson did people learn about “fireproof” buildings from the *Tribune* Building?

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(Use the back of the sheet if more space is needed.)



Name \_\_\_\_\_

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 **SAS/ *The Great Fire***

**Section 3: Vocabulary**

**A. Learn the Words:** Define the words below and write an original sentence using each. Use a dictionary to confirm definitions.

1. **consequence** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. **culprit** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. **hazard** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. **investigate** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. **shortage** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. **temporary** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**B. Use the Words:** Study and complete the example below. Then fill in the chart for the vocabulary words.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Synonym</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Example/Image/Sentence</b>
alter, v.	<i>change</i>	<i>to make different; to modify</i>	
consequence			
culprit			
hazard			
investigate			
shortage			
temporary			

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 **SAS/ *The Great Fire***

**Section 3: Text Feature: Political Cartoons**

**Political cartoons** are illustrations with a political or social message. They usually focus on a person or event in the news at the time. Many political cartoons use **humor**, **caricature** (exaggeration of a certain characteristic), and **symbols** (objects that exist on a literal level but also represent something else) to make their points.

**A. Analyze the Political Cartoon:** Use the political cartoon on page 125 to answer the questions below.

1. Who is the woman in the cartoon? What is she doing?

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2. Political cartoons often use symbols to help convey their message. What might some of the animals in the cartoon symbolize, or represent?

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**B. Draw Conclusions About the Political Cartoon:**

3. Based on your answers above, what do you think the cartoonist believed about the cause of the Great Fire?

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(Use the back of the sheet if more space is needed.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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## SAS/ *The Great Fire*

### Section 3: Comprehension and Analysis

1. Why was there a water **shortage** in the days following the fire? Why was this a problem?

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2. In the days after the fire, why did so many people rebuild using wood, a fire **hazard**, instead of sturdier brick or stone?

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3. How did newspapers treat Catherine O’Leary after the fire? Was this treatment fair? Cite examples from the text to support your response.

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4. If a cartoonist wanted to show that firefighters were to blame for the rapid spread of the fire, how might the cartoonist portray the firefighters?

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5. What lessons about emergency planning could be learned from an **investigation** of the 1871 Chicago fire?

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(Use the back of the sheet if more space is needed.)



**SAS/ The Great Fire****Book Test/Part A**

**A. Multiple Choice:** Circle the letter of the correct answer.

1. Chicago's Great Fire burned for
  - A. ten hours.
  - B. thirty-one hours.
  - C. seven days.
  - D. twenty-six days.
2. Which of these factors helped the fire grow so large?
  - A. Weather conditions were cool and wet.
  - B. People didn't know how to fight fires.
  - C. Most buildings were constructed of stone.
  - D. Streets and sidewalks were made of wood.
3. Chicagoans were dismayed when the fire
  - A. burned deep into Lake Michigan.
  - B. leaped across the Chicago River.
  - C. raced through the city's suburbs.
  - D. generated no aid from other cities.
4. To create a firebreak, James Hildreth used
  - A. explosives.
  - B. marshland.
  - C. water hoses.
  - D. piles of furniture.
5. Which of these factors was *most* important in halting the spread of the fire?
  - A. The fire ran out of fuel.
  - B. Rain began to fall steadily in the area.
  - C. Firefighters from other cities came to help.
  - D. The Chicago Fire Department used advanced equipment.
6. What happened to Julia Lemos during the fire?
  - A. She fled with her five children and elderly parents from the city to the prairie.
  - B. She died in a struggle with her landlord who refused to return her rent money.
  - C. She remained in her home with her children because her parents refused to leave.
  - D. She left her children behind in the Half-Orphan Asylum as she and her parents fled.
7. Claire Innes was reunited with her father when they found each other
  - A. in Lincoln Park.
  - B. at a relief society.
  - C. near the ruins of their house.
  - D. through an ad in the newspaper.
8. The idea that Catherine O'Leary and her cow were to blame for causing the Great Fire was
  - A. a story invented by the Mayor's office.
  - B. proved during the city's official inquiry.
  - C. a rumor printed by a Chicago newspaper.
  - D. confirmed by Mrs. O'Leary's confession.
9. The firefighters were
  - A. overworked and understaffed.
  - B. praised by the public as heroes.
  - C. hailed by city leaders for their efforts.
  - D. interested more in arguing than fighting fires.
10. One effect of the Great Fire was
  - A. most Chicago industries relocated to St. Louis.
  - B. many Chicago newspapers went out of business.
  - C. fewer new buildings were constructed out of wood.
  - D. rich and poor people learned to respect one another.

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 SAS/ *The Great Fire*

**Book Test/Part B**

- B. Short Answer:** Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper. Include enough details from the book to demonstrate a thorough understanding of each question.
1. Murphy points out that the upper classes were quick to blame the poor for the Great Fire: “The poor and slovenly people of De Koven Street—specifically Mrs. O’Leary and her cow—were the cause of the fire and the destruction of Chicago.” Agree or disagree that the O’Learys were responsible for destroying the city. Write two paragraphs in which you use examples from the text to support your opinion.
  2. Compare and contrast how both the rich and poor reacted as the fire swept through their neighborhoods. Use examples from the text to support your answer.







