

Expository  
Text

# Firefighting Heroes

by Kate Sinclair



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PAIRED  
READ

A Favor Repaid

# STRATEGIES & SKILLS

## Comprehension

**Strategy:** Ask and Answer Questions

**Skill:** Author's Point of View

## Vocabulary Strategy

Sentence Clues

## Vocabulary

accidental, careless, disasters, equipment, harmful, prevention, purpose, respond

## Content Standards

**Social Studies**

Civics and Government

Word count: 1,090\*\*

**Photography Credit:** Cover Radius/SuperStock.

\*\*The total word count is based on words in the running text and headings only. Numerals and words in captions, labels, diagrams, charts, and sidebars are not included.



## Education

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**Essential Question**

How do teams work together?

# Firefighting Heroes

**by Kate Sinclair**

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# Introduction

Long ago, people needed fire to survive. They used it to cook and keep warm. But accidental fire was always a danger.

The first settlers in America made buildings from wood. Forests often grew nearby. There was no running water. There were no fire departments. A fire could quickly destroy an entire village!

**The Great Fire of London destroyed more than 13,000 homes.**



In 1666, there was a big fire in the city of London. It raged for three days. A lot of houses burned down. Many people died.

The scary thing about this fire was that it started in a small store. It was a windy day. The wind pushed the fire quickly across the city. The fire caused a lot of damage.

People knew that they had to band together to protect themselves from fire.



## CHAPTER 1

# United We Stand

Fire was a problem for the first settlers in America. In 1608, a fire swept through the Jamestown settlement in Virginia. Almost all of the houses in the **colony** burned down. There were two harmful fires in Boston in 1653 and 1676.

People realized that they had to respond quickly to fires. The settlers began to form **volunteer** firefighting teams. Their purpose was to fight fires and to prevent fires from starting.



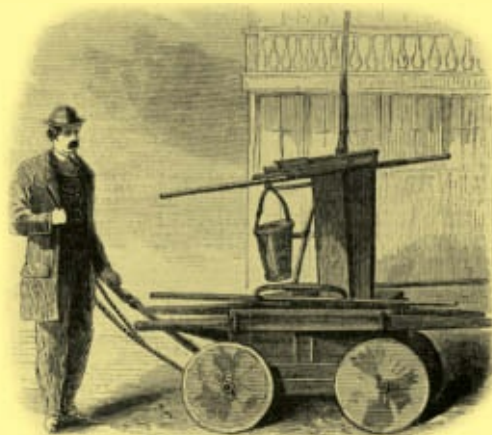
### Fighting Fire in the 1600s

- Buckets of water were kept outside each house at night.
- Volunteers used long poles to collect the buckets.
- Volunteers raced to the fire with the buckets of water.
- Many volunteers were needed.



**Fire damaged many buildings in American cities.**

William Penn started the city of Philadelphia in 1682. Penn had seen the fire in London. He tried to prevent fire when planning his new city. People were ordered to clean their chimneys often. Many buildings were built from brick, not wood.



**This is the first fire engine built in the United States.**

Ben Franklin was one of our founding fathers. He also started a volunteer firefighting group in Philadelphia.

In 1736, Franklin started a fire brigade called The Union Fire Company. It had 30 volunteers. These volunteers were heroes in their community.



**Ben Franklin helped set up a firefighting team in Philadelphia.**

## **Women Firefighters**

The first known female volunteer firefighter was an African American woman named Molly Williams. She fought fires wearing a dress and an apron. Another volunteer was Marina Betts. She became well known for throwing buckets of water over men who wouldn't help fight fires!



Teamwork was an important part of being a volunteer firefighter. The volunteers had to carry buckets of water to the fire. They formed a line and passed the buckets from one person to another. This allowed them to reach the fire as quickly as possible.

With modern equipment, fewer volunteers are needed. The job is still very important, however, and firefighters still need to work together as a team.

#### STOP AND CHECK

How did William Penn and Ben Franklin help fight fires?

**Firefighters work to put out a fire in Atlanta, Georgia.**



## CHAPTER 2

# Firefighters at Work

Today, there are more than 30,000 fire departments in the United States. Almost 90 percent of them are partly or fully run by volunteers. That is more than 800,000 people! All volunteers have a sense of **civic duty**. They want to help the people in their community.

Today's firefighters can put out fires using high-pressure hoses.



Mark Karrass/CORBIS



**Firefighters often work with members of other teams, such as paramedics.**

Firefighters work in teams. There is usually a captain in charge. The captain gives jobs to each firefighter. These jobs can change at a moment's notice. So all firefighters must learn to drive the fire truck, hook up the hoses, set up the ladders, and enter burning buildings safely.

Volunteer firefighters do other work, too. They also help out during natural disasters, car accidents, and medical emergencies.

Volunteer firefighters need a lot of training. First, they need to learn about fire safety. They usually have to pass a physical test as well. They have to crawl through small spaces and move heavy ladders. They have to drag heavy hoses for several hundred feet and carry them up and down several flights of stairs. They also have to carry a 180-pound person through a doorway.

**Firefighters wear protective gear and carry heavy equipment.**



# All in a Day's Work

Read about this firefighter's day.

*The alarm is ringing. A house is on fire. We run to the fire truck. We take our seats. Joe is our driver. My job is to control the hose. Anne looks after the ladders. When we get there, the fire is hard to control. We all wear protective clothing and breathing **apparatus**. We clear the house. An elderly man is having trouble breathing. Peter, our first aid officer, takes care of him. Our new equipment helps make sure the fire is out. We are all very tired! But everyone is safe.*



These firefighters are discussing their work.

## STOP AND CHECK

What are some things volunteer firefighters need to be able to do?

## CHAPTER 3

# Safety in the Home

One of a firefighter's jobs is to teach people about fire safety. Do you know what to do if there is a fire in your home?

## Escape!

What is the safest way out of your home in a fire? Have a family meeting. Talk about the best ways to leave the house, especially at night. Choose a place away from the house to meet. Choose someone to count people to make sure that everyone is out. Call 9-1-1 or the fire department as soon as you can, but don't stay in the house to do it.



STOP



DROP



ROLL



If your clothing catches fire, drop to the floor and roll over to put out the flames.

## High-Rise Buildings

If you live in a tall building, make sure you know where the nearest fire exit is. When you are out of the building, stay out. If you think anyone is still inside, tell the fire department.



**Stairs are the safest way out of a high-rise building during a fire.**

## Smoke Alarms

A working smoke alarm can alert you to a fire at any time. Make sure your home has smoke alarms on every floor and near the bedrooms. Change the batteries every six months.



**A working smoke alarm saves lives!**

### STOP AND CHECK

What are some things to remember if there is a fire in your home?

# Conclusion

People have known for a long time that teamwork helps protect the community from fires. Today, many people lead busy lives. It can be hard for them to find time to volunteer for services such as firefighting. Even so, the work volunteer firefighters do is as important as ever.



**Firefighters teach people about fire safety.**



# Respond to Reading

## Summarize

Use details from *Firefighting Heroes* to summarize the text. Your graphic organizer may help you.

Details

↓

Point of View
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## Text Evidence

1. How do you know that *Firefighting Heroes* is an expository text? Find two examples of information about firefighters in the text.

**GENRE**

2. How does the author describe volunteer firefighters? Give an example. **AUTHOR'S POINT OF VIEW**
3. What do you think *prevent* on page 4 means? What clues in the sentence help you figure out what it means? **SENTENCE CLUES**
4. Write a short paragraph describing how the author feels about volunteer firefighters.

**WRITE ABOUT READING**

## Compare Texts

Read about a woman who gets help from a very unusual source.

# A FAVOR REPAID

Sal Fink was the daughter of a famous Mississippi boatman. She was brave and loud.

One day, Sal was walking in the woods when she saw three sleeping bear cubs. Sal bent down to pat them. Patting wild animals isn't a good idea. But Sal was careless about her safety.



Sal heard a growl behind her. She turned to face a very angry mother bear. The bear was going to attack! But Sal didn't back away. She yelled. That stopped the bear. Then Sal wrestled the bear until it was on the ground.



Sal had the bear at her mercy. She looked at the bear. Then she looked at the cubs. She patted the bear and walked away.

Two years later, Sal was cutting down a tree. Suddenly, she smelled smoke. Sal looked around and saw flames everywhere.

Sal didn't know which way to go. She yelled loudly, but no one heard her. Or so she thought!

Suddenly, a bear came crashing out of the trees. When Sal yelled, the bear had recognized her voice. The bear feared fire, but it remembered that Sal had spared its life. The bear ran toward Sal. Then it ran back the way it had come. Sal realized the bear wanted her to follow.



Sal followed the bear until they came to a river. The bear jumped in, and Sal followed. She held onto the bear's fur, and it towed her to the other side. Sal climbed out and lay gasping but safe. The bear watched her for a minute, then it walked off into the trees.

Text: Karen Alexander, Illustration: Helen Tudor



## Make Connections

How do Sal and the bear work together in *A Favor Repaid*? **ESSENTIAL QUESTION**

How are *Firefighting Heroes* and *A Favor Repaid* examples of teamwork? **TEXT TO TEXT**

# Glossary

**apparatus** (*ap-uh-RAT-uhs*) the equipment needed for a particular purpose (**page 11**)

**civic duty** (*SIV-ik DEW-tee*) the responsibilities of a citizen (**page 8**)

**colony** (*KOL-uh-nee*) a place where people first settle in a land that is new to them (**page 4**)

**volunteer** (*vol-uhn-TEER*) a person who offers to do a job without getting paid money (**page 4**)

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# Focus on Social Studies

**Purpose** To find out about volunteers.

## What to Do

**Step 1** Choose a group that uses volunteers, such as a food bank or an animal shelter.

.....

**Step 2** Find out all you can about the group. Find out how the group works and what its goal is.

.....

**Step 3** Find out what volunteers do.

.....

**Step 4** Write a short paragraph about what the group does.

.....

**Step 5** Write a short paragraph about what volunteers do.

**Conclusion** What did you learn about the organization?

# Thinkmark

## The Topic

What is *Firefighting Heroes* mostly about?

## Vocabulary

What new words did you learn?  
Find two key words in the text that relate to the topic.

## Author's Purpose

Why did the author write *Firefighting Heroes* and *A Favor Repaid*?

## Conclusions

What is the most important thing you learned in *Firefighting Heroes*?

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