

# Teacher Resource

## Bushfire Special

**PLEASE NOTE:** The bushfires have been upsetting for some children and may have caused some discomfort, distress and/or anxiety. Please refer to the following links for information on how to talk to children about bushfires and upsetting news.

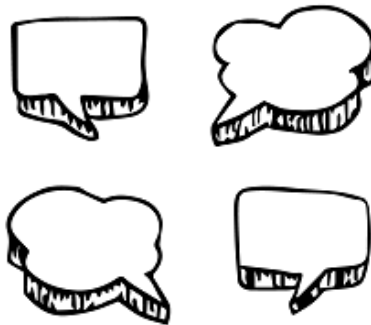
- UNICEF has created a [guide about how to talk to children about the bushfires](#).
- [Kids Helpline](#) has some information to help children cope with natural disasters.
- BTN has a short video about the [Important Things to Remember about Upsetting News](#).

### Activity

#### What do you think?

As a class, students will discuss what they THINK about what they saw in the BTN *Bushfire Special*. Use the following questions to guide discussion:

- How did the BTN *Bushfire Special* make you feel?
- What did you learn from the BTN *Bushfire Special*?
- What questions do you have after watching the *Bushfire Special*?



### Activity

#### Class Discussion

Discuss the BTN *Bushfire Special* as a class. Ask students to record what they know about the bushfires that have occurred in Australia recently. What questions do they have? Use the following questions to help guide discussion:

- Where have the bushfires occurred?
- How do bushfires start? (Think about fuel, weather and geographical conditions).
- Who has been affected by the bushfires?
- Who are the people or organisations that have helped during the bushfires?
- How have the bushfires made you feel?



### Key Learning

Students will develop a deeper understanding of the bushfire crisis in Australia and the impact on people and the environment.

### Curriculum

#### Geography – Year 5

The impact of bushfires or floods on environments and communities, and how people can respond.

#### Science – Year 6

Scientific knowledge is used to solve problems and inform personal and community decisions.

Sudden geological changes and extreme weather events can affect Earth's surface.

## Activity

### Bushfire Research

Students will be exploring bushfires in more detail. They can develop their own key questions to investigate or respond to one or more of the questions below. Students can complete the following KWLH organiser to explore their knowledge and consider what they would like to know and learn.

<i>What do I <u>k</u>now?</i>	<i>What do I <u>w</u>ant to know?</i>	<i>What have I <u>l</u>earnt?</i>	<i><u>H</u>ow will I find out?</i>

Here are some possible questions for students to research:

- Research the difference between low, medium, high and extreme bushfire risk situations. Think about temperature, wind conditions, how dry it is and when it last rained.
- What is radiant heat and how is it dangerous in a bushfire? What steps can be taken to reduce the risks of radiant heat?
- How can the impact of bushfires on people and places be reduced?
- What is the fire danger rating system? How is the fire danger rating determined? Why is it important to have a fire danger rating?
- What is a hazard reduction burn? Are there any effective ways to manage the threat of bushfires? Explain your answer.
- Investigate the three elements of the fire triangle. Draw a diagram of the fire triangle labelling each of the elements and then explain how each of the elements might affect a fire. Explore what a fire needs to start, continue burning and be put out. Predict what might happen if one of the elements is removed from the fire triangle.

## Activity

### Fire danger ratings

In this activity, students will learn more about fire danger ratings, what they mean and what actions they should take.

Students will watch this [bushfire message](#) made by students at Strathewen Primary School in Victoria to learn more about the fire danger rating system. Students will then research what each of the ratings mean and respond to the following.

- Have you seen a fire danger rating sign before? If so, where would you see a fire danger rating sign?
- What is a fire danger rating?
- What does a fire danger rating tell you?
- How can you find out what the fire danger rating is each day?



YouTube: [Survive and thrive, a bushfire message from Strathewen Primary School - CFA](#)



- What happened in the Yarloop fire in 2016?
- What type of tree is extremely flammable?

## Activity

### Visual Literacy

As a class, explore the ABC's [before and after photos of areas affected by bushfires](#). Encourage students to look closely at the images and write down what they notice. Students will choose one of the before and after photos and respond to the following questions:

- Where were the photos taken? Find using Google Maps.
- What is happening in the before and after images?
- What do you notice about the before and after images? Make comparisons.
- What does the 'after' image tell you about what has happened?
- How do the images make you feel?
- What question/s do you have about the images?
- Create captions for each of the images.



ABC News: [Before and after photos of areas affected by bushfires](#)

## Activity

### Animals affected by the bushfires

Students will brainstorm a list of key words that relate to the BTN *Bushfires and Wildlife* story. Students will then use the words to write their own sentences about the issue. Students may want to use pictures and diagrams to illustrate the meaning and create their own glossary. Here are some words to get your students started.

Ecologist	Species	Threatened
Population	Habitat loss	Endangered

### Profile of a native Australian animal

Students will research and develop a profile on a native Australian animal, to gain a deeper understanding of that animal and how it survives in its habitat. Students will choose one of the following animals which were impacted by the bushfires:

- Koala
- Hastings River mouse
- Brush-tailed rock-wallaby
- Alpine bog skink
- Pelican spider
- Ligurian bee



Once students have chosen one animal to research, they will then investigate the following:

- What are some of their physical characteristics?
- What do they eat?
- What animal group do they come from?
- Where can they be found? Describe their natural habitat.
- How do they survive in their environment?
- Compare the habitat requirements to another native animal. What are the similarities and differences?
- Are they an endangered species?
- How has their habitat been impacted by the bushfires?

### Further investigation

Students will research one or more of the following questions and then present their findings in an interesting way.

- Describe how some Australian animals use their senses to protect themselves and to find food.
- Investigate the ways in which the bodies of animals assist in their survival.
- Habitat loss is one of the main factors that can lead to a species being threatened with extinction. List how an animal's habitat might be destroyed or disturbed.
- Can you think of some ways in which we can help prevent loss of habitat for Australian native animals?
- Describe how you would feel if you were a native animal that had been forced out of its environment.

## Activity

### BTN stories

As a class watch one or more of the following BTN stories to learn about bushfires and their impact on people and the environment. After watching any one of the BTN videos ask students to respond to the discussion questions (to find the discussion questions and teacher resources go to the related BTN Classroom Episode and download the Episode Package).



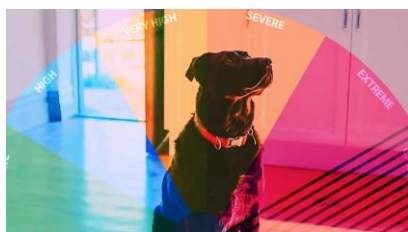
[Bushfire Kids Visit](#)



[Fire Preparations](#)



[Bushfire Season](#)



[Pet Bushfire Safety](#)



[Burn off Season](#)



[Bushfire Plan](#)

## Useful Websites

Bushfire Kids Visit – BTN

<https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/bushfire-kids-visit/11703500>

Bushfire Season – BTN

<https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/bushfire-season/11505884>

How to talk to your children about Australia's bushfire emergency - UNICEF

<https://www.unicef.org.au/blog/news-and-insights/january-2020/how-to-talk-to-your-children-about-australia-s-bushfires>

Coping with natural disasters – Kids Helpline

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/coping-natural-disasters>

Important Things to Remember about Upsetting News – BTN

<https://www.abc.net.au/btn/campaigns/upsetting-news/10500572>

The bushfires' path of destruction – ABC News

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-01-11/australian-bushfires-photos-before-and-after/11854888>

Bushfire Factsheet for Wildlife – Wires

<https://www.wires.org.au/wildlife-info/wildlife-factsheets/bushfire-factsheet>

How to help animals during the bushfire crisis – RSPCA

<https://www.rspca.org.au/blog/2020/how-help-animals-during-bushfire-crisis>

Animal bushfire refugees might not be able to return to their habitats for months – ABC News

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-01-28/animals-affected-by-bushfires-face-months-before-returning/11903416>