

# Teacher Resource

## Fire Ants

Episode 29  
20<sup>th</sup> October 2020

### Focus Questions

1. What was the main point of the BTN *Fire Ants* story?
2. How are fire ants affecting farmers?
3. Fire ants can kill small animals. True or false?
4. Where do fire ants originally come from? Find on a map.
5. How were the first fire ants introduced to Australia?
6. When were fire ants first introduced to Australia?
7. Describe fire ants using 5 words.
8. Why are fire ants called 'super pests'?
9. Why has it been difficult to eradicate fire ants from Australia?
10. What was surprising about this story?

### Activity

#### Class Discussion

As a class discuss the BTN *Fire Ants* story, using the following questions as a guide. Record the main points of the discussion.

- When were fire ants introduced to Australia?
- How did they come here?
- What impact do fire ants have on the environment and people?
- How are fire ants different to native Australian ants?
- What other introduced animal species are there in Australia?
- What impact do introduced species have on ecosystems?
- How do we try to stop the spread of diseases and pest species (animals and plants) in Australia? (For example: not being allowed to take some food items across state borders, having bags checked at the airport, vaccinations for animals).
- Are introduced species always a bad thing? What makes an animal a 'pest'?



### Key Learning

Students will learn more about fire ants and the impact they have on people and the environment. Students will investigate other introduced species and methods used to manage or eradicate them.

### Curriculum

**Science – Years 5 & 6**  
Scientific knowledge is used to solve problems and inform personal and community decisions.

**Science – Year 5**  
Living things have structural features and adaptations that help them to survive in their environment.

**Science – Year 6**  
The growth and survival of living things are affected by physical conditions of their environment.

**Science – Year 7**  
Interactions between organisms, including the effects of human activities can be represented by food chains and food webs.

**Science – Year 8**  
Scientific knowledge has changed peoples' understanding of the world and is refined as new evidence becomes available.



## Activity

### Key Words

Students will brainstorm a list of key words that relate to the BTN *Fire Ants* story. Here are some words to get you started.

Introduced species	Native	Eradicate
Invasive	Pest	Biosecurity

## Activity

### Fire Ants Information report

Students will create an information report about fire ants. The following may help guide students' research:

- How did fire ants get to Australia?
- What do they look like?
- Where do they live?
- What impact do fire ants have on the environment and people?
- What is being done to eradicate fire ants?



### Structure and features of an information report

Information reports are factual texts written to inform and provide detailed facts about a topic. Discuss with students what they already know about the purpose, structure and features of an information report. Use the following as a guide to use with students.

- **Purpose** – an information report provides information to the reader by stating facts.
- **Structure** – see table below.
- **Language features** – write in the present tense, use technical or scientific words and write in the third person.

Students can then use the following plan to help write their report.

### Information report – structure

Title	States a topic
Introduction	The opening statement explains the subject of the report and includes a definition or short description.
Body	Facts grouped into paragraphs. Starts with a topic sentence. Include subject specific language. Text features such as sub-headings, labelled diagrams, charts and captioned photographs may be included.
Conclusion	A summary of what the topic is about and end with an interesting fact.

## Activity

### Introduced species – Research Task

Students will then investigate the impact introduced species have on the environment and choose one to research. Include the following information:

Introduced species	Research
Describe the animal	
Which country did the animal come from?	
When was animal introduced to Australia?	
Why was the animal introduced to Australia?	
Where does the animal live in Australia? (show on a map).	
What impact does the animal have on native animals and the environment?	
What methods have been used to control or eradicate the animal? How successful has it been?	

Below are stories about introduced species on the BTN website to help students with their research.



[Rabbit Scan](#)



[Controlling Carp](#)



[Toad Training](#)



[Dirk Harthog Island](#)

## Activity

Students choose one of the following projects to work on and then present the information to their class.

### Campaign

Design a public education campaign to raise awareness about an introduced species in Australia. Think about your campaign's aim, your target audience, and the value of raising awareness.

### Anatomy of a Fire Ant

Draw a labelled diagram showing the structural features of a fire ant. How are they different to native Australian ants?

### Most Unwanted Poster

Create a poster of Australia's 10 most unwanted invasive species. Describe each species and the impact the species has on the environment.

### Create a Quiz

Create a quiz about fire ants or another invasive species using [Kahoot!](#) Then test your classmates!

## Useful Websites

Australia claims small world-first victory against fire ants, but not everyone is convinced of the strategy – ABC News

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-10-10/fire-ant-victory-in-se-qld/12740836>

Red Imported Fire Ant – Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment

<https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive-species/insects-and-other-invertebrates/tramp-ants/red-imported-fire>

Invasive species in Australia – Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment

<https://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/2bf26cd3-1462-4b9a-a0cc-e72842815b99/files/invasive.pdf>