

**Wildfires**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Read the selection excerpt. Then answer the following questions.



After a fire, burned areas quickly burst into life. In fact, when the ground is still warm from the fires, ants, wood beetles, millipedes, and centipedes are busy. Fire beetles actually seek out fire to breed and lay their eggs in charred logs. The first plants that appear are those whose roots and seeds were there before the fire. But soon new seeds are carried in by the wind and on the fur of animals or in their droppings.

The green-and-black mosaic favors newly arrived plants and animals. Hawks and owls hunt for food in the opened spaces. Tree-drilling woodpeckers hunt for insects beneath the bark of fallen trees. The dead trees also make good nesting sites; bluebirds and tree swallows move in. The fields of new grasses and wildflowers attract grazing animals, and birds come from all over to catch insects in the meadows.

Fires often move slowly through forests and grasslands. Larger animals, such as bears, elk, bison, moose, and deer, simply walk away from the fire. Bison and elk graze as usual,

sometimes on the flaming edges of the fire. Elk even step over fiery logs to get at patches of unburned grass. The animals that are affected die mostly from smoke inhalation rather than from the flames.

Fires rarely start during the wet spring breeding season, so nests of fledglings are not usually threatened, and at other times of the year mature birds can fly off in advance of a fire. Rodents and other small animals dash away across fields or seek shelter in underground burrows or in rocky places. Bears, coyotes, foxes, hawks, falcons, and ravens feast on animals driven from their burrows or on the bodies of animals killed by the smoke. For these scavengers, fire offers many sources of food. Nature quickly adjusts to changes and finds new life even in death.

The forests of Yellowstone are mostly lodgepole pine trees. Many of the lodgepoles were several hundred years old at the time of the 1988 fire. As a lodgepole ages, it doesn't produce enough resin, or sap, to stop insects from boring into its bark, which eventually kills the tree. In very old lodgepole forests, many of the standing trees are dead. Fires remove these dead trees, making room for new ones.

Fire also helps the lodgepole reproduce. This tree has two kinds of cones. One opens normally, over time, and its winged seeds whirl to the forest floor. That is how lodgepoles usually sprout. The other kind of seed is sealed in a rock-hard pine resin that opens only when the heat of a fire melts and burns away the resin.

**Wildfires**

**1. Read the following sentence.**

*Fire beetles actually seek out fire to breed and lay their eggs in charred logs.*

**What is the meaning of the underlined word as it is used in this sentence?**

- a) burned
- b) cooked
- c) hollow
- d) soft

**2. One message Seymour Simon wants to get across is that fires may be helpful. Reread the first and second paragraphs in the text. Which sentence best supports that message?**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**3. How do fires help lodgepoles regrow?**

- a) It's winged seeds whirl to the forest floor.
- b) The rock-hard pine resin melts away.
- c) Fires clear the forest so sunlight reaches the ground and new growth forms.
- d) Insects bore into it's bark.

**4. What animals use charred logs to lay their eggs?**

- a) ants
- b) fire beetles
- c) millipedes
- d) centipedes

**5. Describe one way an animal seeks shelter from a fire.**

---

---

---

---

---

---

### 6. Written Response (3 Points)

**After reading the excerpt from *Wildfires*, describe what the author sees as valuable or important to nature due to wildfires.**

Use explicit evidence from the text to support your answer. Be sure to write one complete paragraph.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

**Wildfires**

**Smoke Jumpers and Hotshots**

Sumer Success Reading Magazine  
Volume 5 Issue 2



From lookout towers, fire-spotters for the U.S. Forest Service see smoke rising from the forest below. A call is made. Fire!

Quickly, special teams of firefighters called smoke jumpers fly to the fire. They parachute out of the plane and land nearby. Their goal is to cut and clear away the brush and trees that the fire needs. They use a tool called a Pulaski, a combination of ax and hoe, to clear a large circle of dirt around the fire. When the fire reaches the circle of dirt, there will be nothing to burn. If the fire is very stubborn or large, planes drop chemicals on it. The chemicals cut off oxygen and help put the blaze out.

As soon as possible, a team of hotshots arrives to help the smoke jumpers. These men and women stay on fighting the fire for 10 to 18 hours a day for as long as 21 days. They continue the digging and clearing of strips of land around the fire. It's hot, dirty, smoky, tiring work and the pay is not high. Yet many people want to do it

Why do people do it? Many say they like the excitement and the people they work with.

Grade 4 ELA 6.2

And almost all would agree – saving our nation's forests is worth the risks and the hardships.

**7. What do the smoke jumpers do right after they parachute out of the plane and land near the forest fire?**

- a) The smoke jumpers collect and re-pack their parachutes before attacking the fire.
- b) They stay fighting the fire for 10 to 18 hours.
- c) The smoke jumpers clear a large circle of dirt around the fire.
- d) The team quickly flies to the fire.

**8. State the main idea of this text.**

---

---

---

---

---

**9. Write a detail sentence from the text that best supports the following statement.**

*Smoke jumpers are the first line of defense once a fire-spotter sees smoke in the forest.*

---

---

---

---

**Wildfires**

**Directions: Choose the correct meaning for the underlined word used in context.**

10. Before the fire, the towering older trees blocked sunlight from the forest floor, allowing only a few other species of plants to flourish there.

- a. grow very well
- b. take away
- c. burn
- d. die

**Choose the word that best completes the sentence.**

11. Fires \_\_\_\_\_ dead trees, making room for new ones.

- a) seek out
- b) save
- c) waste
- d) consume

**Directions: Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.**

12. Some parts return \_\_\_\_\_ than others.

- a. quickly
- b. more quickly
- c. quickliest
- d. most quickly

13. The veteran firefighter worked \_\_\_\_\_ of all.

- a. most hardest
- b. hard
- c. harder
- d. hardest

**Directions: Choose the word that correctly completes the analogy.**

14. Plutnik is to tool as \_\_\_\_\_ is to firefighter.

- a. hose
- b. wildfire
- c. smoke jumper
- d. police officer

**Directions: Read the passage below. Find and correct 4 errors.**

(2 spelling errors, 2 grammar errors)

Firefighters work more quickly to get wildfires under control. Some people wonder why smoke jumpers continue to do their job. Many say they like the excitement. They do the job because it saves our nations forest, not because they recieve extra pay.

**Wildfires****Answer Key - 20 Total Points**

1. A CC.1.2.4.F
2. answers will vary CC.1.2.4.D/CC.1.2.34.H
3. B CC.1.2.4.H
4. B CC.1.2.4.A
5. answers will vary CC.1.3.4.A

6. (3pts) Written Response – Rubric below

7. C CC.1.2.4.E
8. answers will vary CC.1.2.4.A
9. Their goal is to cut and clear  
away the brush and trees that  
the fire needs CC.1.2.4.B

10. A CC.1.2.4.F
11. D CC.1.2.4.F
12. B CC.1.4.4.F
13. D CC.1.4.4.F
14. C CC.1.4.4.F

EDIT (4 points)

~~more~~ quickly  
wonder  
nation's  
receive

**# 6 – Written Response RUBRIC**

Score	In response to this item, the student:
3	Demonstrates <i>complete</i> knowledge of task by using three correct details from the excerpt.
2	Demonstrates <i>partial</i> knowledge of task by using two correct details from the excerpt.
1	Demonstrates <i>incomplete</i> knowledge of task by using only one correct details from the excerpt.
Nonscorable	No response or written refusal to respond or response too brief to determine response:  BLK.....Blank OT .....Off task/topic LOE ..... Response in a language other than English IL ..... Illegible