



Impacts of wildfire

Time needed for activity 20 minutes plus

Location Indoors or outdoors

Context

This activity plan focuses on identifying the immediate and long term impacts felt from wildfire events. Natural Resources Wales’ purpose is to pursue sustainable management of natural resources in all of its work. This means looking after air, land, water, wildlife, plants and soil to improve Wales’ well-being, and provide a better future for everyone.

Curriculum for Wales

Humanities

- **What matters** - Enquiry, exploration and investigation inspire curiosity about the world, its past, present and future.

- **What matters** - Our natural world is diverse and dynamic, influenced by physical processes and human actions.

Health and well-being

- **What matters** - How we process and respond to our experiences affects our mental health and emotional well-being.

- **What matters** - Our decision-making impacts on the quality of our lives and the lives of others.

Languages, Literacy and Communication

- **What matters** - Languages connect us.

- **What matters** - Expressing ourselves through languages is key to communication.

- **What matters** - Understanding languages is key to understanding the world around us.

Objectives

Learners will be able to:

- List some immediate and on-going impacts of wildfire.
- Identify some of the problems these may cause for a community.
- Discuss how they might affect different people within the community.

Resources and equipment

- Resource cards - Impacts of wildfire



Background information

Wildfires are a persistent, widespread, costly and potentially dangerous issue, particularly in areas of relative socio-economic deprivation in Wales, which are more prone to experiencing wildfires.

The peak fire season is generally between March and May each year with over 60% of wildfires occurring between 4pm and midnight.

There is a low level of public awareness of wildfires, with many people not thinking of it as a particularly important issue.

As the effects of climate change become more obvious, it is likely that wildfires will become more common and widespread.

What to do

1. Provide your group with the scenario that a raging wildfire has taken place around the local community, lasting several days.
 - People living there were told to evacuate to the leisure centre in a nearby town, where they stayed for 2 days and 2 nights.
 - The emergency services have managed to extinguish the fire, flooding some of the area in their efforts to curb the flames.
 - Several buildings, the surrounding farmland and the natural environment surrounding the area have been completely burnt.
2. Ask your learners to imagine that they live in the affected community and have just returned home from a trip. Ask your learners to consider what they might see on their route back into their home that might make them uneasy and begin to notice that something has happened in the area. How would they feel when they learn of the wildfire from friends and neighbours? Discuss their thoughts.
3. Ask your learners to consider the length of time the effects of a wildfire event such as the one described, are felt for? Explain to your learners that the impacts of wildfire are immediate but can have on-going, long-term and incalculable effects.
4. Divide your learners into pairs or small groups and ask them to discuss and note what impacts a wildfire such as the one described in the scenario, may have on people and the local area.
5. You can use the **Resource cards – Impacts of wildfire** in a variety of ways, as a pack, as single cards, or using just a couple.
 - Ask your learners to compare the thoughts from their previous discussion with the impacts described on the resource cards.
 - Ask them to consider and discuss the immediate and on-going (either long-term or incalculable) impacts.
 - Ask them to diamond rank the impacts, from the most terrible at the top, to the potentially easiest to recover from. Consider if this might alter for different individuals within the community such as a vulnerable person, a business owner, a local teacher, a family, and so on.
 - Can they sort the cards under the 3 impact headings of immediate, long-term or incalculable? Who might be affected in this way? For example, a local business, an adult, a child, a family, the whole community, the nation, or even the world?
 - Give one card per learner or pair. They can role play a person from the affected community, talking about the impact of their card.
 - Drill down more deeply into the impacts and the associated knock on effects. For example, depression due to dealing with the overwhelming effects of a wildfire might lead to inability to hold down a job, possibly resulting in homelessness. Someone affected by depression may require medication and other support to manage their condition which will have a financial impact on our health services.
 - In three groups, give each group one of the heading titles – immediate, long-term and incalculable. Ask each group to work together to write and present the story of their allotted impacts. What are the impacts, the affects, and who do they effect? Can anything be done to reduce the impacts?



6. Your learners may want to reflect on some of the questions below and access further research as they deliberate. How do they think they would cope with each of the impacts?
 - Who could be impacted? Particular members of the community or everyone?
 - What actions might they need to take for each of the impacts? Allow research time.
 - How long could some of these impacts affect their own or other people's lives?
 - How many of these impacts could a member of the community, or the whole community, have to deal with?
 - What other possible problems could these impacts cause and how might they affect different, more vulnerable people in the community. You can link this to our [Activity plan – Feelings on fire](#).
 - Can they think of any other impacts to add to the cards?
7. Ask your learners to feedback and discuss their findings. Can they think of three words to describe the overall impacts of wildfire?

Suggested key questions

- What damage can be caused by a wildfire?
- How does damage caused by a wildfire possibly affect individuals and a community?
- What could individuals or a community do to manage and minimise the impacts, following a wildfire?
- Can individuals or a community ever fully recover from the effects of a wildfire?

Adapting for different needs/abilities

More support

- Discuss several of the resource cards as a whole group, getting everyone to feed in ideas.
- Reduce the number of cards to be discussed.

More challenge

- Ask each pair or group to present their findings to the wider group.
- Discuss how different members of the community might deal with these impacts and compare the experiences.
- Ask the learners to use the cards to create a flowchart showing the impacts of wildfire, from immediate to incalculable.
- Complete alongside our [Activity plan – Feelings on fire](#)

Follow up activity/extension

Why not try our:

- [Activity plan – Wildfire evacuation](#)
- [Activity plan – 3 C's of wildfire](#)

Learning in, learning about, and learning for the natural environment.

Looking for more learning resources, information and data?

Please contact: education@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk or go to <https://naturalresources.wales/learning>

Alternative format; large print or another language, please contact: enquiries@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk 0300 065 3000

