

# Firefighters



Written by Sara Oldfield



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## How to use this book

The Alphakids Plus teacher editions support teachers as they guide children's reading and thinking during one or more guided reading sessions. Teachers can observe children as they read and choose from the given suggestions to suit individual needs.

### Before reading

#### Setting the context, front cover and title page:

The suggestions help teachers to set the scene and prepare children for reading the book. Prompts help to determine children's prior knowledge. Where necessary, background information is provided. Teachers are encouraged to check that children understand the vocabulary listed and to discuss the meanings and/or the structures of these words. Previous experiences with similar text types may also be discussed.

### During reading

#### Predict, Read, Reflect:

Questions encourage children to engage with the text by making predictions. They then read a section of the text and reflect on what they have read. The focus is on the content, language and text features of the book.

#### Observe and support:

Prompts help teachers to focus on the strategies children use as they read. Teachers can then select from and adapt the suggestions according to the needs of the individual child. The suggestions aim to develop a child's reading abilities. Interruptions to the child's reading should be minimal.

### After reading

#### A selection of reading and writing activities:

The last pages of the teacher edition provide follow-up activities and include the assessment focus.

## Selected text features

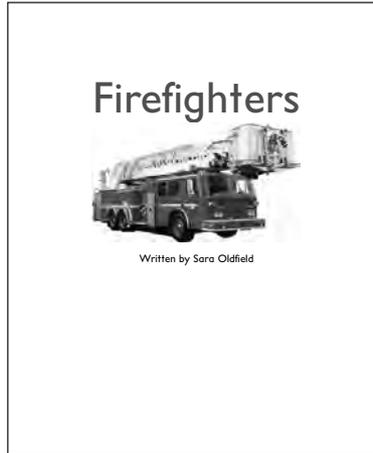
- Labelled photographs of fire fighting equipment are shown
- A contents page is provided
- A glossary is provided
- Technical language is used: firefighters, vehicles, sirens, ladder truck, fire engine, ladder company, engine company, fire hydrants, smoke ejector, medical supplies, fire resistant, reflective strips, back burning

## Vocabulary

back burning, bushfires, communication, firefighters, engine company, explosions, fire engine, fire hydrants, fire resistant, flashing lights, helicopters, hoses, ladder company, ladders, ladder truck, masks, radio, reflective strips, sirens, smoke ejector, vehicles

## Setting the context

*Have you ever seen a fire on TV? How was the fire put out?  
Who helps to put out fires? How do they do it?*



## Front cover and title page

*What sort of book do you think this is?  
Can you tell me what made you think so?  
How do the pictures on the cover and the  
title page help you guess what it will be  
about?*

## **Predict**

Turn to the contents page.

*What is the heading on this page? What does it tell us?*

*How is a table of contents organised?*

*What will we read about on page 5?*

*What is an introduction? Why would the author include an introduction?*

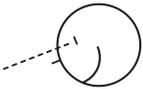
## **Read** to the end of page 5.

## **Reflect**

*What did the author need to know to write the introduction?*

*How would an author compile a table of contents?*

*Can you show me how to use the table of contents?*



## **Observe and support**

Ask one child to read aloud to you while the others are reading silently. Can the child read the text fluently?

*Try to make it sound as if you are talking to someone.*



## Contents

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## Introduction

Fires can be dangerous.

Firefighters know how to fight fires. They help to save the lives of people who are trapped by the smoke and flames.

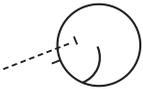
● **Predict**

*Look at the photo on page 7. Why is this photo blurred?  
What does it tell you about what the truck is doing?  
What would the lights on the vehicle be doing?  
What sound would the siren be making?  
What will the firefighters do once they arrive at the fire?*

● **Read** to the end of page 8.

● **Reflect**

*Can you find the word 'siren' on the labelled photograph? What does it mean? Why do fire vehicles need a siren?  
What do firefighters do when they arrive at a fire?  
How do they organise themselves?*



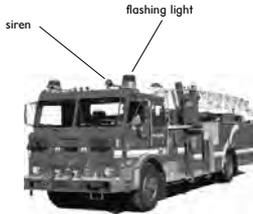
**Observe and support**

Does the child check a range of information on the page to assist with problem solving?  
*I noticed that you looked at the picture as you were working that out. What did you notice that helped you to work out that sentence?*

## Getting to a fire

When there is a fire in a building, firefighters arrive in fire vehicles as quickly as they can.

They use the sirens and flashing lights on their vehicles so that cars on the road know to move out of their way.



6



7

## At the fire

When they get to the fire, the firefighters search for people who may be trapped in the building and try to control the flames.

The firefighters work in two teams.

One team uses a ladder truck. This team is called the ladder company.

The other team uses a fire engine. This team is called the engine company.

The ladder company and the engine company work together to fight the fire.



8

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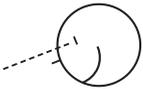
● **Predict**

*How will the ladder company use their ladders?  
How will the engine company help to fight the fire?*

● **Read** to the end of page 13.

● **Reflect**

*Was there anything about the information that was confusing?  
Can you tell me in your own words what the ladder company does at the fire?  
What does the engine company do?*



**Observe and support**

*Can the child understand inferences in the text?  
Why do firefighters need to work in teams? Is one team more important than the other, or are both teams equally important?*

## Ladder trucks and the ladder company

Ladder trucks carry ladders of different heights. The ladders can be raised so firefighters can reach people or fires that are high up. The ladders can be raised as high as 30 metres.

A built-in hose runs all the way to the top of the ladder so that water can be directed at the fire from up high.



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When firefighters arrive at a burning building, the ladder company searches for people who may be trapped inside.

They use their ladders to climb into high windows.

They cut holes in windows and the roof to let out smoke, heat or gases.

This helps to prevent dangerous explosions.



11



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## Fire engines and the engine company

Fire engines carry hoses for spraying water over the fire.

The engine company attaches the hoses to fire hydrants. Then they use the hoses to spray water over the flames until the fire is out.

They also spray water on any nearby buildings to stop the fire from spreading.



A fire hydrant

13

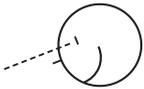
● **Predict**

*What sorts of equipment and clothing do firefighters need?  
Why do you think so?*

● **Read** to the end of page 17.

● **Reflect**

*How was the information in these two sections provided?  
(Captions, labelled photographs)  
What did you learn from these sections?  
Are there any words that you don't understand?  
How could you find out what they mean?*



**Observe and support**

Is the child able to explain the function of different text features on the page?  
*What does this diagram show? What does this caption tell us?*

## Equipment

Fire trucks carry many tools to help firefighters force their way into buildings and ventilate areas that are full of smoke. They use a smoke ejector to blow smoke out of a building. A smoke ejector is like a large fan.

Fire trucks also carry medical supplies for people who are hurt.



## Clothing

Firefighters wear thick, heavy clothing when they are working so that they can get close to the fire without getting hurt.

They wear coats and pants made of fire resistant material. They also wear boots, gloves and helmets. They use masks so that they don't breathe in smoke or dangerous gases.



● **Predict**

*Why do firefighters use radios?*

*What do you know about bushfires?*

*What information do you think the author will include in this section?*

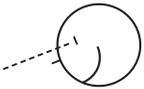
● **Read** to the end of page 21.

● **Reflect**

*Was any of the information confusing or can you explain it all in your own words?*

*What does ‘radio communication’ mean?*

*What is back burning and why is it necessary?*



**Observe and support**

Does the child use their knowledge of phonics to support their reading?

Point out the word ‘helicopters’.

*How did you know how to read this word? What did you check at the start of the word? What did you look for at the end of the word? What else did you check?*

## Radios

Firefighters use radios to keep in touch with each other during a fire.

Wind can make fires flare up or change direction in seconds. It is very important that this information can be passed on to all the firefighters.

Radio communication in a fire helps to save lives.



## Bushfires

Not all fires are in cities or buildings. Sometimes there are big fires in forests and bush. These fires are called bushfires.

Firefighters sometimes use helicopters to drop large amounts of water on bushfires.

They also light small fires to burn up all the fuel in the area. Then there is no fuel left for the bushfire to burn, and it goes out. This is called back burning.

If the firefighters cannot control the fire, they make sure that everyone leaves the area safely.

Then they wait until the fire gets smaller before they try to put it out.



● **Predict**

*What is a conclusion?*

*What type of information will be included? Why?*

● **Read** to the end of page 23.

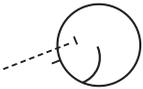
● **Reflect**

*What do you think were the main points of this report?*

*Were they included in the conclusion?*

*Is there any other information that could have been included? Why?*

*What did you learn about firefighters that you didn't know before reading this book?*



**Observe and support**

Can the child understand the literal meaning of the text?

*What are firefighters trained to do?*

*Why do they wear protective clothing?*



## Conclusion

Firefighters are trained to fight fires.

They know how to use fire vehicles and rescue equipment. Sometimes they even use helicopters.

They wear special clothing to protect them from smoke, flames and dangerous gases.

23

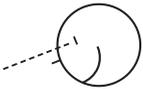
● **Predict**

*What does this heading say?  
What is a glossary? Why is it needed?*

● **Read** to the end of page 24.

● **Reflect**

*How is the glossary organised?  
What does it tell us?  
Why did the author choose to explain these words?*



**Observe and support**

*Can the child explain the purpose of a glossary?  
What is this page called? What is it for?  
Can you tell me what 'fire resistant' means?*



## Glossary

**back burn** to light a small fire which burns up the fuel in an area. Back burning can help to stop a large bushfire from spreading.

**fire hydrant** an upright pipe in the street. A fire hose can be attached to a fire hydrant. Water flows from underground pipes into the fire hydrant and then through the fire hose.

**fire resistant** material that will not easily catch fire. Firefighters wear coats and pants made of fire resistant material to help them stay safe in a fire.

**reflective** material that reflects light. Firefighters wearing reflective clothing can be seen in dark or smoky places.

**smoke ejector** a large fan used by firefighters to blow smoke out of a room or a building.

## After reading

### Being a meaning maker

Encourage the children to support their answers with evidence from the book as they discuss these questions:

*What is a ladder company? What does it do?*

*How do firefighters put out fires?*

*What is back burning?*

*Why is fighting fires dangerous?*

### Being a code breaker

Children may like to explore the following language feature:

- the sound /i/: fire, heights, high, hydrants, fight, lives, light, arrive, sirens

### Being a text user

Have the children consider the glossary.

*What does this tell us?*

*How do we use it?*

*How is a glossary organised?*

### Being a text critic

*Who do you think the author wrote this book for?*

*What makes you think that?*

*Did you like the book? Why?*

## Responding to text



Children could work in cooperative groups to perform role plays of what happens when someone reports a fire. The performance should include the correct technical vocabulary and demonstrate an understanding of the concepts outlined in the book.



Children could use fabric scraps and coloured paper to make a collage of a firefighter. Encourage the use of labels to describe clothing and equipment.



Children could make lists of words with the sound /i/. These could be grouped according to the letters used to represent the sound.

Example:

i-e	eigh	igh	y
fire arrive sirens	height	high	hydrants

## Writing links

### Shared writing

Select a photograph from the text to discuss. Choose one key word to describe it. Then write a sentence about the photograph that includes the key word. Children could then select a photograph from the book to discuss with a partner and try the process themselves. This activity could be extended by asking children to write 4 or 5 key words for each photograph.

### Independent writing

Children could make a flow chart showing how firefighters go about fighting fires. Encourage them to use labelled illustrations to explain their chart.

## Possible assessment focus

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Can the child:

- explain the purpose of a glossary and show how to use it?
- explain how firefighters work to fight fires?



whole text activity



sentence activity



word activity



## Teacher Edition

**Topic:** People who help us

**Curriculum link:** SOSE

**Text type:** Explanation

**Reading level:** 24

**Word count:** 566

**Vocabulary:** back burning, bushfires, communication, firefighters, engine company, explosions, fire engine, fire hydrants, fire resistant, flashing lights, helicopters, hoses, ladder company, ladders, ladder truck, masks, radio, reflective strips, sirens, smoke ejector, vehicles

### Possible literacy focus

Reading and understanding the features of a glossary.

Interpreting the text to understand how firefighters fight fires.

### Summary

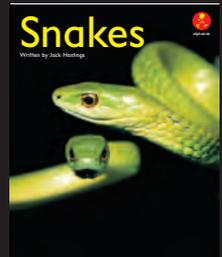
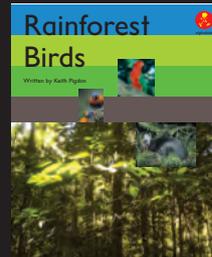
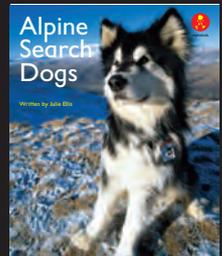
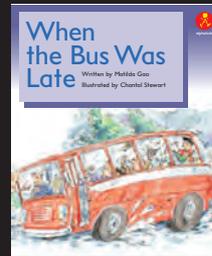
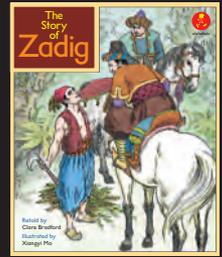
This book explains how firefighters fight fires.

ISBN 0-7253-3298-0



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## Other books at this level



alphakids