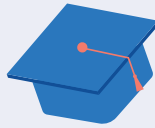


# FireSmart™ BC Education Program

 **BRITISH COLUMBIA**  
**FireSmart™** (Grades 4–6)



# Lesson Two

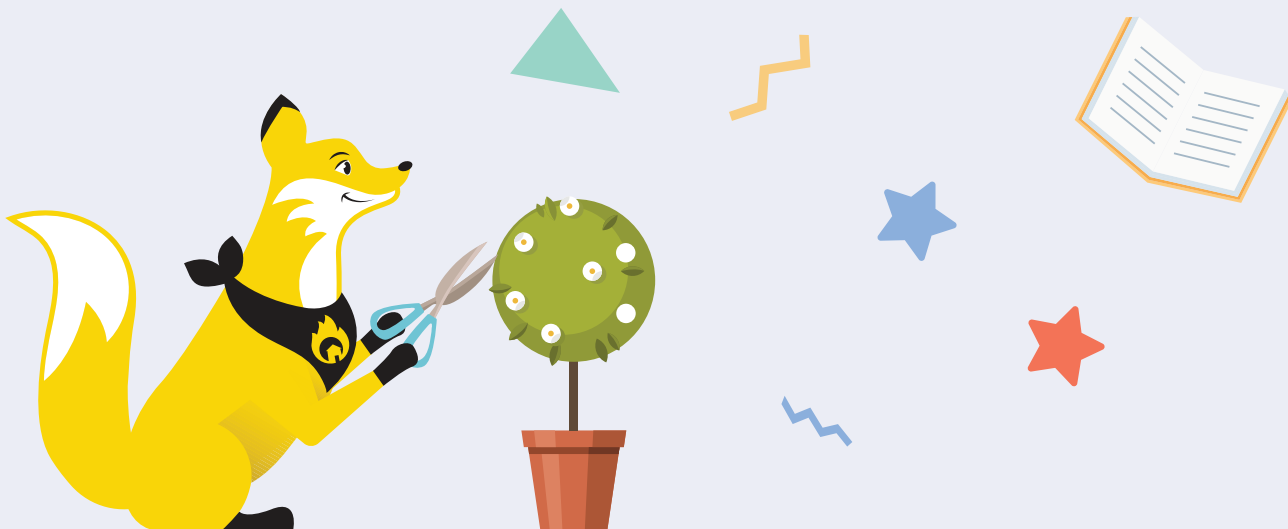


In this lesson, students will explore aspects of First Peoples' relationships with fire to identify important lessons that can be learned about using fire to care for the land. Students collect or create relevant images and use them to show and describe important lessons to be learned from First Peoples' relationships with fire.

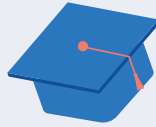
Consider taking the opportunity to begin this lesson by acknowledging the traditional territories upon which the class is learning. Model for students taking time to think about what the land acknowledgement means. Share how you show respect and honour for the peoples and the land and invite them to do the same.

While this lesson does include some examples of First Peoples' perspectives and knowledge about fire, please be mindful of the following when using this lesson:

- Students can use the thinking strategies in this lesson to learn more from local First Peoples' knowledge and stories. Consider inviting Elders and Knowledge Keepers into the classroom to provide local examples as the content for this lesson, remembering to respect that not all First Peoples' knowledge can be shared.
- Follow proper protocols when inviting an Elder or a Knowledge Keeper to the classroom. Your school or district likely has guidelines for collaborating with local First Peoples.



# Lesson Two



## Lesson Question:

What are the most important lessons about using fire to care for the land that we can learn from First Peoples?

## Lesson Challenge:

Design a collage or visual that shows important lessons we can learn from First Peoples about how fire can be used to care for the land.

## Suggested Materials

- **Activity Sheet A:** Thinking About the Effects of Fire (one copy for each student)
- **Activity Sheet B:** Learning Important Lessons About Fire (one copy for each small group)
- **Briefing Sheet A:** First Peoples' Relationship With Fire (one or two copies for each small group)
- Large sheets of paper or digital tools for creating a collage or illustration
- Scissors, glue, and markers for creating the collage or illustration if it is not done digitally

## Big Ideas

- Earth materials change as they move through the rock cycle and can be used as natural resources. (Grade 5 Science)
- The pursuit of valuable natural resources has played a key role in changing the land, people, and communities of Canada. (Grade 4 Social Studies)
- Interactions between First Peoples and Europeans lead to conflict and cooperation, which continue to shape Canada's identity. (Grade 4 Social Studies)
- Natural resources continue to shape the economy and identity of different regions of Canada. (Grade 5 Social Studies)
- Canada's policies and treatment of minority peoples have negative and positive legacies. (Grade 5 Social Studies)
- Systems of government vary in their respect for human rights and freedoms. (Grade 6 Social Studies)



## Start the Thinking



1. Organize students into pairs or small groups and provide each student with a copy of Thinking About the Effects of Fire (Activity Sheet A).
2. Guide students' attention to the "My First Ideas" section of the activity sheet and introduce the question "How helpful are fires for the land?" Invite groups to suggest what the word land might refer to or include. As students share, suggest that land is much more than the ground we walk on. The word land can include the earth, air, and all living and non-living members of ecosystems and habitats.
3. Invite students to make an initial decision: How helpful are fires for the land? Encourage groups to discuss possible answers, then direct individual students to make their decision by marking the line on the activity sheet.
4. Prompt groups to share highlights of their discussion with the class. As groups share, introduce the lesson question, "What are the most important lessons about using fire to care for the land that we can learn from First Peoples?" Briefly explain that First Peoples have long used fire to care for the land.
5. Share the lesson challenge with students and explain that they will design a collage or illustration to show and describe important lessons that we can learn from First Peoples about how fire can be used to care for the land.

## Grow the Thinking



1. If students haven't already completed the FireSmart lesson "What important lessons can we learn about fire from First Peoples?," consider beginning this section by using the first five steps and Activity Sheet A from that lesson. These steps can help students understand the criteria for an important lesson. An important lesson can help us:
  - understand something better.
  - think about something differently.
  - change our actions and behaviours.
2. Provide groups with one copy of Learning Important Lessons About Fire (Activity Sheet B) and at least one copy of First Peoples' Relationship With Fire (Briefing Sheet).
3. Briefly explain that since time immemorial, First Peoples have used cultural burning, or small and controlled fires, as an important part of their relationship with the land. Unfortunately, these practices were made illegal by the government of British Columbia in 1874 (cultural burning was made illegal in other provinces in the early 1900s).



4. For older students, consider showing the video History of Fire for a description of cultural burning (<https://tinyurl.com/bdfx7z6h>). Invite groups to watch and listen for important lessons that can be learned from First Peoples about how fire can be used to care for the land. Prompt groups to note the lessons on the activity sheet. Other videos that can be used include the following:
  - A Conversation With Fire Keepers: <https://prescribedfire.ca/cultural-burning/>
  - Indigenous Cultural Burning—Shackan: <https://tinyurl.com/5auasmb7>
5. Ask groups to read Briefing Sheet A and identify important lessons about relationships with fire. Remind students to use the criteria for an important lesson to guide their thinking. Prompt groups to note any important lessons on the activity sheet.
6. Invite groups to share their thinking with the class. As groups share, guide students in revisiting their first ideas on Activity Sheet A. Prompt students to answer the question again, this time using their learning and the criteria to guide their decision-making.
7. Guide students' attention to the bottom of the activity sheet. Ask them to choose at least three important ideas that can be learned from First Peoples about how fire can be used to care for the land. Students will use these ideas to create their collage or illustration.

## Reflect on the Thinking



1. Invite students to reflect on their thinking about using fire to care for the land: What new ideas about how First Peoples used fire did they learn? What changed the most in their thinking about fire?
2. Review some of the features they should consider when creating their collage illustration. A powerful collage or illustration
  - thoughtfully answers the question
  - effectively uses visual features including space, colour, shapes, titles, and words
3. Allow time for students to build their collage and illustration, encouraging them to seek guidance from the teacher or peers as they illustrate and describe the important lessons from First Peoples about how fire can be used to care for the land.
4. Consider inviting Knowledge Keepers and Elders to visit the class and provide additional wisdom about how fire can be used to care for the land.

# Activity Sheet A: Thinking About the Effects of Fire

## My First Ideas

How helpful are fires for the land?



Reasons for my answer:

## My Final Ideas

How helpful are fires for the land?



Reasons for my answer:

# Activity Sheet A: Thinking About the Effects of Fire

## Ideas for My Collage or Illustration



Important Lessons  
From First Peoples

Ways That I Can Show  
and Describe the Lessons

# Activity Sheet B: Learning Important Lessons About Fire

Benefits of Cultural Burning	Important Lessons to Be Learned



# Activity Sheet B: Learning Important Lessons About Fire

Benefits of Cultural Burning	Important Lessons to Be Learned



# Briefing Sheet A:

## First Peoples' Relationship With Fire

Since time immemorial, First Peoples have understood that fire is an important part of healthy habitats and ecosystems. When used with care and respect, fire can play an important role in ecosystems. First Peoples' use of cultural burning, or small and controlled fires, is an important part of their relationship with the land. Unfortunately, these helpful practices were made illegal by the government of British Columbia in 1874.

First Peoples use traditional knowledge to carefully manage both the possible benefits and the harms caused by fires. This is done by:

- practising **cultural burning**, which is the intentional lighting of small, controlled fires to improve the health of vegetation and animals that provide food, clothing, and ceremonial items.
- setting relatively small and controlled fires that help create firebreaks in forests and grasslands.
- using small fires to prevent large fires. It is hard for wildfires to cross firebreaks since the fuel—the dried-up grasses, branches, shrubs, and other burnable vegetation—has already burned. In areas where cultural burning has been used, there have been fewer large wildfires.
- using knowledge of the seasons to choose the safest times for burning. Cultural burns are usually done in the spring or autumn.
- seeing fire as an important way of increasing biodiversity.

# Briefing Sheet A:

## First Peoples' Relationship With Fire

- using fires to improve habitats and ecosystems. For example:
  - burning young trees and brush to create and maintain meadows that attract deer and elk.
  - burning undergrowth to control small shrubs that can keep berry plants from growing.
  - burning areas of oak trees to create smoke that kills insects such as bark beetles, which can damage trees.
  - burning dry leaves to kill biting insects, clear trails for travel, and flush out game during hunts.

