

Ask and Answer Questions

To be sure you understand what you read, ask questions about the text. If you have trouble answering the question, reread the section. At the end of an expository text, ask: *What is the main idea?* Then find details to support your answer.



Find Text Evidence

To check your understanding of the section “Destructive and Productive” on page 339, you might ask yourself, *What is the main idea?*

page 339

Like a big storm, the destructive power of wildfires is terrifying. On the other hand, naturally occurring wildfires are also productive forces. Whether their flames race through a forest, a prairie, or acres of brush, these fires produce necessary changes in their environment. Like rain, they can allow new life to flourish.

The main idea is that wildfires are both destructive and productive. Details such as how wildfires in a forest or prairie produce necessary changes help support the main idea.

Your Turn

COLLABORATE



Ask and answer a question about the information in the section “Benefits of Naturally Occurring Wildfires” on page 339. Use this strategy as you read.

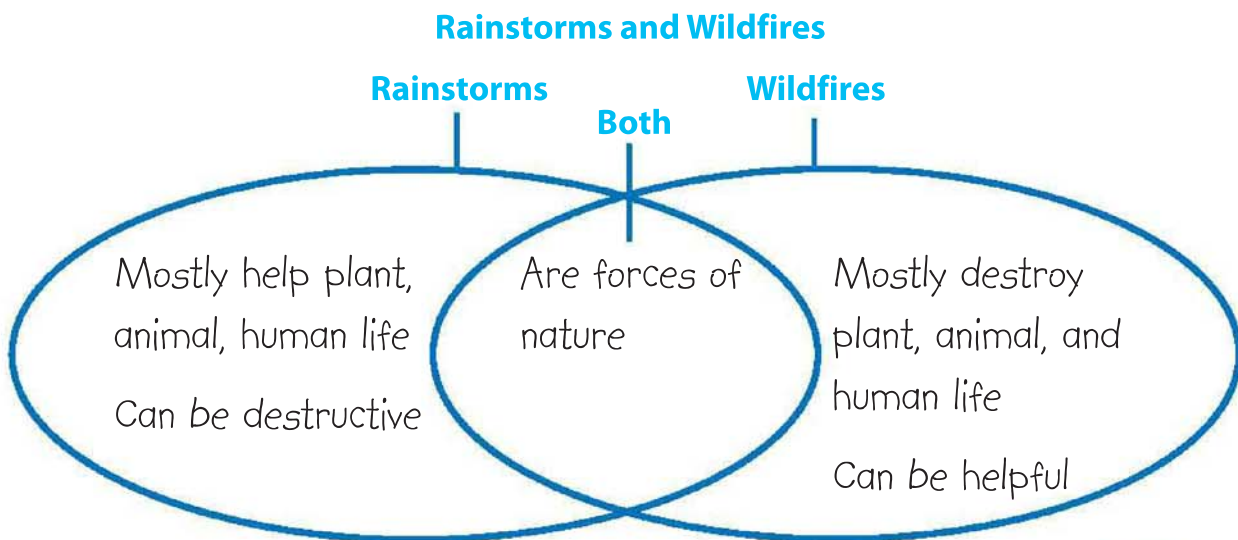
Compare and Contrast

Writers may organize a text to show how an idea is similar to or different from another idea. To figure out if a writer is using a compare-and-contrast structure, look for signal words and phrases such as *however*, *on the other hand*, and *just as*.



Find Text Evidence

The first section tells how wildfires are both like storms and unlike storms. This comparison helps me understand that both forces of nature have uses. Wildfires may be mostly destructive, but, like storms, they can be useful, too.



Your Turn

COLLABORATE



Reread "The Human Factor" on page 341. Compare and contrast the impact that humans have on fires as described in this section.

Go Digital! Use the interactive graphic organizer

Expository Text

The selection "Forests on Fire" is expository text.

Expository text:

- Gives information about a topic
- Develops the topic with facts, examples, and explanations
- May include graphs and photographs



Find Text Evidence

I can tell that "Forests on Fire" is expository text. The selection gives facts about the causes of wildfires and explains more about them. Photographs, captions, and a graph add information.

page 341

The Human Factor

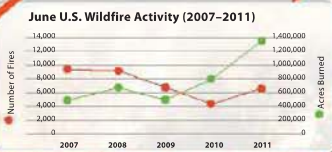
Although wildfires have benefits, they also are feared and misunderstood. As a result, our government tried to suppress them completely throughout the 20th century. This policy had a negative **impact** on the environment. The **gradual** buildup of decayed vegetation provided more fuel to feed fires. Consequently, wildfires became **noticeably** fiercer.

More recently, the government has used two different strategies to manage wildfires. One is to try to limit fires before they burn out of control. The other is to set small

"prescribed" fires to reduce the amount of fuel in the environment. Hopefully, the danger of catastrophic fires is now **receding**.

Unfortunately, human carelessness, such as a campfire left to smolder, also can start a fire. While a natural or prescribed wildfire can be beneficial, this is not true of fires that result from malice or mistakes. These happen at times and places that may cause irreparable damage to plant, animal, and human life. Fires cannot control themselves, so humans will always have to figure out how best to handle them.

Whether wildfires are small or large, firefighters are needed to help contain them.



Make Connections

Talk about how wildfires change the environment for plants. **ESSENTIAL QUESTION**

Why is it important for you to be careful around a fire of any kind, even in a home? **TEXT TO SELF**

Photographs Photographs provide visual information. **Captions** also add information.

Graphs A graph is a diagram that shows numerical information, including changes over time. A title tells what the graph will show.

COLLABORATE



Your Turn

Discuss the graph on page 341. What may have caused so many acres to burn in 2011?

Context Clues

Sometimes you can figure out the meaning of unfamiliar or multiple meaning words by looking for **clues in the paragraph**. You may see a synonym, an antonym, or a comparison that can help you define a word that puzzles you.



Find Text Evidence

When I read "Stability and Diversity" on page 340, the phrases new seedlings and small trees refer to trees in early life. Since mature trees have been untouched by fire for years, the word mature must mean "fully grown or developed."

For example, a forest recently struck by fire will have **new seedlings**. Not far away, in a forest struck by fire twenty years earlier, there may be **small trees**. And nearby, there may be a forest of **mature trees**, **untouched by fire for years**.



Your Turn

COLLABORATE



Use context clues to figure out the meaning of the following words in "Forests on Fire":

productive, page 339

regenerate, page 339

diversity, page 340



Readers to . . .

A writer **develops a topic**, or central idea, with details. To engage readers, writers often include facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, and examples that develop and explain a topic. All the details in the text relate to the topic and expand on it.

Expert Model

Develop a Topic

Identify details the writer uses to develop the topic of wildfires' benefits.

Wildfires have happened throughout history, and they help to regenerate Earth and its species. When vegetation decays, wildfires clear it away so that new plant life can grow. Fire also releases nutrients back into the soil. And by eliminating leafy canopies of mature trees, fire allows nourishing sunlight to reach a forest floor.

Often, this new plant life will be better adapted to fire than what existed before. Some species will have fire resistant roots, leaves, or bark. Other species will actually depend on fire to reproduce and thrive.

Writers



Editing Marks

- ^ Add
- ^ Add a comma.
- ✂ Take out.
- sp Check spelling.
- ≡ Make a capital letter.

Marcus wrote an expository text about a change he has observed in nature. Read his revision of this section.

Student Model

Autumn Leaves

Why do the trees change color every fall? By the end of summer, the leaves

look tired. they're dry from the summer sun. They're a dull green.

Then, one day, I'll notice a gold maple leaf in the middle of the green ones.

Soon, all the trees are dressed up in brilliant colors, as if covered in

a red and gold patchwork quilt. Not only do

we get great colors—the trees

get a rest from all that growth!



Grammar Handbook

Adjectives

See page 466.

Your Turn

COLLABORATE



- How does Marcus use concrete details and examples to develop his topic?
- Look at the adjectives Marcus used.
- Tell how revisions improved Marcus's writing.

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