

Graphic Novels Project

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Title: *The Great Chicago Fire*
Publisher: Capstone Press, Minnesota
Copyright: 2006
ISBN: 0-7368-5480-0
Themes: history, Great Chicago Fire
Target Grade Level: 4th

Book Summary:

The Great Chicago Fire is a graphic interpretation that tells the story of a dry city mostly built with wood and how a fire started in Patrick and Catherine O'Leary's barn on the night of Saturday, October 7, 1871. The fire alarm sounded but the central fire office did not receive it. They sounded another alarm that they thought was close by but firefighters could not find the flames. More alarms were supposed to be sounded but some thought it would just confuse the situation. Others thought they didn't need help. The fire raged through Chicago's poor and rich, North and South sides. By 3 o'clock am, on Tuesday, October 10th, rain began to fall, which finally stopped the blaze. This fire killed 300 people and left 100,000 homeless. This graphic novel has given this story an updated look with action packed illustrations in comic book style. The illustrations are very detailed and crisp with bright and realistic colorful images.

Activity Objectives:

- The students will have already read several non-fiction books on the Great Chicago Fire (see bibliography) since this is a cumulative lesson.
- The students will use the reading strategies (predict, visualize, connect, summarize, infer, and synthesize) to read the graphic novel version of *The Great Chicago Fire*.
- The students will utilize a KWL chart to evaluate what they Know, What they want to know, and what they have learned about the Great Chicago Fire.
- The students will use the graphic novel version, along with the information gathered from previous sources to create a timeline about the events before, during, and after the Great Chicago Fire.

Getting Ready:

The teacher will review the information already learned about the Great Chicago Fire from books, videos, magazines, news clippings, and websites.

Vocabulary:

graphic novel	fire alarm box	fire watch office	tenement
non-fiction	water works	bustling	calamity

Activities:

During whole class discussion, the students will fill out an individual KWL chart along with the teacher's chart. They will write what they Know, and what they Want to know by reading the graphic novel version of *The Great Chicago Fire*. In small, guided reading groups, the students will read the graphic novel version of *The Great Chicago Fire*. The students will complete their KWL chart by filling in what they Learned. Their cumulative activity will be to create a timeline of the Great Chicago Fire. They will plan, prepare, and present these projects to the class.

Extensions:

- Students will compare and contrast other non-fiction books they read about the Great Chicago Fire by using a Venn Diagram.
- Students will learn about 9-11 and create a graphic novel version of this disaster.
- Students will compare and contrast the Great Chicago Fire to 9-11.
- Students could visit museum exhibits about this topic.
- Students could visit a local firehouse and learn more about fire disasters and safety.

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN**Analyze Learners:**General Characteristics

This fourth grade class consists of 30 students, 17 boys and 13 girls. 25% of the students are from different races including Hispanic, Asian, and Polish, and Middle-eastern, while the remaining 75% are Caucasian. One student is pull-out Instructional for a learning disability and three students receive LD Resource push-in services. Ten students are in the SOAR reading program, two students attend speech, two students receive TPI services, and two are in Occupational Therapy.

Entry Competencies

Having studied the Great Chicago Fire, the students have the knowledge base required to enter the lesson. We have discussed the technical vocabulary for the lesson. They have not mastered the skills that I want to teach which is reading for understanding, extracting information, and preparing a project of all they have learned. One bias that the students may have is how the Great Chicago Fire got started, many still believe the myth that it was the O'Leary's cow.

Learning Styles

This lesson begins with whole class discussion and lecture. Then students are reading and talking in small groups. They will then work individually to prepare their project. Most students in the class learn best when all learning styles are present. For auditory learners, much discussion will take place, reading will be aloud, and oral directions to the assignment will be given. For the visual, they will have a copy of the KWL and book, and example projects will be shown and passed around. For the kinesthetic, students will be writing a KWL chart, contributing in small group discussion, and working on this project individually which will include hands-on materials and presentation.

State Objectives:

- Given a KWL chart worksheet, a pencil, and seeing the class KWL chart, students will list what they Know and what they Want to know about the Great Chicago Fire. (Cognitive)
- Given a copy of the graphic novel *The Great Chicago Fire*, students will read and participate in a small group discussion about the novel, recalling factual information included in the novel. (Interpersonal)
- Given their KWL chart, students will finish filling in what they Learned after reading the graphic novel. (Cognitive)
- Upon completion of the KWL chart and the reading of the graphic novel, students will plan, prepare, and present a short presentation of the product of a timeline, either using materials or PowerPoint about the dates and times they learned when reading *The Great Chicago Fire*. (Psychomotor/ Intrapersonal/Affective)

Select Methods, Media, and Materials:

Methods – whole class discussion and some lecture, small group work, and independent work

Media – computer (PowerPoint presentations and internet sources), movie clips, newspapers, and magazines

Materials – KWL chart, chart markers, KWL chart worksheet, pencils, five copies of the graphic novel *The Great Chicago Fire* (for small group instruction and reading), sentence strips, note cards, glue, tape, scissors, colors, computers

Utilize Methods, Media, and Materials:

Methods – The class will meet in the reading corner on the floor for whole class discussion and lecture. Then we will move to desks when we fill out the KWL chart. The students will meet in the back of the room at the reading table for small group work. The students will use their desks, the floor, and the computer workstations for independent work.

Media – The students have previewed many of the media pieces available – these items are still available for perusal. For their presentations, students will use the computer workstations available to them to make a PowerPoint presentation if they decide to do that.

Materials – The materials mentioned above will be easily available for all students. Students will be encouraged to think outside of the box while filling in their KWL charts. They will also be asked to act out parts of the book to better understand the story.

Require Learner Participation:

Each student will be required to engage themselves in this lesson on the Great Chicago Fire. The students will also participate in whole group discussion, making of the KWL chart, and small group reading and discussion. They will listen and actively answer questions asked by the teacher and other students. They will be asked to share their rough drafts of their timeline with me before starting on their final project. Students will present their finished products to the class.

Evaluate and Revise:

Evaluate Student Performance:

The students will be assessed throughout their learning by the instructor. Large group and small group discussions of the facts and materials will be informally reviewed by the instructor. Their KWL chart and presentations/final project will be graded using a rubric.

Evaluate Media Components:

Media effectiveness will be determined if the students are engaged in the lesson. It will be noted if students are able to create and present PowerPoint timelines effectively.

Evaluate Instructor Performance:

To determine whether my instruction was effective, I will evaluate how well the students understood the lesson and the project. I will also use their discussion and final graded aspects to assess whether they learned and understood some facts about the Great Chicago Fire.

Books on the Great Chicago Fire:

Balcavage, Dynise. *The Great Chicago Fire. Great Disasters, Reforms, and Ramifications.* Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 2002.

Bales, Richard F. *The Great Chicago Fire and the Myth of Mrs. O'Leary's Cow.* Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, 2002.

Cowan, David. *Great Chicago Fires: Historic Blazes that Shaped a City.* Chicago: Lake Claremont Press, 2001.

Dell, Pamela. *Liam's Watch: A Strange Story of the Great Chicago Fire.* Minnesota: Tradition, 2003.

Nobleman, Marc Tyler. *The Great Chicago Fire. We the People.* Minneapolis: Compass Point Books, 2006.