

# Fire

Upper-intermediate

## 1 Rank order

Look at these words which are all connected with fire. Sort them into order of intensity:

- |    |             |            |            |         |         |
|----|-------------|------------|------------|---------|---------|
| a. | spark       | fire       | inferno    | blaze   | flame   |
| b. | to blaze    | to flicker | to burn    | to glow |         |
| c. | smouldering | burning    | flickering | roaring | blazing |

## 2 Fill the gaps

Complete the sentences below using some of the words in exercise 1.

- It was dark so they lit the *candle*. Its tiny \_\_\_\_\_ was all they had. It \_\_\_\_\_ in the light wind.
- In the *fireplace*, there was a huge \_\_\_\_\_ fire. Tiny \_\_\_\_\_ from the fire flew up the *chimney*.
- The *bonfire* was almost out. The few remaining *logs* were \_\_\_\_\_, a little *smoke* rising from them. As he turned a log with his stick, it \_\_\_\_\_ red from the heat for a moment.
- The fire in the skyscraper was completely out of control. It was now a \_\_\_\_\_.

Describe the relationship that the words in italics have with fire?

## 3 Collocations

The words in italics all collocate with either fire or flames. Use the correct word, *fire* or *flames*, to complete each sentence:

- All of a sudden, the hot air balloon *caught* \_\_\_\_\_.
- Eventually, using blankets and towels, they were able to *put* the \_\_\_\_\_ *out*.
- He knocked over the oil heater and it just *burst into* \_\_\_\_\_.
- It was amazing. The whole place just *went up in* \_\_\_\_\_.
- Because the matches were wet he couldn't *light* the \_\_\_\_\_.
- Some children broke into the school and *set* \_\_\_\_\_ *to* the sports hall.

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## 4 Unscramble the idioms

These idiomatic expressions using the word fire are mixed up. For example, *there's no smoke without fire*. Can you sort them out?

- |   |                         |   |                      |
|---|-------------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1 | <i>There's no smoke</i> | A | <i>without fire</i>  |
| 2 | Out of the frying pan   | B | like a house on fire |
| 3 | They got on             | C | in the fire          |
| 4 | You're playing          | D | and into the fire    |
| 5 | He's got too many irons | E | with fire            |

Now match the expressions to the definitions below:

- You're in more trouble now than you were before.
- They had a lot to say to each other and became friends immediately.
- This is dangerous.
- He is trying to do too many things.
- I'm sure there is some truth in this rumour about him.

## 5 What is it?

What do you call the following?

- A device which makes a noise to warn people when there is a fire.
- An organization which has the job of putting out fires.
- The specially equipped vehicle used in putting out fires.
- An outside staircase which allows people to leave a burning building safely.
- A metal cylinder containing chemicals for putting out fires.
- A person whose job it is to put out fires.
- A length of pipe used to spray water on fires.
- An adjective to describe something which cannot be damaged by fire.

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## 6 Discussion

Work in groups of three. Yesterday there was a fire in your town. Discuss the following questions:

- Where was it?
- How did it start?
- Was it a minor fire, or a terrible blaze?

Imagine that one of you works for a local newspaper, and two of you were witnesses who saw the fire. Prepare an interview role play in which the reporter asks questions and the witnesses describe the fire. Present your interview to the class.

## 7 Newspaper article

Write an article for the local newspaper describing the fire.

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### Teacher's notes – Fire (Upper Intermediate)

1 Ask the students to work in pairs to look at the words and sort them into order of intensity.

**Answers**

- a. spark flame fire blaze inferno  
b. to flicker to glow to burn to blaze  
c. smouldering flickering burning roaring blazing

2 Ask the students to complete the sentences using some of the words in exercise 1.

**Answers**

- a. It was dark so they lit the *candle*. Its tiny flame was all they had. It flickered in the light wind.  
b. In the *fireplace*, there was a huge roaring fire. Tiny sparks from the fire flew up the *chimney*.  
c. The *bonfire* was almost out. The few remaining *logs* were smouldering, a little *smoke* rising from them. As he turned a log with his stick, it glowed red from the heat for a moment.  
d. The fire in the skyscraper was completely out of control. It was now a blazing/roaring inferno.

**The words in italics have the following connections with fire:**

A candle is made of wax and gives light when it burns.

A fireplace is where you light a fire in a house, particularly a living room.

A chimney is where the smoke from the fire in a house goes to escape.

A bonfire is a big outdoor fire made of wood, often lit on special occasions.

Logs are big pieces of wood that burn well on fires.

Smoke rises from fires.

3 Ask the students to use the correct word, fire or flames, to complete each sentence.

**Answers**

- a. fire b. fire c. flames d. flames e. fire f. fire

4 Ask the students to work in pairs to sort the idiomatic expressions out.

**Answers**

1. There's no smoke without fire. 2. Out of the frying pan into the fire.  
3. They got on like a house on fire. 4. You're playing with fire  
5. He's got too many irons in the fire.

**Ask the students to match the expressions to the definitions.**

**Answers**

- 1e, 2a, 3b, 4c, 5d

5 Ask the students to work in pairs to guess the answers. See which pair can finish first. If it's difficult, you could let students use dictionaries or write the answers on the board in a random order and see if they can match the answer to the question.

**Answers**

- a. a fire alarm b. the fire brigade/service/department c. a fire engine  
d. a fire exit e. a fire extinguisher f. a fire fighter  
g. a fire hose h. fire proof/fire resistant

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- 6 **Ask the students to work in groups of three to discuss the questions and prepare an interview role play. Ask each group to present their interview to the class.**
- 7 **Ask the students to write an article for the local newspaper describing the fire. This could be set for homework.**

These exercises were prepared using the CD-ROM from the new Macmillan English Dictionary, which was designed to make making vocabulary lessons easy for teachers. You can find out more about the dictionary and the CD in [www.onestopenglish.com](http://www.onestopenglish.com). You can also buy the dictionary from the site.