

Lesson plan 4:

Fire Danger Ratings

Background

Students need to be aware of what the Fire Danger Rating signs mean, particularly during the Fire Danger Period. Children of this age group can start to understand the basic formula behind the ratings. This should be described in simple terms.

Basic knowledge of the fire danger period being during the hot summer months (fire season), and the reasons why there are fire restrictions, will provide students with an understanding of why these boards are important. Ratings are forecast using Bureau of Meteorology data for up to four days in advance, based on weather and other environmental conditions such as fuel load. A Total Fire Ban is declared by CFA on days when fires are likely to spread rapidly and could be difficult to control. If a district has not been declared a Total Fire Ban, fire restrictions may still apply for each municipality during the Fire Danger Period.

Care should be taken not to unduly frighten them about the dangers of bushfires in their local area. Suggest the students discuss the Fire Danger Rating sign with their parents/guardians and encourage their families to think about what this may mean for them.

Ensure **Support material 1: Letter to parent/guardian** is circulated prior to your visit and that any sensitivity is considered.

Suggested teaching time

45 minutes

Objectives

To develop an understanding of Fire Danger Ratings so that students are able to:

- explain what the different colours and words mean on the Fire Danger Rating sign
- describe how this relates to their local environment
- explain why this is important during the warmer summer months and how this relates to their family and the local emergency services such as CFA

Materials needed

- **Fire Danger Rating core flute**
- **Poster: Bushfire warning signs**
- **Worksheet 46: Fire Danger Ratings Find-a-word**
- Colour paper
- Scissors
- Glue/ Blu Tack
- Coloured Pens/Pencils
- Black string

Lesson outline

1. Introduction of the Fire Danger Rating board

15 minutes

- Ask the students if they know what the Fire Danger Rating board is. Then ask them to identify where they might have seen one of these boards. Discuss what they look like (for example – colours, height and size of sign).
- Explain what they are used for in simple terms, and why they are as big as they are.
- Explain that these boards are usually placed where they can be seen easily, and ask the students why they think this is important.

2. Fire Danger Rating Word Activity

15 minutes

- Provide students with a sheet of coloured paper corresponding to a colour on the Fire Danger Rating.
- Students write a word on their sheet of paper that describes the conditions they think might correspond to that rating. Make a space in the classroom for a ‘word wall’.
- Use the black string to outline and replicate the Fire Danger Rating scale. Have the students put their word in the rating space they were given.
- Discuss this as a class once all words are placed.

3. Fire Danger Rating Find-a-Word (Optional)

15 minutes

- Students select up to 10 words from one of the ratings and create their own find-a-word (*Worksheet 46* can be used as template). These can then be exchanged and completed by other students at a later time.
- Teachers might even ask students to tailor their find-a-words for younger students.

4. Question box

Background Activity

- In small groups, students take turns to help colour/decorate a section of the question box.
- Assemble the box and place it in the classroom. Inform the students that questions they have about the Fire Danger Ratings, CFA or fires can be placed in the box, and will be answered later. The presenter may want to write down a question and place it in the box first, as an example.

Use *Support Material 4: Meet Captain Koala and friends* to introduce the characters to students.