

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 will have limited capacity to understand the formula behind the ratings, however they will be able to recognise the signs and inform others.

Basic knowledge of the Fire Danger Period being held during the warmer summer months (fire season), and the reasons why there are fire restrictions, will provide students with an understanding of why these boards are important.

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 their family plans.

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

Materials needed

- **Fire Danger Rating core flute**
- **Poster: Bushfire warning signs**
- **Worksheet 45: Fire Danger Rating Word Tree**
- Colour paper
- Scissors
- Glue/ Blu Tack
- Coloured Pens/Pencils

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. Word tree

15 minutes

- Provide students with a sheet of green paper and ask that they cut out a leaf shape (*Worksheet 45* leaf templates can be used if this is easier for the students). Make a space in the classroom for a ‘word tree’.
- Conduct a brainstorming session on related words to help this age group if needed.
- Students then write a word on their leaf that describes one of the ratings (e.g. High – Sunny). Teachers may need to help the younger ones with writing their word on their leaf.
- The leaves are then pinned on the wall of the classroom to form a tree. Brown paper can be cut to size to form the trunk.
- The leaves can be pinned on the tree randomly, or pinned with the Low-Moderate descriptive leaves on the left, and the Code Red description leaves to the far right.

3. Life in the tree (Optional)

15 minutes

- This activity is an opportunity to build on the ‘word tree’ installation and get students thinking about the impact on wildlife in these conditions. This allows them to think about how the weather might impact animals, without making it too scary.
- Students are to draw, colour-in and cut-out an animal that may live in, around or under the tree.
- The class then sits around the tree and one at a time the animals are added to the tree.

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.