

NAME _____

Wildland Fire

Read the article below and answer the questions on the back of this sheet of paper.

A wildland fire, or wildfire, is an uncontrolled fire that burns in a forest, grassland, or other sparsely populated area. In the United States and Australia, about 50,000–60,000 wildfires (also known as bushfires in Australia) burn every year. About 90 percent of wildfires are started by people, either on purpose or by accident. These fires are started by campfires, cigarettes, or other careless behavior. The remaining 10 percent of wildfires are started by lightning or lava.



A wildfire burns in southwestern California in 2007.



A firefighter shares his water with an injured koala after wildfires in Australia, February 2009.

Wildfires usually begin in the summer, when it is hot and there is little rain. This weather dries out the trees, grass, leaves, and branches. Fires can spread quickly in these fuels. The fires are often hot enough to light heavier fuels, such as tree stumps, heavy tree limbs, and the forest floor. Once these heavy fuels are burning, it is hard to put them out. Drought, heat, and wind can make a wildfire worse.

Tools for fighting wildland fires include portable pumps, tank trucks, and earth-moving equipment. Aircraft are also very important in fighting wildfires. They are used for dumping water or other chemicals that can slow down or contain wildfires. Airplanes and helicopters are also used for gathering information and for moving people, supplies, and equipment. Smoke jumpers are firefighters who parachute into wildfires in remote areas.



An airplane releases fire-fighting chemicals on a wildfire in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Using what you learned from the article, answer these five questions.

1. What is a wildland fire, also known as a wildfire?

2. List three ways the article says wildfires are started by people.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

3. When do wildfires usually begin, and why?

4. What are four tools for fighting wildfires?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. What is one fact from the article that you found most interesting?



The information in this activity is sourced from Britannica Kids and provided to schools courtesy of Central Pierce Fire & Rescue, Orting Valley Fire & Rescue, and Graham Fire & Rescue.

