File Name: I7R To Build a Fire
Informative/Explanatory
Grade 7
Range of Writing

To Build a Fire

One of the most important things in life is to know how to build a successful fire. For ages fire has been a critical part of our lives. Fire provides heat, and this is what it is mainly used for. Heat cooks food. This is also critical because some uncooked foods can cause some very nasty, unmentionable diseases. And, of course, there is aesthetics. Could one be more cheerful than roasting chesnuts over an open fire?

So, now that you're all convinced that fire is the greatest thing in the world, you probably should know how to make a successful fire. Well, I agree wholeheartedly to teaching you. So, let us go through the steps one by one.

First you need to decide where you are going to build the fire, whether it be in a woodstove, in a fireplace, or out in the open. They are all relatively the same in terms of process, but materials used can differ. The basic process is as follows.

First you need to find some newspaper, or other easily burnt materials such as birch bark, office papers, old report cards, etc. Crumple up enough of the paper to cover the bottom of your fire area (if you are using birch bark just lay a few strips down). Next you need kindling. Kindling usually is best in the form of split boards, but split wood is also fine as long as the wood is dry and not green (not in color but if wood has been cut recently it is usually referred to as "green"). About four to eight pieces should be laid on top of the paper in a criss-cross design in order to allow the fire air. See Figure 1. Note: Fire will not burn without oxygen! Do not smother it!
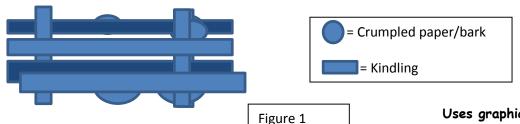
Introduces the topic / focus clearly, previewing what is to follow: The writer provides background information about the importance of fire, leading into an explanation of how to build a fire.

Organizes ideas, concepts, and information using sequence: The writer explains the process of building a fire in a step-by-step fashion

Develops the topic with appropriate accurate, **facts and concrete details** about the materials and steps needed to build a fire.

Uses precise, domain-specific vocabulary to **explain and analyze.**

Establishes and maintains a formal style.

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Figure 1

= Crumpled paper/bark

= Kindling

Uses graphic to aid comprehension

Then you need a small piece of firewood, preferably not green. This should be laid diagonally across the top of the kindling.

Well, that's the hard part. Now you just need a match. Light the paper (or bark) in a few places and watch the fire blaze. Note: The wood will need to be replenished now and then. Just lay a piece of firewood across the top of the currently burning log and it will soon start blazing Enjoy your wonderful fire wherever you are!

Uses appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify relationships among ideas and concepts

I hope that if you survive your first fire you will continue to use this wonderful power of nature safely so that all can enjoy it. And remember, 'only YOU can prevent forest fires!'

Provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the explanation presented

In this assignment, from a language arts class, students were asked to explain a concrete procedure. This writer gives some background information about fire in the introduction and then states his purpose (to explain how to build a fire), thereby previewing the sequential steps to follow.

The writer organizes the essay sequentially, explaining each step carefully. Within each chunk, the writer uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to name and accurately explain the steps in building a fire. He uses appropriate transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts, and to create cohesion. To make the steps easier for a reader to follow, he includes a graphic. This makes the writer's thinking and understanding easy to follow.

Except for a few lapses (*"only you can prevent forest fires"*), the tone of the essay is objective and the style formal—both appropriate for procedural writing. The conclusion follows from and supports the information given.