

I SURVIVED

BOOK CLUB

Name: _____

I Survived The Great Chicago Fire, 1871



LITERARY ELEMENT ACTIVITY, CONTEXT REVIEW, AND GRAPHIC NOVEL QUESTIONS

LITERARY ELEMENT ACTIVITY: Fill in the blanks below with either the problem or the solution, as needed.

PROBLEM AND SOLUTION CHART

PROBLEM	SOLUTION
1. Thieves took Oscar's suitcase, which has Papa's badge in it.	
2. Jennie and Bruno are trapped inside a burning house because the door is stuck.	
3. Bruno is getting burned by falling embers and it hurts.	
4.	Mr. Morrow and Oscar get in a rowboat instead of walking across the bridge.
5.	Oscar grabs a big piece of wood in the water and tells Mr. Morrow to hold onto it.
6.	Oscar describes Jennie and Bruno to Mr. Morrow, and Mr. Morrow draws pictures of them and has the pictures printed in the newspaper.

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LITERARY ELEMENT ACTIVITY, CONTEXT REVIEW, AND GRAPHIC NOVEL QUESTIONS *(CONTINUED)*

CONTEXT REVIEW: The *I Survived* books are works of historical fiction. Author Lauren Tarshis supplies important information at the back of each book about the events in the story and the history around these events. Use this information—called “context”—to answer the questions below.

1. Where did the Great Chicago Fire start? How much of Chicago did it destroy?

2. How did gossip harm Mrs. O’Leary?

3. What were the real causes of the fire?

4. Why couldn’t the Chicago fire department put out the fire?

5. How many people died in the fire? How many lost their homes?

6. When and how did the city recover?



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LITERARY ELEMENT ACTIVITY, CONTEXT REVIEW, AND GRAPHIC NOVEL QUESTIONS (CONTINUED)



I SURVIVED THE GREAT CHICAGO FIRE, 1871: THE GRAPHIC NOVEL

GRAPHIC NOVEL 101

WHAT'S A GRAPHIC NOVEL?

A book in which the illustrations and the text work together to tell the story. To understand what's happening, you have to read the text *and* study the pictures.

HOW DO I READ A GRAPHIC NOVEL?

On each page, start with the top row and read left to right, then repeat all the way down the page. In other words, zig-zag your way from the top left to the bottom right.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

- There are many kinds of text in a graphic novel, like speech bubbles and narration boxes.
- There are illustrated words that provide sound effects, like "MMMMMMM," "SWOOOSH," and "GROOOOOOAN."
- The illustrated boxes on the pages are called panels.

GRAPHIC NOVEL QUESTIONS: Below, analyze how three illustrations (or details in the illustrations) offer information that helps you better understand the story.



1. What do you notice about the sections that show memories or stories from Oscar's past? How do they compare to the sections that take place in Oscar's present?

2. On page 43, in the second to last panel, what is in the air above Oscar's head? Why is this important?

3. Look at the panels on pages 78-79. How does the illustrator create fear and panic in these panels? List at least three ways.

ANSWERS

LITERARY ELEMENT ACTIVITY: PROBLEM AND SOLUTION:

1. SOLUTION: When Oscar sees the girl who tricked him and helped the thieves outside the Palmer House Hotel, he chases after her.
2. SOLUTION: Oscar breaks down the door so they can get out.
3. SOLUTION: Jennie grabs a big hat off an abandoned wheelbarrow and puts it on Bruno's head.
4. PROBLEM: The bridge that Mr. Morrow and Oscar need to cross is made of wood and could catch fire at any time.
5. PROBLEM: Mr. Morrow and Oscar have to jump in the water, but Mr. Morrow can't swim.
6. PROBLEM: No one can find Jennie and Bruno after the fire.

Context Review:

1. The Great Chicago Fire started in a barn owned by the O'Leary family. It destroyed an area of the city four miles long and one mile wide.
2. The rumor that her cow started the fire somehow became "fact," and she never recovered from the hurt and shame of being unfairly blamed for the fire.
3. The real causes of the fire were: a drought that had gripped the Midwest, making the city bone dry; the city's buildings, sidewalks, and roads had been built mostly with wood.
4. The firefighters were exhausted from fighting a fire the night before. They were also sent to the wrong neighborhood due to a series of errors, giving the fire time to spread. Also, a strong wind was blowing that night that carried sparks far and wide.
5. About 300 people died in the fire. About 100,000 people lost their homes.
6. The city recovered by the early 1880s, with new buildings that followed strict building laws and were much safer for people.

Graphic Novel Questions:

1. The sections that show memories or stories from Oscar's past are not in bright color like the sections that take place in his present.
2. An ember is floating down from the sky and about to land on his head. This is important because it shows that the fire is now close, and Oscar is in danger.
3. The people in the illustrations have wide-open eyes and mouths; they are running away, trying to escape; people are reaching for each other but getting separated; one person falls and people step on her; the words BOOM BOOM BOOM create the frightening sound of the exploding warehouse.