

# Student Resource: Fire Safety and How to Build a Campfire Resource

## Fire Safety Tips

- Only build fires in areas where it is allowed. Make sure there are no fire bans.
- Check the wind - windy days are challenging for fire building.
- Only put wood in the fire. It is not a place to burn packaging or food.
- Do not add cooking oils/grease and white gas to the fire. It can flare up quickly and potentially burn out of control.
- Have a water supply ready near the fire before you light it to douse it quickly if needed.
- Don't leave the fire unattended.
- Make sure everyone knows the rules around the fire (no running or don't get too near the fire, don't throw anything into the fire).
- Only the person in charge of the fire adds wood to it when needed.
- Stop, Drop and Roll if a spark gets on your clothing.

## Fire Needs Three Things

- A heat source: matches, lighter or spark can provide the heat source
- Oxygen: there is oxygen all around in the air
- Fuel: such as newspaper, dead twigs, milkweed or cattail fluff, birchbark found on the ground, dead branches and dry wood.

## Types of Fuel Needed

- Tinder: small flammable objects that catch on fire quickly such as milkweed or cattail fluff, birchbark found on the ground, dryer lint, dry pine needles, or newspaper.
- Kindling: flammable objects that are larger than tinder but smaller than logs such as twigs, sticks and small branches. No bigger than your pinky finger.
- Chopped Wood or larger pieces of dry wood. No bigger than your wrist.

## Choosing a Spot for the Fire

- Choose a clear spot that is at least 3 meters (10 feet) in diameter. Make sure there are no low overhanging tree branches.
- Clear the firebuilding area of trip and fall hazards like rocks and brush, twigs and leaves. Make sure to sort and pile all the firewood in one place.
- Create a fire ring by arranging rocks around the perimeter.

## Steps to Make a Fire

1. Make a loose pile with your tinder. Don't pack it too tightly because oxygen needs to get to all of the tinder.
2. Use your kindling to build a structure that looks like a tepee or build a square like a log cabin. Start with small pieces first.
3. Light the tinder on all sides. Blowing gently on the fire to give it more oxygen will help it start.
4. Add larger branches and wood to the fire as it grows, making sure there is still space for oxygen to circulate through the fire. Add only one or two pieces at a time, you don't want to overwhelm the fire.
5. Put the fire out with water, sand or dirt or let it burn out completely. Don't leave it alone until the ashes are cold.
6. Clean up the fire area by scattering unused wood back into the forest so there is no trace of you being there.

(Student Resource: NPR.org, 2021)

## Reference

NPR.org. (2021) [Summer Science: How to Build a Campfire.](#)