

# The Great Chicago Fire: *Rising from the Ashes*

By Kate Hannigan ✍ Illustrated by Alex Graudins

## Teaching Guide 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grades

Inspire a love of history, encourage reluctant readers,  
explore new ideas, promote critical thinking skills  
& much more!



Based on the first in the  
*History Comics*  
series from First Second!

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First Second

Includes:

- *Lesson Plan*
- *Key Vocabulary*
- *Discussion Questions*
  - *Activities*
  - *Rubric*



## About the book

*History Comics: The Great Chicago Fire* tells the true story of how a city rose up from one of the worst catastrophes in American history, and how this disaster forever changed how homes, buildings, and communities are constructed. A deadly blaze engulfs Chicago for two terrifying days! A brother, a sister, and a helpless puppy must race through the city to stay one step ahead of the devilish inferno. But can they reunite with their lost family before it's too late?



## About the author

Kate Hannigan used to work for daily newspapers but now she writes fiction and nonfiction for young readers, digging up remarkable people from history and sharing their stories. Her work includes the middle-grade historical fantasy series, *The League of Secret Heroes*, featuring *Cape*, *Mask*, and *Boots*; the historical mystery *The Detective's Assistant*; and a picture book biography of Belva Lockwood, *A Lady Has the Floor*.



## About the illustrator

Alex Graudins is a Rhode Island-based cartoonist known for illustrating *Science Comics: The Brain*. She graduated from the School of Visual Arts' cartooning program in 2016 and has since contributed comics to sites like the Nib and CollegeHumor. In her free time, Alex likes to draw autobiographical comics about living with anxiety.



## About the curriculum writer

Eric Arnall is a special education teacher in Chicago. He has taught elementary and middle school and, before becoming a special education teacher, he was a school librarian. He has a PhD in curriculum and instruction from St. Louis University. His favorite hobbies are reading mysteries, playing tennis, and traveling. Learn more at [ScribblersBindle.com](http://ScribblersBindle.com)

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# How to use this Guide

Struggling, average, and advanced readers will LOVE Kate Hannigan’s graphic novel, *The Great Chicago Fire: Rising from the Ashes*. The text, using fictive siblings to tell about The Great Chicago Fire of 1871 and the Columbian Exposition of 1893, is informative and entertaining. Hannigan’s graphic novel is a great way to introduce a difficult topic like *scapegoating* and to get students excited about exploring history and imagining what Chicago life was like in the late 1800s.

The ideas presented in this guide can be used to plan anything from **a multi-lesson unit** to a **single lesson**. Beginning with an **essential question**, possible **objectives**, and **key vocabulary**, ideas are centered on the subject of *scapegoating* and presented chronologically according to six stages of the learning cycle:

- **Warm-Up** - Introduce the unit/lesson
- **Learn** - Establish foundational knowledge to build upon
- **Explore** - Lead students to discover information from the text
- **Wrap-up** - Provide an activity that allows students to demonstrate what they have learned
- **Assess/Evaluate** - Critique student work based on a scoring guide
- **Dive Deeper** - Challenge students with discussions and academically rigorous activities

Touch on each of these briefly to create a single lesson, use each category to create a six-lesson unit, combine them in ways to create fewer lessons, or expand each into more than one lesson. Make it work for your class, according to the time you have!

**Online resources** and **Connections to The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy** are also provided to help you meet the academic needs of your students.

# Mrs. O'Leary Was Scapegoated!



## Essential question

Why is Mrs. O'Leary's story relevant to me, my community, my nation, and our world?

## UNIT/LESSON OVERVIEW

Teaching about scapegoating and its effects will help kids recognize reasons this kind of bullying happens and strategies they can use when they see or hear a person being scapegoated, or they are the target of scapegoating. This lesson will help kids help each other, making our school communities stronger and more inclusive.

### Possible Unit/Lesson Objectives. Students will be able to:

1. Identify the factors that led to Mrs. O'Leary being blamed for the Great Chicago Fire.
2. Describe what happened after the fire that caused the scapegoating to become a common belief.
3. Reflect on scapegoating and bullying and their effects.
4. Analyze the reasons that Mrs. O'Leary was scapegoated.
5. Identify actions to prevent scapegoating and ways to affect positive change once scapegoating has begun.
6. Compare and contrast the fictive siblings, J.P. and Franny, and the characters in *Scapegoat: The Story of a Goat Named Oat and a Chewed-Up Coat*.
7. Create a GRAHPIC NOVEL that teaches about scapegoating with MODERN DAY characters.

### Key Vocabulary:

#### bully

n. a person who abuses, mistreats, and/or threatens another student

**Etymology:** *Bull+y*. From Old Norse. *Bull* comes from *boli* meaning a male domestic cow. The *y* ending denotes *one who*. Literally, bully means *one who is like a bull*.

#### bully

v. to abuse, mistreat, and/or threaten another student

#### bullying

n. the act of abusing and mistreating a student at school

**emigration**

n. the act of leaving one's own country, moving to another country

**Etymology:** from Latin. *e+migrat+ion*. The *e* is shortened from *ex* which means *out*. *Migrat* is from *migrare* which means *to move*, and *ion* denotes a noun ending, or *that which*. Literally, the word means *that which moves out*.

**emigrate**

To leave one's own country

**immigration**

n. the action of moving INTO another country to live

**Etymology:** from Latin. *Im+migrat+ion*. *Im* is from *in* which means *in*. Immigration is difficult to pronounce, so the *n* was changed to an *m* to make the word *immigration*. *Migrat* is from *migrare* which means *to move*, and *ion* denotes a noun ending, or *that which*. Literally, the word means *that which moves in*.

**immigrant**

n. A person who moves INTO a new country to live

**scapegoat**

n. Someone who is blamed for the mistakes of others

**scapegoat**

v. to make a scapegoat of someone

**Etymology:** *Scape+goat*. The word originates from a Hebrew term in the Bible. A goat would be sacrificed for the sins of the people. *Scape* comes from *escape*. It means *blaming or punishing another for the mistakes or sins of others*.

**scapegoating**

n. the act of blaming someone for the mistakes of others.

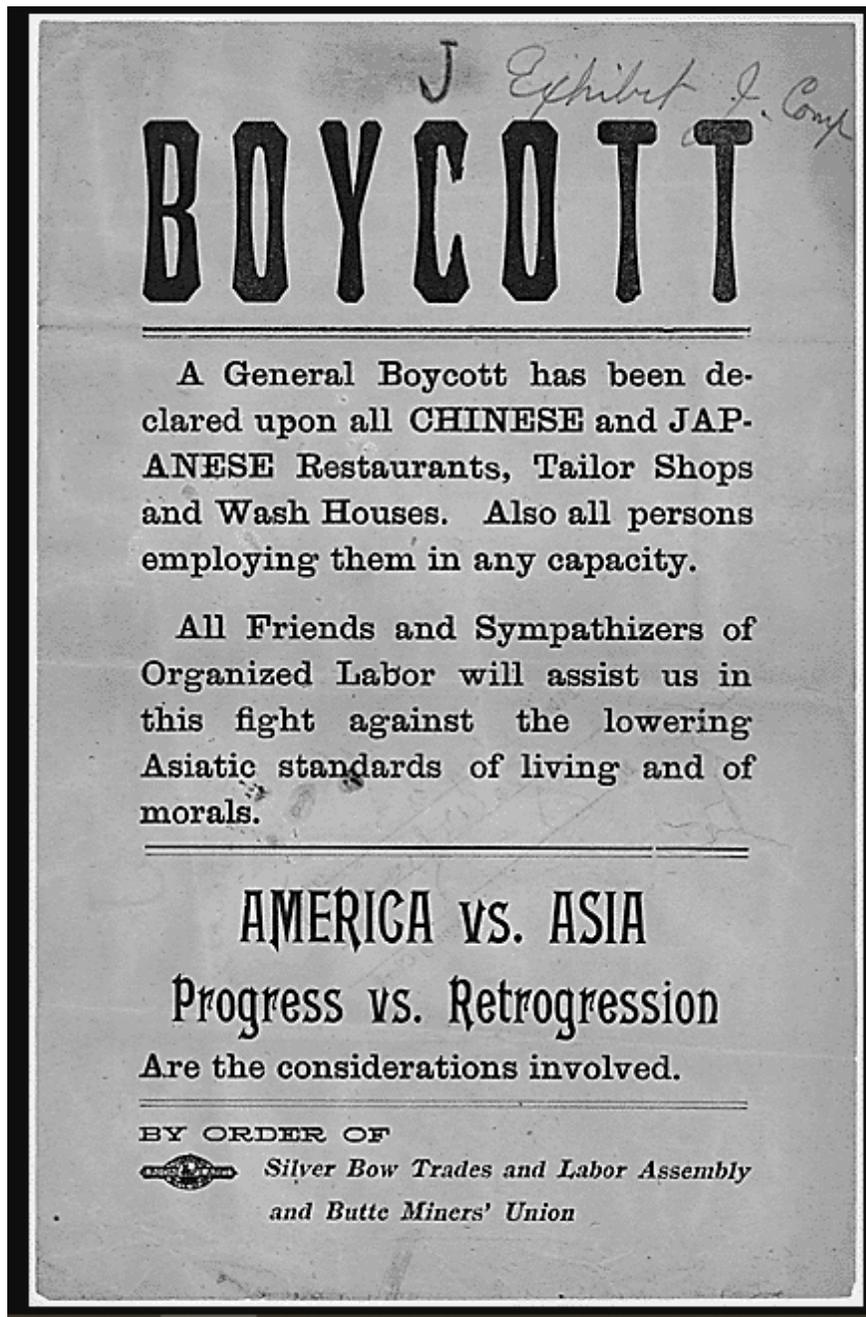
## UNIT/LESSON IDEAS

### Warm Up:

Put students into groups have them research the DEFINITIONS of the vocabulary words listed above.

Assign words to each group or individuals. Have them research the word and share their findings. Have them explain the vocabulary words in their own words.

Show students the image of the Union Labor Flyer from the 1880s (a primary source) from this link: <https://www.archives.gov/files/education/lessons/chinese-boycott/images/union-flyer-01.gif>



**Distribute** the document entitled, “Analyze a Written Document” found here:

[https://www.archives.gov/files/education/lessons/worksheets/written\\_document\\_analysis\\_worksheet.pdf](https://www.archives.gov/files/education/lessons/worksheets/written_document_analysis_worksheet.pdf)

**Ask** students to complete the analysis as a group or individually.

**Allow** students to use computers to go to

<https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/chinese-boycott#documents>, or print out the article and distribute among students or groups.

**Read** the article about how Chinese Immigrants were scapegoats during the Gold Rush in the 1880s.

**Ask** students to explain scapegoating by referring to the text in the article: What is the context? Who is scapegoated? Why? Who is responsible? What were their motives?

**Learn: Mrs. O’Leary**

**Reread** pages 23-27 *The Great Chicago Fire: Rising from the Ashes*. Everyone can read silently or aloud in their groups.

**Check for understanding:** What names did they call the Irish Catholics? Irish Catholics were immigrants from Ireland. What is an immigrant? What were some of the stories people made up to explain the fire? Why did people blame Mrs. O’Leary? What really caused the fire? What happened in 1997?

**Ask:** According to the text, *who was the scapegoat? Who did the scapegoating?*

**Explore: Making Connections**

**Ask:** What are similarities between Mrs. O’Leary’s story and the story of the Chinese Immigrants in the 1880s? What are differences between their stories?

**Wrap Up**

**Use** *The Great Chicago Fire* to guide students to make a LIST of elements of a graphic novel (boxes, dialogue bubbles, thought bubbles, onomatopoeias, etc. (For a list of graphic novel terms, see [https://prh.azureedge.net/resources/TR\\_OppositeLand.pdf](https://prh.azureedge.net/resources/TR_OppositeLand.pdf))

**Direct** students to this site to create a “comic strip” story <https://www.makebeliefscomix.com/> OR

**Distribute** several copies of the graphic novel template from Scholastic to each student <https://www.scholastic.com/content/dam/parents/migrated-assets/printables/pdfs/jason-printable-graphic-novel.pdf.pdf>

# WRITE A GRAPHIC NOVEL!

Start your very own graphic novel by filling in these cool comic strips. Here's a tip: Print out multiple sheets to keep the story going!



TO BE CONTINUED...

**Assign:** Working in a group or individually, tell the story of scapegoating Chinese Immigrants in the 1800s. USE graphic novel format AND *fictive siblings* like J.P. and Franny as the main characters.

Assess/Evaluate: See Rubric

Story in Graphic Novel Format: *Chinese Immigrant Scapegoats in the 1880s*

Evaluation Rubric

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
<b>Focus on Assigned Topic</b>	The entire story is related to the assigned topic and allows the reader to understand much more about the topic.	Most of the story is related to the assigned topic. The story wanders off at one point, but the reader can still learn something about the topic.	Some of the story is related to the assigned topic, but a reader does not learn much about the topic.	No attempt has been made to relate the story to the assigned topic.
<b>Graphic Novel Elements</b>	All facts presented in the story are accurate.	Almost all facts presented in the story are accurate.	Most facts presented in the story are accurate (at least 70%).	There are several factual errors in the story.
<b>Graphic Novel Elements</b>	The story contains many onomatopoeias, dialogue bubbles, thought bubbles, and simple illustrations.	The story contains a few onomatopoeias, dialogue bubbles, thought bubbles, and simple illustrations.	The story contains a few onomatopoeias, dialogue bubbles, thought bubbles, and simple illustrations, but they are used incorrectly.	There is little to no evidence of elements of graphic novel elements.
<b>Characters</b>	The main characters are fictive siblings who are named and clearly described in text as well as pictures. Most readers could describe the characters accurately.	The main characters are named and described. Most readers would have some idea of what the characters looked like.	The main characters are not siblings and/or the reader knows very little about the characters.	It is hard to tell who the main characters are.
<b>Organization</b>	The story is very well organized. One idea or scene follows another in a logical sequence with clear transitions.	The story is pretty well organized. One idea or scene may seem out of place. Clear transitions are used.	The story is a little hard to follow. The transitions are sometimes not clear.	Ideas and scenes seem to be randomly arranged.
<b>Neatness</b>	The final draft of the story is readable, clean, neat and attractive. It is free of erasures and crossed-out words. It looks like the author took great pride in it.	The final draft of the story is readable, neat and attractive. It may have one or two erasures, but they are not distracting. It looks like the author took some pride in it.	The final draft of the story is readable and some of the pages are attractive. It looks like parts of it might have been done in a hurry.	The final draft is not neat or attractive. It looks like the student just wanted to get it done and didn't care what it looked like.

## Dive Deeper

**Assign:** Irish Americans were scapegoated for more than the Great Chicago Fire. Read this newspaper article from Springfield, Ohio: <https://www.springfieldnewssun.com/news/local/americans-once-believed-the-irish-caused-cholera/HPHiGaOtMcsElfurROAE1H/#:~:text=In%20the%201830s%2C%20when%20nearby,the%20Iris h%2C%E2%80%9D%20Alan%20M.>

**Assign:** Create a timeline after reading the article on the history of scapegoating Asians at <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/2020/09/asian-american-racism-covid/>.

**Present** *The Bully and the Shrimp*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KOd60NVY6Wk>

**Ask** students to *compare* and *contrast* the Shrimp with Mrs. O’Leary.

**Compare the definitions** of bullying (imbalance of power, threatening) and scapegoating (falsely blaming).

**Have students** think of ways to prevent and/or stop SCAPEGOATING and BULLYING. Have them make a poster sharing their suggestions.

## Online Resources:

Images of The Great Fire from the Chicago History Museum  
<https://images.chicagohistory.org/search/?searchQuery=Great+fire&assetType=default>

Immigration Lesson Plan from Scholastic Grades 3-5  
<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plans/teaching-content/immigration-lesson-plan-grades-3-5/>

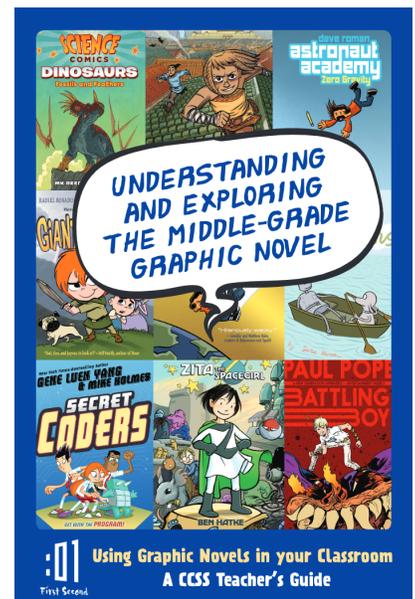
Ellis Island Virtual Tour  
[https://www.nps.gov/hdp/exhibits/ellis/Ellis\\_Index.html](https://www.nps.gov/hdp/exhibits/ellis/Ellis_Index.html)

Scapegoat: The Story of a Goat Named Oat and a Chewed-Up Coat  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qyn0fyziXgE>

Face Bullying With Confidence: 8 Kidpower Skills We Can Use Right Away  
[https://www.kidpower.org/library/article/prevent-bullying/?gclid=CjwKCAjwzIH7BRAbEiwAoDxxTsRIWcPHA3id73Zd2UajSqYzyVvldWh6yyccOHXWnv9tpEYSBct3BBocpvYQAvD\\_BwE](https://www.kidpower.org/library/article/prevent-bullying/?gclid=CjwKCAjwzIH7BRAbEiwAoDxxTsRIWcPHA3id73Zd2UajSqYzyVvldWh6yyccOHXWnv9tpEYSBct3BBocpvYQAvD_BwE)

Using graphic novels in the classroom:  
<https://firstsecondbooks.com/resources/>

<https://www.scholastic.com/content/dam/teachers/lesson-plans/18-19/Graphic-Novel-Discussion-Guide-2018.pdf>



## **Connections to *The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy***

CC.7.R.L.1 Key Ideas and Details: Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CC.7.R.L.4 Craft and Structure: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.

CC.7.R.L.7 Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Compare and contrast a story, drama, or poem to its audio, filmed, staged, or multimedia version, analyzing the effects of techniques unique to each medium (e.g., lighting, sound, color, or camera focus and angles in a film).

CC.8.R.L.1 Key Ideas and Details: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CC.8.R.L.4 Craft and Structure: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

CC.7.R.I.3 Key Ideas and Details: Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).

CC.7.R.I.4 Craft and Structure: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.

CC.8.R.I.3 Key Ideas and Details: Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).

CC.8.R.I.4 Craft and Structure: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

CC.7.W.1.c Text Types and Purposes: Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), reasons, and evidence.

CC.7.W.2.a Text Types and Purposes: Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

CC.7.W.3 Text Types and Purposes: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

CC.7.W.3.a Text Types and Purposes: Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.

CC.7.W.3.e Text Types and Purposes: Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

CC.7.W.6 Production and Distribution of Writing: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and link to and cite sources as well as to interact and collaborate with others, including linking to and citing sources.

CC.7.W.7 Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.

CC.7.W.9 Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CC.8.W.1.c Text Types and Purposes: Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

CC.8.W.2 Text Types and Purposes: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

CC.8.W.3 Text Types and Purposes: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

CC.8.W.3.b Text Types and Purposes: Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

CC.8.W.3.d Text Types and Purposes: Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.

CC.8.W.6 Production and Distribution of Writing: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.

CC.8.W.7 Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

CC.7.SL.1 Comprehension and Collaboration: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CC.7.SL.2 Comprehension and Collaboration: Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.

CC.7.SL.6 Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: Include multimedia components and visual displays in presentations to clarify claims and findings and emphasize salient points.

CC.8.SL.1 Comprehension and Collaboration: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CC.8.SL.2 Comprehension and Collaboration: Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.

CC.8.SL.5 Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.

CC.7.L.2 Conventions of Standard English: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

CC.7.L.3.a Knowledge of Language: Choose language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy.\*

CC.8.L.1 Conventions of Standard English: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CC.8.L.2.c Conventions of Standard English: Spell correctly.