

# The Great Chicago Fire:

## *Rising from the Ashes*

By Kate Hannigan  Illustrated by Alex Graudins

# Teaching Guide

## 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<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!



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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# Mrs. O’Leary Was Scapegoated!



## Essential question

**Why do some people blame others?**

### LESSON OVERVIEW

Teaching about scapegoating and its ripple effects will help kids recognize reasons why 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 and make our school communities stronger and more inclusive.

### 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. Create a poster about scapegoating.

### Key Vocabulary:

#### Immigration

To move to another country to live

#### Immigrant

A person who moves to a new country to live

#### Scapegoat

Someone who is blamed for the mistakes of others

#### Scapegoating

Blaming someone for the mistakes of others

## LESSON PLAN

### Warm Up: Scapegoating and its ripple effect

**Before the lesson:** Fill a large container (an aluminum 8x13 pan would work great). Put in two or three small objects that will float. Have a small pebble.

1. **Invite** students to gather around the container of water. Select one student to drop the pebble into the water.
2. **Ask** students to describe what happened to the floating object when the pebble fell into the water?
3. **Explain** the waves are RIPPLES.

*Students may say: there were waves, the floating objectives went up and down, the water moved, etc. Explain that like the pebble caused ripples that affected the floating objects, so someone's actions can affect others.*

### Learn: Mrs. O'Leary

1. **Reread** pages 23-27 *The Great Chicago Fire: Rising from the Ashes*. Everyone can read silently, round robin reading, read it aloud to the whole group, or have students read aloud with a partner.
2. **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?
3. **Explain** the words scapegoat and scapegoating.
4. **Ask:** *Who was the scapegoat? Who did the scapegoating?*

### Explore: Making Connections

1. **Gather** students around the container of water.
2. **Hold up the pebble and say:** Let's pretend this PEBBLE is hatred and looking down on others.
3. **Point to one of the floating objects in the water and ASK:** If this is Mrs. O'Leary, what will happen to her when I drop the pebble in the water? Call on a student to answer. Let him/her toss the pebble in.
4. **Ask:** What are some other effects the ripples of "hatred, not liking a group of people, and looking down on others" might have? Let each one that answers drop the pebble in.

## Wrap Up: Think & Create

Have students work in groups OR assign as individual project to create a POSTER of what they have learned about scapegoating. Give groups a printed copy of the matching rubric. Go over the expectations for the project. (You may use more than one class period for the project.)

Assess/Evaluate: See Rubric

## Making a Poster: *The Great Chicago Fire* by Kate Hannigan

### Evaluation Rubric

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

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
<b>Use of Class Time</b>	Used time well during each class period. Focused on getting the project done. Never distracted others.	Used time well during each class period. Usually focused on getting the project done and never distracted others.	Used some of the time well during each class period. There was some focus on getting the project done but occasionally distracted others.	Did not use class time to focus on the project OR often distracted others.
<b>Labels</b>	All items of importance on the poster are clearly labeled with labels that can be read from at least 3 ft. away. Includes title.	Almost all items of importance on the poster are clearly labeled with labels that can be read from at least 3 ft. away. Includes title.	Several items of importance on the poster are clearly labeled with labels that can be read from at least 3 ft. away. May be missing the title.	Labels are too small to view OR no important items were labeled. Is missing a title.
<b>Content - Accuracy</b>	At least 5 accurate facts are displayed on the poster.	4 accurate facts are displayed on the poster.	3 accurate facts are displayed on the poster.	Less than 3 accurate facts are displayed on the poster.
<b>Graphics - Relevance</b>	All graphics are related to the topic and make it easier to understand. All borrowed graphics have a source citation.	All graphics are related to the topic and most make it easier to understand. All borrowed graphics have a source citation.	All graphics relate to the topic. Most borrowed graphics have a source citation.	Graphics do not relate to the topic OR several borrowed graphics do not have a source citation.
<b>Mechanics</b>	Capitalization and punctuation are correct throughout the poster.	There is 1 error in capitalization or punctuation.	There are 2 errors in capitalization or punctuation.	There are more than 2 errors in capitalization or punctuation.

**Dive Deeper** (Extend the lesson OR use in a following lesson):

Present the READ ALOUD YouTube, *The Bully and the Shrimp*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KOd60NVY6Wk>

1. **Compare the definitions** of bullying (being mean) and scapegoating (falsely blaming).
2. **Ask** students to *compare* and *contrast* The Shrimp with Mrs. O'Leary.
3. **Have students work in groups** to think of ways to responding to SCAPEGOATING and BULLYING. Have them share their ideas.
4. **Have students make a poster.** Use poster rubric above.

**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>

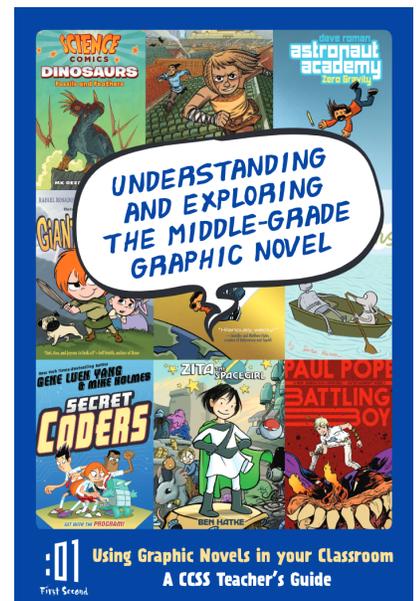
Face Bullying With Confidence: 8 Kidpower Skills We Can Use Right Away

<https://www.kidpower.org/library/article/prevent-bullying/?gclid=CjwKCAjwzIH7BRABEiwAoDxxTsRIWcPHA3id73Zd2UajSqYzyVvldWh6yycOHXWnv9tpEYSBct3BBoCpvYQAvD 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>



## Key Standards *Common Core ELA*

CC.3.R.1.1 Key Ideas and Details: Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

CC.3.R.1.2 Key Ideas and Details: Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.

CC.3.R.1.3 Key Ideas and Details: Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.

CC.3.R.1.4 Craft and Structure: Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 3 topic or subject area.

CC.3.R.1.5 Craft and Structure: Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently.

CC.3.R.1.6 Craft and Structure: Distinguish their own point of view from that of the author of a text.

CC.3.R.1.7 Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

CC.3.R.1.9 Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Compare and contrast the most important points and key details presented in two texts on the same topic.

CC.3.R.1.10 Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity: By the end of the year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, at the high end of the grades 2–3 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

CC.4.R.1.1 Key Ideas and Details: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CC.4.R.1.2 Key Ideas and Details: Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

CC.4.R.1.3 Key Ideas and Details: Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

CC.4.R.1.4 Craft and Structure: Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a grade 4 topic or subject area.

CC.4.R.1.5 Craft and Structure: Describe the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.

CC.4.R.1.8 Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text.

CC.4.R.1.10 Range of Reading and Complexity of Text: By the end of year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, in the grades 4–5 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as necessary at the high end of the range.

CC.3.R.F.4 Fluency: Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

CC.3.R.F.4.a Fluency: Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding.

CC.4.R.F.4 Fluency: Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

CC.4.R.F.4.a Fluency: Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding.

CC.3.W.2 Text Types and Purposes: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

CC.3.W.2.a Text Types and Purposes: Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension.

CC.3.W.2.b Text Types and Purposes: Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details.

CC.3.W.7 Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.

CC.3.W.8 Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.

CC.3.W.10 Range of Writing: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CC.4.W.1.b Text Types and Purposes: Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.

CC.4.W.2.b Text Types and Purposes: Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.

CC.4.W.2.d Text Types and Purposes: Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

CC.4.W.4 Production and Distribution of Writing: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types.)

CC.4.W.7 Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

CC.4.W.8 Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; take notes and categorize information, and provide a list of sources.

CC.4.W.9 Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CC.4.W.9.b Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Apply grade 4 Reading standards to informational texts (e.g., “Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text”).