

The Great Chicago Fire

Rising from the Ashes

By Kate Hannigan  Illustrated by Alex Gaudins

Immigration

Discussion Questions

3rd & 4th Grades

1. Who was Catherine “Kate” O’Leary? Why is Kate in quotation marks like this, “Kate”? (pg. 6)
2. Mrs. O’Leary grew up in Ireland, but immigrated to Chicago which was almost 4,000 miles away and across the Atlantic Ocean. There were no TVs or iPhones or computers. How do you think she felt being so far from home? Why?
3. What are some reasons that a person would live his/her country and move to another country? Check out *Destination America* at https://www.pbs.org/destinationamerica/usim_wy.html for more ideas.
4. How is being a new student at a new school similar to being an immigrant?
5. How is being a new student at a new school different than being an immigrant?
6. On pages 23-27, we learn that many people in America hated Irish Catholic immigrants. They said mean things about them and make up lies about them. Why do think this happened?
7. On page 24, J.P. says, “Why do they hate immigrants? Doesn’t just about everybody here come from somewhere else?” What did he mean when he said, “Doesn’t just about everybody here come from somewhere else?”
8. From what countries are your ancestors?
9. On page 73, author Kate Hannigan, through her characters, imagines how rumors spread about Mrs. O’Leary. What did J.P. and Franny hear other people say? What expression is on J.P. and Franny’s faces? Why do you think they feel this way?

10. Who was Louis Sullivan? (pg. 97) Why do you think the author included information about his parents?
11. Reread pages 103. How did Mrs. O'Leary respond to everyone bothering her? Why? Do you think this was right? Would you have responded differently?
12. Why do you think the City of Chicago built a Firefighter Training Academy where Mrs. O'Leary's house was? Do you think she would be happy or sad about this?
13. What does *look down their noses* mean when Franny said, "Now the rich look down their noses at them instead of the Irish"?

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Immigration Discussion Questions

5th & 6th Grades

1. What are some reasons that Mrs. O'Leary might have left Ireland in the mid1800s and moved to America? Check out *Destination America* at https://www.pbs.org/destinationamerica/usim_wy.html and compare your guesses to the reasons people left Ireland during that time.
2. Mrs. O'Leary grew up in Ireland, but immigrated to Chicago which was almost 4,000 miles away and across the Atlantic Ocean. There were no TVs or iPhones or computers. How do you think she felt being so far from home? Why?
3. What are challenges that immigrants face? Which would be the most difficult for you?
4. How is being a new student at a new school similar and different than being an immigrant?
5. What are some things students and teachers can do to help new students feel welcome and accepted? What are some things cities can do to help immigrants feel welcome and accepted?
6. On pages 23-27, we learn that many people in America hated Irish Catholic immigrants. They said mean things about them and make up lies about them. Why do think this happened?
7. On page 24, J.P. says, "Why do they hate immigrants? Doesn't just about everybody here come from somewhere else?" What did he mean when he said, "Doesn't just about everybody here come from somewhere else?"
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11. Reread pages 103. How did Mrs. O'Leary respond to everyone bothering her? Why? Do you think this was right? Would you have responded differently?
12. Why do you think the City of Chicago built a Firefighter Training Academy where Mrs. O'Leary's house was? Do you think she would be happy or sad about this? (pg. 104)
13. What does *look down their noses* mean when Franny said, "Now the rich look down their noses at them instead of the Irish"? (pg. 105)
14. In 2018, Patricia Smith wrote an article entitled, "The Great Immigration Debate." What is a debate? According to the article, why is there a debate about immigration? See <https://junior.scholastic.com/issues/2017-18/021918/the-great-immigration-debate.html#1200L>
15. Go to <https://myimmigrationstory.com/> and select one of the modern day immigration stories. What do these stories have in common? How are these stories different?
16. In what ways are modern day immigration stories similar to Mrs. O'Leary's story?

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7th & 8th Grades

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2. Mrs. O'Leary grew up in Ireland, but immigrated to Chicago which was almost 4,000 miles away and across the Atlantic Ocean. There were no TVs or iPhones or computers. How do you think she felt being so far from home? Why?
3. Check out <https://myimmigrationstory.com/> AND the personal stories of immigration at <https://www.pbs.org/destinationamerica/ps.html>. What are challenges these immigrants faced?
4. Check out <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/united-states-history-primary-source-timeline/rise-of-industrial-america-1876-1900/immigration-to-united-states-1851-1900/>. What were challenges that immigrants from 1851-1900 faced?
5. How are the challenges that Mrs. O'Leary faced similar and different than modern day examples of immigrations?
6. If you had to leave your home and city and relative and move to another country, what would be the most difficult challenge for you?
7. How is being a new student at a new school similar and different than being an immigrant?
8. What are some things students and teachers can do to help new students feel welcome and accepted? What are some things cities can do to help immigrants feel welcome and accepted?

9. On pages 23-27, we learn that many people in America hated Irish Catholic immigrants. They said mean things about them and make up lies about them. Why do think this happened?
10. According to <https://irishamerica.com/2008/08/chicago-and-the-irish/>, the South Side of Chicago used to be comprised of mostly Irish Americans. Today, the neighborhood is primarily African American. How do you think immigration influenced the population of neighborhoods?

Michael Flatley is a famous Irish American who grew up on Chicago's South Side. Check out his website, <https://www.michaelflatley.com/>
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