

Student Worksheet

DIRECTIONS

Read the following news story and answer the reading comprehension and discussion questions. Use additional paper if necessary.

STORY

Destructive Fires in Southern California Highlight Risks of Dry Season, 11/18/08

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/us/july-dec08/fires_11-18.html

READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What happened in southern California this week?
2. How much damage was done?
3. Why is southern California particularly vulnerable to fires?
4. Where else have wildfires been a problem recently?
5. How does climate change affect the possibility for wildfires?
6. What is happening to California's snow season?
7. How might fires be contributing to climate change?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (more research might be needed)

1. After reading about the fires in California would you ever want to live there? Should people be allowed to live in these areas that are at a high risk? Why or why not?

2. Who is responsible for keeping people safe from natural disasters?

3. Are there particular natural or weather related risks in your area? How can you prepare?

4. What should California's government be doing to reduce the risk of fires or increase its ability to respond to fires?

5. What are some of the other possible consequences of having longer, hotter summers?

Extension Activity

Have students write a 300-500 word essay on this topic providing clear examples. Send your completed editorial to NewsHour Extra (extra@newshour.org). Exceptional essays might be published on our Web site.