

# Text structure: Sequence

## Grade 5 Reading Worksheet

**Text structure** is how an author organizes information in a nonfiction text.

**Sequence** is a type of text structure that shows events in the order they happen, from first to last.

**Signal words** are clue words that help you identify the text structure. Signal words for sequence include **first**, **next**, **then**, **later**, **soon**, **last**, **after**, **when**, **while** and **suddenly**.

Circle the text's **signal words** and underline the **important events**.

### Wildfires

Wildfires are out-of-control fires that burn in natural areas. They can burn large areas of land in a very short amount of time, leaving behind bare ground filled with blackened trees and ash. When wildfires occur in a forest, they are thankfully able to slowly recover and grow again.

Immediately after a fire, the ground of the forest looks empty and lifeless. However, something is invisible to the eye: In the ash, there are important nutrients. These nutrients mix with the soil and help make it rich, healthy and ready for new growth. Even though the plants are gone, there are often seeds hidden in the soil too.

After weeks pass and rain has fallen, small plants will start to appear. Wildflowers and grasses are often the first to grow because their seeds can survive the heat and they sprout quickly. These early plants are important because they hold the soil in place and create shade for other plants that will grow later.

Over the next few months, trees and shrubs also start to grow. It's common for the first trees to include pine trees. This happens because pine cones open up when they are exposed to heat. This means that when there is a fire, their seeds fall into the soil. If they're lucky, their seeds will be spread by the wind.

At the same time, animals also begin to return to the area. Insects arrive first, followed by small mammals and birds that can feed on the new plants and seeds. As the plant life increases, larger animals return too. Little by little, the forest is able to provide food and shelter to living things once again.



After several years, the young trees—which never stopped growing—have formed a thicker forest. Plants that love the shade start to grow under the taller trees, which creates different layers of vegetation. Over time, the forest starts to look more like it did before the fire began.

It may take decades for a forest to fully recover from a fire, but it can happen. Eventually, trees, smaller plants and wildlife reappear. These living things work together to form a balanced ecosystem. When wildfires occur in a forest, forests are thankfully able to slowly recover and grow again.

**Then, use your annotations to write a sequence of eight important steps that happen after a wildfire.**

|     |
|-----|
| 1 - |
| 2 - |
| 3 - |
| 4 - |
| 5 - |
| 6 - |
| 7 - |
| 8 - |

## Answers

The sequence below is a suggestion. Accept other reasonable events if they are from the text and in the correct order.

- 1 - A wildfire leaves behind blackened trees, ash and bare ground.
- 2 - Nutrients from burned plants mix into the soil.
- 3 - Seeds in the soil survive and remain ready to grow.
- 4 - Grasses and wildflowers begin to sprout.
- 5 - Shrubs and young trees start growing.
- 6 - Animals slowly return as plants grow back.
- 7 - Trees grow taller and the forest becomes thicker.
- 8 - The forest fully recovers into a balanced ecosystem.