



# The Fox and the Forest Fire

By Danny Popovici

978-1-7972-0282-2 • \$17.99 HC

Ages 5 to 8 • F&P Text Level Gradient: L

Lexile® Measure: AD660L

## About this Book

*The Fox and the Forest Fire* tells the story of a little boy named Oswald who moves out of the city to the forest with his mother. At first, he does not like his home, which is surrounded by new and strange sounds. After spending time exploring the area around his new home, Oswald develops a fond appreciation for the forest and befriends a fox. When a forest fire engulfs the home of the little boy, his mother, and all of the other creatures, evacuations must occur. The spirit of renewal and rejuvenation shines through this moving story of rebuilding and friendship.

## About the Author

Danny Popovici is an author-illustrator, hiker, and former forest firefighter. He lives in Portland, Oregon. *The Fox and the Forest Fire* is his debut as an author-illustrator.

## About this Guide

Picture books serve as valuable resources across grade levels. In addition to the elementary classroom, picture books can be integrated into middle school and high school classrooms to explore various elements of storytelling and writing. This educator guide contains discussion questions and activities that can be used while reading, teaching, or discussing *The Fox and the Forest Fire*.



## Before Reading

1. Encourage students to take a walk around their neighborhood or the school and pay attention to what they hear. Ask them to describe the sounds they notice and the different things they hear at different times of the day.
2. Ask students to share their answers to the following question:
  - a. If you had to pack a suitcase and leave your home immediately, what would you bring and why?
3. Ask students to look at the cover of the book and answer the following questions:
  - a. What do you think the story is about?
  - b. How does the cover make you feel? What causes you to feel this way?

## During Reading

1. Direct students to look closely at the first illustration on the copyright page. The little boy, Oswald, is loading boxes into the back of a box truck. Ask students to discuss what they think is happening in this illustration and how the image and its placement invite readers into the story.
2. The first line of the story is “I wasn’t sure I’d like my new home” (p. 4). Have students describe Oswald’s new home and discuss how it differs from the city.
3. Oswald complains that the nights are too quiet. Ask students to share examples of the sounds they think he used to hear at night.
4. Oswald says that the mornings are too loud. Ask students to share the new sounds he hears in the morning. Encourage the class to take a close look at the illustration on page 6 as they consider their answers.
5. Oswald and his mother go on a hike to explore the forest. Ask students to imagine the conversation the two of them have while overlooking the creek and the forest, and have them write a script of the dialogue.
6. Slowly Oswald begins to like his new home and its surroundings. He goes on adventures and makes new friends in the forest. Ask students to describe some of the adventures Oswald goes on and who he meets while he’s exploring.
7. One morning is “strangely quiet” (p. 13). Lead the class in a discussion of the following questions:
  - a. How is this morning different from the previous ones?
  - b. Why do you think this particular day is quiet?
  - c. What does Oswald notice in the horizon? Why does this sight signal trouble?
8. Note how the fox looks toward the other forest animals as they escape the fire. Ask students to share their thoughts about where they think these animals are going.



## After Reading

1. Lead the class in an exercise to create a poster or a commercial that encourages people to prevent forest fires.
2. Have students research the effects of climate change on forest fires. Then, have them use their research to create a brochure advocating for environmental stewardship. Finally, have students share their brochures with classmates and the local community.
3. The Author’s Note explains the roles of forest managers and firefighters. Ask students to write job descriptions for a forest manager and a firefighter, highlighting their roles in protecting forests and the creatures who live within them.
4. Have students read the following articles and resources about wildfires:
  - a. “Wildfires Have Spread Dramatically—And Some Forests May Not Recover” ([www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/extreme-wildfires-reshaping-forests-world-wide-recovery-australia-climate](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/extreme-wildfires-reshaping-forests-world-wide-recovery-australia-climate))
  - b. “Here’s How Wildfires Get Started—And How to Stop Them” ([www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/wildfires](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/wildfires))
  - c. “The Science Connecting Wildfires to Climate Change” ([www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/climate-change-increases-risk-fires-western-us](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/climate-change-increases-risk-fires-western-us))
  - d. “Wildland Fire Science” from the US Geological Survey ([www.usgs.gov/special-topic/fire](http://www.usgs.gov/special-topic/fire))

Next, have students reread the *The Fox and the Forest Fire* and discuss how the articles and resources above have informed their rereading of the book. Ask them to identify any allusions to information in the articles and resources they can find in the book.
5. Invite students to think about the overall theme of *The Fox and the Forest Fire*. Have them create a visual representation of the theme and share it with their peers.

## About the Guide Creator:

Shanetia P. Clark, Ph.D., is an associate professor of literacy at Salisbury University in Maryland. She teaches courses in children’s literature and literacy methods to preservice elementary and middle school teachers.

