

The river that caught fire

Have you ever heard of a river catching fire?

Vocabulary

1. spill 2. burned 3. symbolised 4. waste 5. inspired 6. turning

True Story

On June 22, 1969, an oil _____ on the Cuyahoga River in Cleveland, Ohio, caught fire. Although the river had _____ thirteen times before, this fire became a _____ point. Photos of past fires and news reports shocked people across the country, showing how bad pollution had become.

The fire _____ the damage caused by industrial _____ and led to the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 1970 and major laws like the Clean Water Act in 1972. It even _____ songs like R.E.M.'s Cuyahoga and a Simpsons episode.

Quiz

1. When did the Cuyahoga River catch fire?
2. How many times had the river burned before the 1969 fire?
3. What did the fire symbolise?
4. Name one thing that was inspired by the Cuyahoga River fire.

True or False

- | | | | |
|---|------|--|-------|
| 1. Photos of past fires and news reports surprised people all over the country. | True | | False |
| 2. The fire led to the creation of the R.E.M in 1970. | True | | False |
| 3. An episode of the Simpsons was inspired by the river fire. | True | | False |

Conversation

- A: Did you hear the river caught fire again?
B: Yeah, it's crazy! How does a river even burn?
A: Too much oil and waste, I guess.
B: Maybe this time people will finally pay attention.
A: I hope so. We need cleaner water.
B: Who knows, maybe they'll write a song about it!

Discussion

1. What's your favourite river or lake? Has it ever caught fire?
2. Is pollution a problem in your city? Why or why not?
3. Have you ever heard a song about nature? Can you sing it?
4. What would you do if you saw a river on fire?