



# THE GREAT FIRE

## Discussion Guide #3

Encourage critical thinking and support your students' literacy development by asking questions during reading. Here are some questions you can ask your readers to engage them in a discussion.

<b>CHAPTER 6</b> "The Ghost of Chicago"	<b>CHAPTER 7</b> Myth and Reality
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### Comprehension

- Why did people struggle to access water after the fire was under control, and how did they create a short-term solution for the problem?
- How did the mayor communicate that Chicago needed help, and how did people respond to his call for aid?
- After the fire, Claire attempted to reunite with her family. What made her search more difficult? How did her search end?
- In addition to opening hotels and working as construction laborers, some residents found clever ways to make money from the fire. Describe one small business and what it sold.
- Name one positive outcome that resulted from the rebuilding effort.
- What did Alfred Sewell predict about Chicago's future? Use a quote from the book to complete your answer.
- Name two ways the antifire rules impacted residents' rebuilding efforts.

### Analysis

- Even though an official investigation declared her innocent, people blamed Mrs. O'Leary for starting the fire. Why might people blame her for the fire? Why do you think people searched for someone, or something, to blame for the start of the fire?
- Describe what you see in the picture on page 133. What can you tell about the group of people in the picture? What do you think they believed about Chicago's future?
- After the fire, some reports stated that "there had been little or no rioting or looting," illustrating a scene in which Chicago's citizens "seemed cool and collected." Other reports blamed certain groups of people for any and all problems that occurred during the fire. Despite the fact that there were issues in the wealthier neighborhoods—caused by the residents—the public was made to believe otherwise. Why do you think the newspapers and city leaders intentionally shared misinformation with the public? What does that tell you about society's beliefs about social class at the time?

### Personal Connection

- After the fire, people started innovative small businesses like selling "fire relics" and salvaging metal from the rubble. If you could start a small business using resources you have access to today, what would you sell? Why?