

A School for Heroes



Most students spend their school days sitting at desks learning. Aurelious Woolfolk, however, does a lot more than sit at a desk when he is in school. He scrambles up high ladders, walks down the sides of buildings, and rides in a fire engine. He is learning to be a firefighter at the New Haven Fire Academy.

Fire School

Woolfolk and 28 other students are currently learning what it takes to become a firefighter. Classes at the fire academy, which is in Connecticut, last for about 22 weeks. On most days, the students go to school from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. However, once a week, school lasts until 10 p.m.

For two days each week, the students sit in a classroom to learn science, math, and emergency medicine. They learn the science of fires, how to calculate water pressure, and how to treat medical emergencies.

During the other three days, the students go outside and learn how to hook hoses to fire hydrants, climb buildings, rescue people trapped in burning buildings, and many other things.

"Firefighters have to know lots of different things," said Pablo Menendez, an instructor at the school. "We have to treat medical emergencies, know how to handle dangerous chemicals, and rescue people who have fallen from cliffs."

Teamwork is one of the most important lessons students learn at the school. "Working together saves lives," said Capt. William Seward, the director of the academy. "Students need to learn that they are part of a team."

The Heat's On

Fighting fires is not easy. The suits and equipment a firefighter wears weigh about 40 pounds.

Firefighters are very busy. In New Haven, they respond to 32,000 emergency calls a year. Each time firefighters go out, they know they might not come back. Across the United States, about 100 firefighters die each year.

"That's why the lessons learned here at the academy are so important," said Seward. "What they learn here can save their lives."

Firefighters know how dangerous their jobs are. Their training helps them overcome their fear of heights and fires. "When you're up there on the ladder looking down, it's scary," said one student. "To do this job, you've got to wipe out the fear."

Firefighters overcome their fear for one reason. "I wanted to help other people," said Leah Harwin. "I think it is important to help other people whenever you can."

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. According to the passage, which activity does a student at New Haven Fire Academy complete?

- A. handling dangerous chemicals
- B. jumping from a plane
- C. swimming in the ocean
- D. running on the track

2. How does the author *describe* the New Haven Fire Academy?

- A. a school selects the best teams to learn firefighting skills
- B. a school that trains students for two weeks to start fires
- C. a school that gives lessons and real experience for future firefighters
- D. a school that teaches students to fight fires by using only computers

3. Why would it be important for students at the Fire Academy to have lessons inside and outside the classroom?

- A. Firefighters need to practice emotional skills to calm people down when they rescue them.
- B. Firefighters need to practice wearing heavy gear to get used to the weight.
- C. Firefighters need to practice mental and physical skills to succeed.
- D. Firefighters need to practice climbing a ladder to overcome a fear of heights.

4. Read the following sentences and answer the question below:

"Woolfolk and 28 other students are currently learning what it takes to become a firefighter. Classes at the fire academy, which is in Connecticut, last for about 22 weeks."

In this sentence, what does **academy** mean?

- A. a camp
- B. a school
- C. a factory
- D. a fire house

5. The main idea of this passage is

- A. to describe the activities at the New Haven Fire Academy
- B. to inform the reader of the dangers of being a firefighter
- C. to compare the New Haven Fire Academy to public school
- D. to persuade students to attend the New Haven Fire Academy

6. What are three things that students learn outside the classroom at New Haven Fire Academy?

7. What word would the author use to describe firefighters? Find specific examples in the text to support your answer.

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Firefighters are very busy _____ they respond to thousands of emergencies each year.

- A. until
- B. so
- C. because
- D. first

9. Which experience is more difficult to overcome?



10. If you were to miss the school bus, is that something you have to overcome? Why or why not?
