

Name _____

Date _____

Softwoods and Hardwoods

When building a fire, you should always consider the type of wood you want to use. There are many different types of wood, and not all of them burn in the same way. There are two main types of wood: softwoods and hardwoods.

Softwoods like fir and pine are great for new fire builders to use. They are easy to split into little pieces for kindling. They catch fire easily and produce a wonderful holiday aroma while they burn. These fires burn big and bright and are very easy to maintain.

Although softwoods are great for many reasons, they do have some disadvantages. Softwoods burn quickly. This means you need to use a lot of wood to keep the fire going.

They also do not burn very hot—not nearly as hot as hardwoods burn. This means the wood needs to be completely dry. If not, it will not burn well. Finally, softwoods do not produce long-lasting coals. This means you will probably have to rebuild your fire in the morning should it burn out overnight.

Hardwoods like oak, walnut, and madrone are good for more experienced fire builders to use. They burn very hot and can reach temperatures up to 1000 degrees Fahrenheit. They produce a fantastic crackling sound while they burn. Hardwood fires are great to have during cold winter nights because they do not burn out easily. They also produce long-lasting coals. This means that you do not have to rebuild your fire in the morning should it burn out overnight. You simply have to put more wood on the coals and your fire will begin again in minutes.

Although hardwoods are great for many reasons, they do have some disadvantages. Hardwoods are tough to split and they do not catch fire easily. They are also more expensive than softwoods.

As you can see, it is important to think carefully about the type of wood you use to make your fire. And remember that no matter what kind of wood you choose to burn, one thing never changes: you should always wait one year after cutting a piece of wood to burn it. This ensures that the wood is completely dry.

1) As used in paragraph 1, the word **consider** most nearly means

- A. purchase
- B. decide upon
- C. look closely at
- D. think carefully about



2) According to the passage, which of the following is a softwood?

- I. pine
 - II. walnut
- A. madrone only
 - B. I and II only
 - C. II and III only
 - D. I, II, and III

3) According to the author, softwoods

- I. are easy to split
 - II. produce a wonderful aroma
 - III. burn fast
- A. I only
 - B. I and II only
 - C. II and III only
 - D. I, II, and III

4) Using information in the passage as a guide, we can understand that walnut hardwood **COULD** burn at a temperature of

- A. 900 degrees Fahrenheit
- B. 1100 degrees Fahrenheit
- C. 1800 degrees Fahrenheit
- D. Not enough information is provided to answer this question.

5) Margery lives in Maine where they have long, cold winter nights. She wants to make a fire that will not burn out easily. Which type of firewood should Margery use to make her fire?

- I. oak
 - II. walnut
 - III. madrone
- A. I only
 - B. I and II only
 - C. II and III only
 - D. I, II, and III

6) In paragraphs 3 and 5, the author discusses the respective "disadvantages" of both softwoods and hardwoods. Based on its use in the passage, it can be understood that the word

disadvantages belongs to which of the following word groups?

- A. benefits, positives, profits
- B. types, kinds, categories
- C. uses, functions, purposes
- D. drawbacks, negatives, losses

7) In the final sentence of the passage, the author writes, "This ensures that the wood is completely dry." The purpose of this sentence is to

- A. show a contrast
- B. provide an example
- C. give a reason
- D. introduce an idea

8) Using your own words, explain the differences between hardwoods and softwoods.
