

The Great Fire of London: A Social Studies / History Challenge with Ellie

Learning objective: To understand the causes, key events, and consequences of the Great Fire of London in 1666.

Use your historical knowledge to answer the questions below. Think about why the fire spread so quickly and how London changed after the event.

Ellie the elephant has been reading her history books! She knows that in September 1666, a spark in a shop on Pudding Lane turned into a disaster that lasted for four days. The city was made of wood and packed tightly together, making it easy for the flames to jump from house to house. With the help of primary sources like the diary of Samuel Pepys, we know exactly how the people of London faced this challenge.

Word bank: Pudding Lane · 1666 · Samuel Pepys · Timber · St Paul's Cathedral · Bakers · Firebreaks

1. Identify the year the Great Fire of London began and name the specific street where the fire started. (2 marks)

2. Explain two reasons why the fire spread so quickly across the city of London. (2 marks)

3. Who was the famous person who wrote a diary detailing his experiences during the Great Fire of London? (1 mark)

4. The people of London used 'firebreaks' to stop the flames. Describe what a firebreak is and why it helped. (2 marks)

5. After the fire, the city was rebuilt. Why do you think the government decided that new houses should be made of brick or stone instead of wood? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a 'Before and After' scene of a London street. On the left, draw the crowded wooden houses from 1666, and on the right, draw the wider streets with brick buildings from after the fire.



Extension challenge: Imagine you are living in London in 1666. Write a short diary entry (three to four sentences) describing what you see, hear, and smell as you watch the fire from the River Thames.