

Ellie's Historical Discovery: The Great Fire of London

Learning objective: To retrieve information from a text and make inferences about the impact of the Great Fire of London.

Read the text carefully below, then answer the questions that follow in full sentences.

Ellie the elephant loves to visit the archives to learn about history. She recently studied the Great Fire of London, which began on 2nd September 1666. The fire started in a small bakery on Pudding Lane. In the 17th century, London was a crowded place with narrow streets and houses built closely together. Most of these buildings were made of timber and covered in pitch, a sticky substance that is highly flammable. Because it had been a very dry summer, the wooden buildings caught light easily. The fire spread rapidly, jumping from roof to roof, and raged for four days. Thousands of people lost their homes, and iconic landmarks like St Paul's Cathedral were destroyed. After the fire was finally extinguished, the city had to be rebuilt. New building regulations were introduced, and people were encouraged to use brick or stone instead of wood to stop such a catastrophe from happening again. Ellie wonders how the citizens felt watching their city transform, but she is glad the new designs made London a safer place for everyone to live.

Word bank: catastrophe · flammable · timber · reconstruction · architecture · bakery

1. On what date did the Great Fire of London begin, and where exactly did it start? (2 marks)

2. Why did the fire spread so quickly through the streets of London? (2 marks)

3. Why do you think the authorities decided that new houses should be built from brick or stone instead of timber? (2 marks)

4. Based on the text, what can you infer about the living conditions in London in 1666? (2 marks)

5. Do you think the new building regulations were a good idea for the city? Explain your reasoning. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene showing the difference between a 17th-century wooden house on a narrow street and a new, safer brick house built after the Great Fire.



Extension challenge: Research the Monument to the Great Fire of London. How tall is it, and why was it built in that specific location?