

A Diary Entry from the Great Fire of London

Learning objective: To empathise with the experiences of people living through the Great Fire of London in 1666 and describe events using historical context.

Imagine you are living in London in September 1666. Ellie the elephant has helped you look through historical archives to understand what life was like back then. Use the template below to write a diary entry as if you were a witness to the fire. Try to include how the city looked, how people felt, and what they did to escape the flames.

Word bank: Pudding Lane · Bakery · Timber · River Thames · Ember · Evacuate · St Paul's Cathedral · Chaos · 1666 · King Charles II

1. Setting the Scene: Describe where you are and what you notice when the fire first begins to spread. Mention the date and the location. (3 marks)

2. The Spread: Explain why the fire spread so quickly across London. Consider the materials used to build the houses at the time. (3 marks)

3. The Escape: Describe how you and your family are getting your belongings to safety. Where are you heading to stay safe? (3 marks)

4. Observations: What are you seeing, hearing, or smelling as you look back at the city? Use descriptive language to capture the mood. (3 marks)

5. Reflection: How do you feel about the future of London? What do you hope will happen to the city once the fire is finally out? (2 marks)

Extension challenge: Research the 'Fire Breaks' used by King Charles II and his men. Write a short paragraph explaining how they tried to stop the fire from spreading further.