

Ellie's Historical Report: The Great Fire of London

Learning objective: To recount the events, causes, and consequences of the Great Fire of London using formal historical language.

Use this scaffold to structure your report. Refer to your research notes to ensure your facts are accurate. Ellie the elephant reminds you to include specific dates and to use 'cause and effect' language to explain how the fire spread.

In the early hours of Sunday 2nd September 1666, a small spark in a bakery on Pudding Lane ignited a blaze that would forever alter the geography of London.

Word bank: consequently · furthermore · devastating · flammable · catastrophic · nevertheless · inhabitants · subsequently · architectural · preventative

1. The Origins of the Fire: Explain why the fire spread so rapidly across the city, considering the materials used to build houses at the time. Start your paragraph with: 'The fire began to spread uncontrollably because...' (3 marks)

2. The Human Impact: Describe how the citizens of London reacted as the fire consumed their homes. Start your paragraph with: 'As the flames engulfed the timber-framed buildings, the terrified inhabitants...' (3 marks)

3. Stopping the Blaze: Compare and contrast the methods used to fight the fire, such as creating firebreaks. Start your paragraph with: 'In a desperate attempt to halt the progress of the inferno, officials decided to...' (3 marks)

4. The Aftermath: Justify why the reconstruction of London was necessary for the safety of the city's future. Start your paragraph with: 'Following the destruction, the city planners realised that...' (3 marks)

5. What might happen if the fire had occurred during the winter rather than a dry, windy summer? Explain your reasoning. (4 marks)

6. Critical Evaluation: Evaluate the primary source evidence we have today (such as Samuel Pepys' diary). Why is it important for historians to cross-reference different accounts? (4 marks)

Extension challenge: Imagine you are a reporter living in 1666. Write a one-page broadside (a news sheet) detailing the scene at the River Thames as people tried to flee. Use sophisticated vocabulary to convey the atmosphere of chaos and loss.