



History

Great Fire of London



How Do We Know About the Great Fire?

twinkl

Aim

- I can understand how we know about the Great Fire of London.

Success Criteria

- I can accurately choose some of the sources that historians could use to find out about the Great Fire of London.
- I can explain why some historical sources are helpful to find out more about the Great Fire of London.
- I can explain why some historical sources are not helpful to find out more about the Great Fire of London.

What were the main events of the Great Fire?



- It started on 2nd September 1666, in a bakery on Pudding Lane.
- The city was very dry and windy.
- The fire spread very quickly and there was no fire brigade to help.
- People had to use buckets of water to put the fire out and houses were pulled down.
- People took their belongings on boats across the River Thames.
- St. Pauls Cathedral was destroyed by the fire.
- As the wind died down, the fire burned more slowly.
- By Thursday the fire had stopped. Luckily, only 6 people died but thousands of people were left homeless and had lost their belongings.



How do we know about the Great Fire?



What is an eyewitness?



Imagine you are there: How would you feel? What would you do?

Samuel Pepys



- What can you remember about him? Why is he important?
- What is a diary? What sort of information do people keep in diaries?
- Are diaries fact or fiction?
- Why might diaries from the past be useful for us today?



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Sources of Information



Samuel Pepys was an eyewitness to the Great Fire.

His diary is a reliable source of information about what happened. Let's find out what he wrote!

[Extract from Samuel Pepys' Diary](#)

Sunday 2 September 1666

Jane called us up about three in the morning, to tell us of a great fire they saw in the City. So I rose and slipped on my nightgowne, and went to her window, ...I thought it far enough off; and so went to bed again and to sleep...By and by Jane comes and tells me that she hears that above 300 houses have been burned down to-night by the fire we saw, and that it is now burning down all Fish-street, by London Bridge. So I made myself ready presently, and walked to the Tower, ... and there I did see the houses at that end of the bridge all on fire, and an infinite great fire on this and the other side the end of the bridge; ...So down, with my heart full of trouble, to the Lieutenant of the Tower, who tells me that it begun this morning in the King's baker's house in Pudding-lane, and that it hath burned St. Magnus's Church and most part of Fish-street already. So I down to the water-side, and there got a boat and through bridge, and there saw a lamentable fire. ...Everybody endeavouring to remove their goods, and flinging into the river or bringing them into lighters that lay off; poor people staying in their houses as long as till the very fire touched them, and then running into boats, or clambering from one pair of stairs by the water-side to another. And among other things, the poor pigeons, I perceive, were loth to leave their houses, but hovered about the windows and balconys till they were, some of them burned, their wings, and fell down.

So I was called for, and did tell the King and Duke of Yorke what I saw, and that unless his Majesty did command houses to be pulled down nothing could stop the fire. They seemed much troubled, and the King commanded me to go to my Lord Mayor from him, and command him to spare no houses, but to pull down before the fire every way.

Great Fire Sources

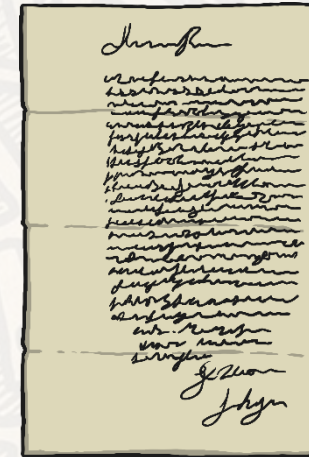
Which of these sources help to let us know how the Great Fire started?



A detailed drawing of the London skyline, before and after.



A portrait of King Charles II



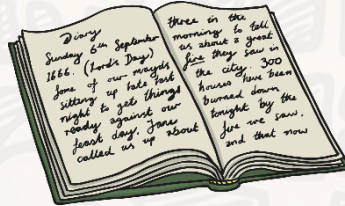
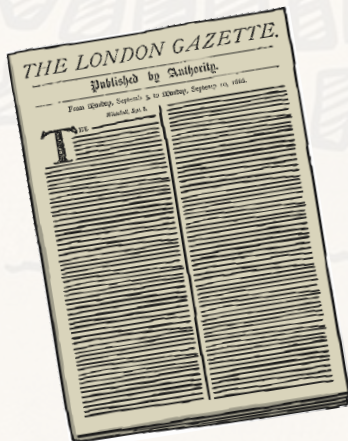
An eyewitness statement detailing where the fire began, signed by John Morgan in 1668.

Great Fire Sources



Which of these sources help to let us know how the Great Fire started?

- You are going to be history detectives!
- Look at the pictures on your sheet. Which of these sources will help you to find out more about the Great Fire of London?





Which sources did you choose?

- Can you explain why you chose each source?
- Why were some sources not helpful?



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