

Great Fire of London

Key Historical Facts (Olympiad Focus):

1. **Why did it spread so fast?**
 - London was extremely dry after a hot summer.
 - Houses were made of **wood** and covered in straw/pitch, built very close together in narrow streets.
 - Strong winds pushed the flames across the city.
2. **The Damage:**
 - Destroyed about **80% of the City of London**, including around 13,200 houses and 87 churches.
 - The famous **Old St Paul's Cathedral** was completely destroyed.
 - Surprisingly, the official death toll was recorded as very low (fewer than 10 people), though many unrecorded lives were likely lost.
3. **Samuel Pepys and His Diary:**
 - **Samuel Pepys** ['pi:ps] was a navy administrator who kept a famous **diary**.
 - His eyewitness account is the most important primary historical source about the fire (and the Great Plague of 1665).
 - *Fun fact:* He buried his cheese and wine in his garden to save them from the flames!
4. **Rebuilding London & Christopher Wren:**
 - The famous architect **Sir Christopher Wren** was tasked with rebuilding the city.
 - He designed the new **St Paul's Cathedral** (the one standing today).
 - He built **The Monument** (a tall column near London Bridge) to commemorate the fire and its rebirth.
 - After the fire, houses had to be built of **brick or stone**, not wood.

Task 1: Reading for Gist

Match the paragraphs to the titles:

1. Paragraph 1 — A / B / C / D /
2. Paragraph 2 — A / B / C / D /
3. Paragraph 3 — A / B / C / D /
4. Paragraph 4 — A / B / C / D /
5. Which title describes why houses in London are no longer built of wood?

Titles:

- A. How one writer saved and recorded the history of the disaster.
- B. The exact time, place, and ruler when the tragedy began.
- C. Why the fire grew so huge and how much damage it caused.
- D. How the city changed its look and architecture after the tragedy.

Task 2: Reading for Specific Information

Use no more than 4 words/numbers to answer the questions:

6. How many days did the Great Fire of London last in September 1666?

Answer: _____

7. Where exactly did the fire start (the name of the bakery/lane)?

Answer: _____

8. What percentage (%) of the City of London was destroyed by the flames?

Answer: _____

9. What unusual item did the famous eyewitness Samuel Pepys bury in his garden to save it?

Answer: _____

10. What new materials were made compulsory for building houses in London after the fire instead of wood?

Answer: _____