

Key Stage 1: History

Title of Topic : The Great Fire of London

Term: Autumn 2025

National Curriculum History

Develop an awareness of the past, using common words and phrases relating to the passing of time. Know where the people and events they study fit within a chronological framework and identify similarities and differences between ways of life in different periods. Use a wide vocabulary of everyday historical terms. Ask and answer questions, choosing and using parts of stories and other sources to show that they know and understand key features of events. Understand some of the ways in which we find out about the past and identify different ways in which it is represented.

Pupils should be taught about:

- events beyond living memory that are significant nationally or globally [for example, the gun powder plot.
- the lives of significant individuals in the past who have contributed to national and international achievements.
- compare aspects of life in different periods e.g. Christopher Columbus and Neil Armstrong, Amelia Earhart and Edmund Hillary.
- significant historical events, people and places in their own locality.

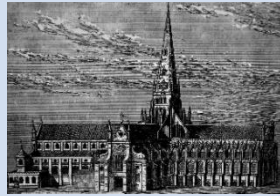
Artefacts



Fire squirt



Leather Fire Bucket



Old St Paul's Cathedral



Diary



Map of the Fire Spread

Cause and Effect

What do we already know about buildings at the time?



Why did the fire spread so quickly?



What happened during the fire?



What happened after the fire?



Vocabulary

Bakery: a place that makes bread, cakes etc.

Diary: a book that people write about their lives in.

Firebreak: a gap that stops a fire spreading to nearby buildings

Fire Hooks: a giant hook used to pull down houses

Flammable: when something burns easily

Leather bucket: leather was used to make buckets before plastic was invented

London: the capital city of England

Monument: A large structure built to remember an event.


Pudding Lane: the street where the fire started

River Thames: The name of the river that flows through London


St Paul's Cathedral: a very large church in London which was burnt down during the fire. A new St Paul's Cathedral was built after the fire.


Tower of London: where King Charles II lived in 1666. The fire stopped just before it reached The Tower.


Chronology



1667



◀ ● ● ●	1600	1700	1800	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2022	2023	2024	2025
	1666 																			Now

	Key Learning: When did this event happen? Beyond Living Memory – 1666 – over 350 years ago
1	What do we mean by past and present? Look at images of London (past and present / Now and Then) and sort the correct pictures into past and present.
2	What was life like in London in 1666? King Charles II reined in 1666. London was very crowded, busy and dirty. Most people didn’t have access to running water and there was no sewage system; people often became ill. There was no electricity; people used candles and oil lamps to light their homes.
3	What were houses like in 1666? Houses were built close together and were made from wood, straw and pitch. Roads were also very narrow. Children will make their own Tudor houses.
4	When and where did the fire start and Why did the fire spread so quickly? The fire started on Sunday 2 nd September 1666 in Thomas Farriner’s bakery on Pudding Lane, in London. The weather was hot, and it hadn’t rained for months. Houses in London were mainly built from wood and straw which is flammable, especially when it is very dry. The houses were very close together, so the fire could easily spread. Strong winds were blowing, which helped the flames to spread.
5	How did people try to put out the fire? There was no fire brigade, so ordinary people used leather buckets, fire hooks and fire squirts to try to put the fire out, but these did not work. Gunpowder was also used in an attempt to stop the spread.
6	What happened during the fire and how was it put out? Later in the week, King Charles II ordered buildings to be pulled down or blown up to create a fire break and stop the flames from spreading. Many buildings including St Paul’s Cathedral and 86 other churches were destroyed by the fire. It is thought that 7 out of 8 homes were lost. People saved their belongings by paying for them to be taken away to safety on carts. By Thursday 6 th September, four days after it started, the wind had died down, so people were able to put out the flames. Apparently only 6 people died but no one knows for sure that this is an accurate number.
7	How do we know about the Great Fire of London? (English Unit) Samuel Pepys kept a diary about the event. Some artefacts have been discovered like fire squirts and leather buckets.
8 	What happened after the fire? People fasted to raise money for those who had lost their homes. People had to live in tents outside the city and many people died during the following harsh winter. A monument 202 feet tall was erected. Organised fire brigades were started. St Paul’s cathedral and the rest of London was rebuilt.
9	Fire burning activity. Children will set their previously made Tudor houses into their own version of Pudding Lane during 1666. A fire will then begin in the bakery and children will observe how quickly the fire spreads through their street.

Key People



Samuel Pepys



Thomas Farriner



King Charles II



Sir Christopher Wren