

The Great Fire of London

A long time ago - in the year 1666 - London was very different. The streets were small and the houses were made of wood. The summer of 1666 was very hot, so it was easy for a fire to start.



Thomas Farryner was a baker who lived on Pudding Lane. One day, he went to bed and forgot to clean his oven. In the night a little fire started. By the next morning it had grown and burst into the street.

For the next few days the wind blew hard so the fire spread at quickly across London. The Great Fire of London lasted for five days and nine people died. Lots of houses, shops and churches were burnt down and we still remember the fire today.

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different

remember

easy

spread

quickly

Activities and questions

The orange words and graphemes at the bottom of the page are words and graphemes that might be either new or uncommon to the children. Try reviewing these before and after reading. The following are some games you can play with this part of the page:

- Call out a grapheme/ word and ask the children to point to it.
- Play a game of bingo. Children circle three graphemes/ words and you call them at random. If one of their circled graphemes/ words is called, they tick it off. The first to tick all off all of theirs, wins.
- Ask children to cover the graphemes/ words. Give the children a piece of scrap paper. Call a word that uses one of the graphemes (or a whole sentence that uses the word itself). Can the children write it without looking? Can they then go back and check if they have used the grapheme/ word properly?
- Ask children to find examples and uses of these graphemes/ words in the text.

Some questions to ask after reading:

- What was special about the summer of 1666? (*It was very hot*)
- Where was Thomas Farryner's bakery? (*Pudding lane*)
- How did the fire start? (*Thomas Farryner left his oven on*)
- What made the fire spread fast? (*The wind blowing/ houses made of wood/ buildings being too close*)
- Did the fire kill many people? (*Own opinion. Nine people were killed, so not many, really*)
- Find two types of buildings that the text says burned down? (*houses, shops and churches*)
- What other buildings might have burned down? (*Own thoughts and responses, within reason*)
- What other reasons do you think the fire might have spread so quickly? (*Own prior knowledge/ houses were too close and made of wood/ no fire brigade*)
- How would you have escaped the fire? (*Own thoughts and responses, within reason*)
- Can you think of an adjective to describe the fire? (*Own thoughts and responses, within reason*)
- Do you think we will ever have another Great Fire of London? Why or why not? (*Own thoughts and responses, within reason*)

Some further activities:

- Draw a "before and after" picture of a building in London. Label it with explanations as to what happened to it.
- Design a building that would be fireproof if the Great Fire of London were to happen again. Write a sentence and use labels to explain how you have made it fire proof (*links to science - materials*)
- Imagine you are the Mayor of London and the fire has just started. Make a list of things you are going to need in order to stop the fire, and why.
- Imagine you are in the Great Fire of London. Write a diary entry or a letter to a friend, describing your experience of the fire.