



History Topic: The Great Fire of London	Year 2	Term 1
---	--------	--------

**Key information**

- The fire consumed 13,200 houses, 87 parish churches, St Paul's Cathedral, and most of the buildings of the City authorities.
- The fire is estimated to have destroyed the homes of 70,000 of the City's 80,000 inhabitants.
- By the late 17th century, the City proper (area bounded by the Roman City wall and the River Thames) was only a part of London, and home to about one sixth of London's inhabitants.
- The City was surrounded by a ring of inner suburbs where most Londoners lived.
- The City was then, as now, the commercial heart of the capital, and was the largest market and busiest port in England, dominated by the trading and manufacturing classes.
- The death toll is unknown but was traditionally thought to have been small, as only six verified deaths were recorded. (This reasoning has recently been challenged on the grounds that the deaths of poor and middle-class people were not recorded; moreover, the heat of the fire may have cremated many victims, leaving no recognisable remains.)
- A melted piece of pottery on display at the Museum of London found by archaeologists in Pudding Lane, where the fire started, shows that the temperature reached 1,250 °C (2,280 °F; 1,520 K).

**Timeline**

Sunday 2nd September 1666	1am – the fire begins 3am – the Lord Mayor goes to look at the fire but decides it is not too bad so goes back to bed 7am – the fire has spread 11am – the Mayor orders the pulling down of houses having been instructed by King Charles II, who was informed by Samuel Pepys 3pm – the King sails down the River Thames to observe the fire
Monday 3rd September 1666	The government order fire posts to be set up. A group of school boys successfully hold back the fires. Midday – the fire can be seen 60 miles away in Oxford.
Tuesday 4th September 1666	The fire reaches its peak. It spread from Temple in the west, to the Tower of London in the east (where gun powder was used to blow up houses)
Wednesday 5th September 1666	The wind changes direction, blowing the fire towards the River Thames. Most of the remaining fires have been put out.
Thursday 6th September 1666	The final fires are extinguished. KI1: Know what London was like in the 17th

**Key Vocabulary**

Leather bucket: container used for carrying water
Squirt: handheld water pump
Fire posts: areas set up to organise people to fire fight from
Government: group of people who rule a country
Cathedral: the main church of a diocese which has a bishop

Timber frame: wooden frame of a building that made the walls
Wattle and daub: animal waste, straw and mud used to make walls of buildings
Thatched roof: dried straw tied tightly together and laid on the roof of a building
Diocese: an area that a church serves
Gun powder: explosive powder used to blow up buildings
Fire hook: metal pole with a hooked end that was used for pulling down buildings that were on fire

Important People	
King Charles II	A contemporary account said that King Charles in person worked manually, on Monday afternoon/evening, to help throw water on flames and to help demolish buildings to make a firebreak.
Samuel Pepys	(1633-1703) was an administrator of the navy of England and Member of Parliament who is most famous for the diary he kept for a decade which included the events of the Great Fire of London.

Artwork of the Great Fire of London:



The Great Fire of London, depicted by an unknown painter, as it would have appeared from a boat in the vicinity of Tower Wharf on the evening of Tuesday, 4 September 1666. To the left is London Bridge; to the right, the Tower of London. St. Paul's Cathedral is in the distance, surrounded by the tallest flames.

