



During this unit, we learn about the Great Fire of London which started on 2nd September 1666 and lasted for 5 days. We will learn why and how the fire started and why it was so devastating for the city of London.

What I Already Know

London is the capital city of England. It has a river running through it called the River Thames.

Key Questions

- When and where did the fire start?
- Why did the fire start?
- How did they fight the fire?
- How did the fire stop?
- How many people died?
- What happened after the fire?



Illustrations of the Great Fire of London

Key Vocabulary

Bakery	A place where bread or cakes are made.
Embers	Small pieces of glowing coal or wood in a dying fire.
Eyewitness	A person who has seen something and can give a description of it.
Fire break	When buildings are pulled down or destroyed to make a gap so the fire cannot spread further.
Fire-hooks	Giant hooks used to pull down houses. Hooks like this were used to help pull down buildings in advance of the fire, or to demolish already burning houses, to prevent the fire from spreading. It took a long time to pull down a house this way.
Flammable	When something burns easily.
Leather Bucket	Leather is the material that buckets were made from before plastic was invented. The buckets were used to hold water, so that people could put out fires.

Timeline

Sunday 2 nd September 1666	Monday 3 rd September 1666	Tuesday 4 th September 1666	Wednesday 5 th September 1666	Thursday 6 th September 1666
A fire started in Thomas Farriner's bakery on Pudding Lane in the middle of the night. The fire probably came from the oven.	People tried to tackle the fire but it spread quickly. They carried their possessions to safety using a horse and cart or boats on the River Thames.	Houses were pulled down in an attempt to stop the fire spreading. St. Paul's Cathedral is destroyed.	The fire started to burn more slowly as the wind died down.	The fire was finally under control and put out. People were left homeless.

Key Events and Facts

- The fire of London started in a bakery in Pudding Lane on 2nd September 1666.
- Thomas Farriner was the owner of the bakery where the fire started.
- **Sir Thomas Bloodworth**, who was Lord Mayor of London at the time, refused to create fire breaks when he was first told about the fire.
- **Samuel Pepys** was a famous man who wrote a diary about the fire.
- **King Charles II** was the king of England in 1666.
- **Christopher Wren** was the man who designed new buildings and a **Monument** to the fire.

Artefacts used in The Great Fire of London



Fire hook



Fire Squirt



Leather bucket

Courtesy of
London Museum

Essential Information

The weather in London was hot and it hadn't rained for 10 months so the city was very dry. Houses in London were mainly built from wood and straw (thatched) which is **flammable**, especially when it is dry. The houses were very close together, so the fire could easily spread.

There was no organised fire brigade so they used **leather buckets** and squirts filled with water, axes, **fire-hooks** and gunpowder to make **fire-breaks**.

The fire burned for 4 days. Though there was no fire brigade at the time of the fire, each parish had its own firefighting equipment. This was usually stored in the local church. People were expected to use items such as hooks, buckets, ladders and axes to fight fires in their area. As the wind died down and changed direction, the fire was brought under control and was finally put out.

6 people died as a result of the fire. Thomas Farriner's maid was the first person to die because she was too scared to jump from the burning building.

87 parish churches, including St Paul's Cathedral, and 13,200 houses were destroyed by the fire. 70,000 people were left homeless. Many left London to live elsewhere and some slept in tents in fields outside the London Wall.

New London was built with stone and brick as well as being designed with wider streets, and a splendid new St Paul's Cathedral was also rebuilt.

Useful Websites

An interactive game

<http://www.fireoflondon.org.uk/game/>

Audio Programmes about the Great fire of London

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/history-ks1-ks2-the-great-fire-of-london/z4bft39>



Sir Thomas Bloodworth



Samuel Pepys



King Charles II



Sir Christopher Wren



The Monument

Home Learning Suggestions

- Create a picture of the Great Fire of London using art resources.
- Visit Pudding Lane and the Monument and climb up to the top, to see the view of London.