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**THE  
NATIONAL  
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WITHIN THE RVINES OF THE CITY OF LONDON FIRST DESCRIBED  
THE ORDER OF THE LORD MAYOR ALDERMEN AND COMMON COVNCCELL OF THE SAID CITY



**Great Fire of London:  
how London changed**

What happened?

Key Stages 1-3 | Early modern 1485-1750

Lesson pack

HOLLAR'S "EXACT SURVEIGH" OF THE CITY OF LONDON, 1667

(from the 1669 copy in the British Museum)





# Introduction

London was a busy city in 1666. It was very crowded. The streets were narrow and dusty. The houses were made of wood and very close together. Inside their homes, people used candles for light and cooked on open fires. A fire could easily get out of control. In those days there were no fire engines or firemen to stop a fire from spreading.

The fire began on early Sunday morning on the 2nd of September. It started in Pudding Lane in the shop of the king's baker, Thomas Farrinor. When Thomas went to bed, he did not put out the fire that heated his oven. Sparks from the oven fell onto some dry flour sacks and they caught fire. The flames spread through the house, down Pudding Lane and into the nearby streets.

Soon London was filled with smoke. The sky was red with huge flames from the fire. By Monday, 300 houses had burned down.

Everybody was in a panic. People loaded their things onto carts and tried to leave town. Others tried to get away on boats on the river. Some people buried their things in the garden, hoping to save them from the fire.

The fire still spread, helped by a strong wind from the east. London Bridge and St Paul's Cathedral were both burnt. On Tuesday, King Charles II ordered that houses and shops be pulled down to stop the fire from spreading. By Wednesday, they had the fire under control. But by then, 100,000 people were homeless.

Use this lesson to work with original documents which tell the story of the Great Fire of London.

Suitable for:

KS 1 - 3

Time period:

Early modern  
1485-1750

Connections to the Curriculum:

Key stage 1:  
An event beyond living memory that is significant nationally

Key stage 2:  
A programme of study concerning an aspect of social history from the Anglo-Saxons to the present.

Key stage 3:  
The Restoration, 'Glorious Revolution' and power of Parliament, covering the reign of Charles II.

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## Teacher's Notes

This lesson can be used with pupils at Key stage 1 for the history National Curriculum in year 2. It looks at the story of the Fire of London through evidence relating to some of the key characters – Thomas Farrinor and Charles II. Background notes also provide contemporary views on the causes of the fire, based on original documents at The National Archives.

The questions progress in difficulty, so those based on source 5 are a little harder than those questions based on source 1. It is suggested that teachers/helpers read through the documents together with the class. Have a go at reading the original document first to spot familiar words, but all documents are transcribed and have simplified transcripts. Here are some suggestions for further activities

- The lesson could be expanded to ask pupils to attempt a piece of writing on the fire such as a diary entry.
- Pupils could read extracts (or simplified versions) from the diaries of Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn.
- The class could discuss how we deal with fires today.

## Sources

Source 1 provides evidence about Farrinor, the king's baker, in Pudding Lane. Catalogue ref: E 170/252

Source 2 shows the instruction given by Charles II to survey the city after the fire. Catalogue ref: SP 44/23

Source 3-4 reveals how much of the city was destroyed. Catalogue ref: ZMAP 4/18

Source 5 provides evidence of how Charles hoped to improve the city and prevent such a calamity happening again. Catalogue ref: SP 29/171

## Background

Thomas Farrinor and his wife got out of their bakery in time, but their maid was too frightened to jump from the roof. She was the first to die. Surprisingly, only nine people died as a result of the fire.

Two people have left us eyewitness accounts of the fire. The first is Samuel Pepys, who worked for the Navy. He kept a diary from 1660-1669. The second is John Evelyn, who also kept a diary. Both men describe how dramatic and scary the fire was.

Not everyone at the time thought that the fire was an accident. Some said foreigners caused it. Others felt that the fire was started by those not free to follow their own religion. Some even saw the fire as a punishment from God.

A ten-year-old boy called Edward Taylor and his family were questioned for throwing fireballs at an open window in Pudding Lane and in the streets. Fireballs were made from animal fat (called tallow), set alight and used to start fires. However, the fire was most likely caused by chance rather than by a deliberate act.

Charles II ordered that 10 October 1666 be a day of fasting on account of the fire. He told the Lord Mayor of London to support collections for victims of the fire. Later, close to Pudding Lane, a monument was built so that people would not forget the fire. It was the work of Sir Christopher Wren, who designed many new buildings, including St Pauls Cathedral, when the city was rebuilt after the fire.

# Tasks

## Source 1: Catalogue ref: E 170/252

This is a tax record for August 1666. These people lived in Pudding Lane in London. The numbers show the amount of hearths (fireplaces) in each person's house.

People who owned a house had to pay a hearth tax to the king. They paid 1 shilling (5p) for each hearth. This tax was collected twice a year. Some people might stop up their fireplaces for part of the year so they didn't have to pay the tax twice.

- Can you find the name of the king's baker?
- How many fireplaces and ovens did he have?
- How much tax did the baker have to pay? (Clue: number of hearths and ovens x 1 shilling)
- How many different jobs can you find on the list? Name them.
- How many men had houses on the list?
- How many women had houses on the list?
- How many houses were empty?

## Source 2: Catalogue ref: SP 44/23

After the fire, King Charles II wanted a new map of London.

- Who did Charles ask to make a plan of London?
- Why did Charles want a map showing London after the fire?
- What did Charles feel about the fire?

## Source 3. Catalogue ref: ZMAP 4/18

Wenceslaus Hollar drew this map.

- Can you find the following places on the map?
  - River Thames

## Tasks

- Tower of London
- St Paul's Cathedral (Clue: from above it looks like a cross, not a dome)
- Pudding Lane (Clue: north of the river, near the bridge)
- Why are there not many buildings shown in the white middle part of the map?
- Ask your teacher for a map of London today. Try and spot the differences with Hollar's map of London.

### Source 4. Catalogue ref: ZMAP 4/18

On the corner of his map, Hollar put some information. It is a list of places that are numbered on the map. This is called a key.

- There are a lot of halls. These were meeting places for different kinds of craftsmen. For example, number 130 is the Carpenter's Hall. Can you find any more? In pairs, talk about what people had to do in these jobs. (Your teacher will help you with the unusual ones.)
- Try and find some new jobs listed here in the key that were not listed in source 1 (for example: 124. weavers)
- How many houses in the city were destroyed by the fire?
- How many churches were burnt?

### Source 5. Catalogue ref: SP 29/171

King Charles praised the courage of the people in the fire. He hoped to see a more beautiful city rebuilt. He also made plans to prevent another fire. Here are some of his plans.

- How did Charles plan to stop fires spreading in London? (Clue: There are five different ideas in this source.) How would each of these plans help to stop a fire from spreading?

## Source 1: Hearth Tax return for Pudding Lane (Book 4), August 1666.

Catalogue Ref: E 170/252

x Mary Whitaker Cordw	2
George Porter plasterer	3
Mr Witt Gardner	1
Benjamin Brewster	1
Thomas Knight Glazier	4
Miss Spence	4
Empty	3
x John Bibber Turner	3
x Thomas Harriner Baker	5
William Ludford plasterer	3
is up	1
James	2
x Susanna Cloost	3
Empty	3
Lambc yard.	
William Burgis hooker & wks	3
Joshua Sande plasterwork	2
Empty	3
x Christos Darter hook & wks	5
Mr Witt Grimes	1
John Wardley stothwork	4
x William Walthor Snyth	3
John Walthor painter	2
John Chastley painter	2
Mr Witt Pawley	2
x William Green Turner	2
	60





## Transcript: Source 1

Mary Whittacre widow	2
George Porter plasterer	3
Widdow Gander	1
Benjamin Burstow	1
Thomas Knight Glasier [glass maker]	4
Alice Spencer	4
Empty	3
John Bibie turner [person who works with a turning lathe, a tool for shaping and cutting wood, important in making barrels]	3
Thomas Farrinor baker	5
1 oven	1
William Ludford plasterer	3
1 stop up	1
Jones	2
Susanna Noest	3
Empty	3
Lanbe Yard	
William Burgis hook & eye maker	3
Joshua Sands plateworker	2
Empty	3
Nicolas Carter hook & eye maker	5
Widdow Grimes	1
John Wardley clothworker	4
William Walter smyth [blacksmith who worked with metal and made horseshoes]	3
John Wells porter	2
John Hasleby porter	2
Widdow Pawley	2
William Greene turner	2
	68

# Source 2: Order from Charles II, 10 September 1666.

Catalogue Ref: SP 44/23

I have appointed Mr. Secretary  
 to take an exact plan &  
 of London w<sup>th</sup> the suburbs  
 as the same now stands after the sad  
 calamity of the late fire w<sup>ch</sup> a particular  
 description of the ruins thereof

## Transcript: Source 2

We have appointed Wencelaus Hollar and Francis Sandford to take an exact plan and survey of our city of London with the suburbs adjoining as the same now stands after the sad calamity of the late fire with a particular depiction of the ruins thereof.

### Simplified transcript

The king has chosen Wencelaus Hollar and Francis Sandford to make a map of the city of London and the nearest suburbs to show the damage caused by the terrible fire.

### Glossary

Suburbs adjoining= areas where people live next to the city

Sad calamity= event that brings terrible loss and sadness; a disaster

Depiction= a picture (or a description in words)



# Source 3: Map showing London after the fire 1667.

Catalogue Ref: ZMAP 4/18



## Transcript: Source 3

AN EXACT SURVEIGH OF THE STREETS LANE AND CHURCHES CONTAINED WITHIN THE RUINES OF THE CITY OF LONDON FIRST DESCRIBED IN SIX PLAT[E]S BY JOHN LEAKE, JOHN JENNINGS, WILLIAM MARR, WILL LEYBURN, THOMAS STREETE & RICHARD SHORTGRAVE in December Anno 1666. BY THE ORDER OF THE LORD MAYOR ALDERMEN, AND COMMON COUNCELL OF THE SAID CITY

Reduced here into one intire plat[e], by John Leake, the City Wall being added also. The places where the Halls stood are exprest by Coats of Armes, & all the Wards divided by pricks & Alphabet.

The Prospect of this Citty, as it appeared from the opposite Southwarke side, in the fire time.

HOLLAR'S "EXACT SURVEIGH" OF THE CITY OF LONDON, 1667

(from the 1669 copy in the British Museum)



## Source 4: Key to map.

Catalogue Ref: ZMAP 4/18

115. Poulterers Hall  
 114. Cookes Hall.  
 115. Barber Chirurgeons Hall.  
 116. Scriveners Hall.  
 117. Goldsmiths Hall  
 118. Waxchandlers Hall  
 119. Haberdashers Hall  
 120. Curriers Hall  
 121. Brewers Hall.  
 122. Girdlers Hall  
 123. Coopers Hall.  
 124. Weavers Hall  
 125. Macons Hall.  
 126. Mercers Hall & Chapell.  
 127. Grocers Hall,  
 128. Founders Hall.  
 129. Armourers Hall,  
 130. Carpenters Hall  
 131. Loriners & Glasiers Hall  
 132. Drapers Hall,  
 133. Marchant Taylors Hall  
 134. Salters Hall.  
 135. Cutlers Hall.

Bunt 373 Acres within  
 63 Acres & 3 woods without the walls  
 89 Churches, 13200 Houses  
 in Parishes within y<sup>e</sup> Walls entire.



## Transcript: Source 4

Transcript	Glossary
113. Poulterers Hall	People who sold chickens, hens and eggs
114. Cookes Hall	People who prepared and sold cooked food
115. Barber Chirurgeons Hall	People who cut hair and beards and could also carry out operations or remove teeth
116. Scriveners Hall	People who wrote letters and documents for money
117. Goldsmiths Hall	People who worked with gold
118. Waxchandlers Hall	People who made candles and sold them
119. Haberdasher's Hall	People who sold men's clothing
120. Curriers Hall	People who worked with leather (colouring it)
121. Brewers Hall	People who made beer and ale
122. Girdlers Hall	People who made girdles (belts)
123. Coopers Hall	People who made and repaired barrels and casks
124. Weavers Hall	People who made cloth
125. Masons Hall	People who cut stone (for buildings etc)
126. Mercers Hall & Chappell	Important traders who sold rich fabrics like silk and velvet
127. Grocers Hall	People who sold food, like spices and sugar
128. Founders Hall	People who worked with metal
129. Armorers Hall	People who made weapons
130. Carpenters Hall	People who made furniture from wood
131. Loriners & Glasiers Hall	Loriners made metal bits for bridles and saddles (kit for a horse). Glasiers made glass for windows.
132. Drapers Hall	People who sold woollen cloth.
133. Marchant Taylors Hall	People who bought cloth and made it into clothes, usually for men.
134. Salters Hall	People who made and sold salt.
135. Cutlers Hall	People who made, sold or fixed knives.
Burnt 373 Acres within	373 acres were burnt within the city walls. One acre is about the same amount of land as a football pitch
63 Acres & 3 roods without the walls	63 acres & 3 roods were burnt outside the city walls. A rood is one quarter of an acre.
89 Churches, 132,00 Houses	89 churches & 132,00 houses were burnt.
11 Parishes within City walls entire.	11 whole communities within the city walls were burnt.

## Source 5: Charles II's declaration to London in 1666.

Catalogue Ref: SP 9/171

In the first place the woful experience in this late heavy visitation hath sufficiently convinced all men of the pernicious consequences which have attended the building with Timber, and even with Stone it self, and the notable benefit of Brick, which in so many places hath resisted and even extinguished the Fire; And we do therefore hereby declare Our express Wil and Pleasure, That no man whatsoever shal presume to erect any House or Building, great or smal, but of Brick, or Stone, and if any man shal do the contrary, the next Magistrate shal forthwith cause it to be pulled down,

all other eminent and notorious Streets, shal be of such a breadth, as may with Gods blessing prevent the mischief that one side may suffer if the other be on fire,

nor wil we suffer any Lanes or Allyes to be crected, but whereupon mature deliberation the same shal be found absolutely necessary,

that no house shall be erected within so many foot of the River,

any houses to be inhabited by Brewers, or Diers, or Sugar-Bakers, which Trades by their continual Smoaks contribute very much to the unhealthiness of the adjacent places; but We require the Lord Major and Aldermen of London upon a full consideration, and weighing all conveniences and inconveniences that can be foreseen, to propose such a place as may be fit for all those Trades which are carried on by smoak to inhabit together,

## Transcript: Source 5

In the first place the woful experience in this late heavy visitation hath sufficiently convinced all men of the pernicious consequences which have attended the building with Timber, and even with Stone itself, and the notable benefit of Brick, which in so many places hath resisted and even extinguished the Fire; And we do therefore declare Our express Wil and Pleasure, That no man whatsoever shal presume to erect any House or Building, great or small, but of Brick or Stone, and if any man shal do the contrary, the next Magistrate shall forthwith cause it to be pulled down, .

.all other eminent and notorious Streets, shal be of such a breadth, as may with Gods blessing prevent the mischief that one side may suffer if the other be on fire, .

.nor wil we suffer any Lanes or Allyes to be erected, but where upon mature deliberation the same shal be found absolutely necessary,

...no house shall be erected within so many foot of the River,

.any houses to be inhabited by Brewers, or Diers, or Sugar-Bakers, which Trades by their continual Smoaks contribute very much to the unhealthiness of the adjacent places, but We require the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London upon a ful consideration, and weighing all conveniences and inconveniences that can be foreseen, to propose such a place as may be fit for all those Trades which are carried on by smoak to inhabit together, .

### Simplified transcript

Firstly, the sad experience of the fire has shown us all the bad results of building with wood, and even with stone, and the good benefits of brick, which in so many places did not catch fire. And it is the King's wish that no man shall build any house or building, large or small, unless it is made of brick or stone. And if any man does not do this, his house will be pulled down.

All of the main streets shall be wide enough to (God willing) stop a fire spreading from one side to the other.



## Transcript (cont.): Source 5

No lanes or alleys will be built unless we think they are really needed.

No houses shall be built near the river.

Brewers (making beer), dyers (colouring cloth) or bakers are trades whose constant smoke makes nearby places unhealthy. The Lord Mayor and the men who run London must think of a place where all those trades which use fire can be housed together.

## External links

[Pudding Lane flythrough](#)<sup>1</sup>

Fly through 17th century London prior to the Great Fire.

[The Great Fire of London game](#)<sup>2</sup>

The Great Fire of London game from the Museum of London.

[Museum of London: The Great Fire of London 1666](#)<sup>3</sup>

Objects from Museum of London collections tell the story of the Great Fire.

[The Diary of Samuel Pepys](#)<sup>4</sup>

The Pepys Diary website site publishes daily extracts from the diary. Find Pepys' description of the Great Fire of London on 4th September 1666, famously burying his 'parmazan cheese'.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UFRrDKaa8EY&feature=youtu.be>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fireoflondon.org.uk/game/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/discover/great-fire-london-1666>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.pepysdiary.com/diary/1666/09/04/>



## Why do our hyperlinks come with footnotes?

Our resources are designed to be printed and used in classrooms, which means hyperlinks aren't always accessible digitally. We include the full link at the bottom of the page so that you can type in the address without distracting from the main text of the lesson materials.

## Did you know?

The National Archives Education Service also offers free workshops onsite in Kew and online in your classroom.

Our [Onsite Workshops](#) are available for free here at The National Archives and allow students to experience genuine original documents reflecting over 1000 years of history. From Elizabeth I's signature to the telegrams of the sinking Titanic, students love the wow-factor of being able to see real history on the desk in front of them.

Our [Online Workshops](#) allow our Education Officers to teach through your projector, leading discussions and guiding students through activities based around original documents. All you need is a computer with a projector, webcam and microphone. We'll arrange a test call before your session to check the tech is working.

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