

## GREAT FIRE OF LONDON

The Great Fire of London was a major **conflagration** that swept through the central parts of the English city of London, from Sunday, 2 September to Wednesday, 5 September 1666.

The fire **gutted** the medieval City of London inside the old Roman city wall. It threatened, but did not reach, the aristocratic district of Westminster, Charles II's **Palace of Whitehall**, and most of the suburban slums. It **consumed** 13,200 houses, 87 parish churches, St Paul's Cathedral and most of the **buildings** of the City authorities. It is **estimated** to have destroyed the homes of 70,000 of the City's 80,000 **inhabitants**.

The death toll is unknown but 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, while 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 1700 °C.

The Great Fire started at the bakery of Thomas Farriner (or Farynor) on **Pudding Lane**, shortly after **midnight** on Sunday, 2 September, and spread **rapidly** west across the City of London.



The use of the **major** firefighting technique of the time, the creation of firebreaks by means of demolition, was critically delayed owing to the indecisiveness of the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Thomas Bloodworth. By the time large-scale **demolitions** were ordered on Sunday night, the wind had already fanned the bakery fire into a firestorm which defeated such measures.

The fire pushed north on Monday into the heart of the City. **Order** in the streets broke down as rumours arose of suspicious foreigners **setting** fires. The fears of the homeless focused on the French and Dutch, England's enemies in the ongoing Second Anglo-Dutch War; these substantial Immigrant groups became victims of lynchings and **street** violence. On Tuesday, the fire spread over most of the City, destroying St Paul's Cathedral and leaping the River Fleet to threaten Charles II's court at Whitehall, while coordinated **firefighting** efforts were **simultaneously mobilising**. The battle to quench the fire is considered to have been won by two factors: the strong east winds died down, and the Tower of London garrison used gunpowder to create effective firebreaks to halt **further** spread eastward.

The social and economic problems created by the disaster were **overwhelming**. Evacuation from London and resettlement elsewhere were strongly encouraged by Charles II, who feared a London rebellion **amongst** the dispossessed refugees. Despite numerous **radical** proposals, London was reconstructed on **essentially** the same street plan used **before** the fire.

1. Many suburban slums were burnt down

- a. True.
- b. False.
- c. We don't know.

2. How many inhabitants had their homes destroyed?

- a. 13,200.
- b. 70,000.
- c. 80,000.

3. There were many deaths recorded.

- a. True.
- b. False.
- c. We don't know.

4. The Lord Mayor of London decided to demolish the burnt buildings to control the fire.

- a. True.
- b. False.
- c. We don't know.

5. The city was rebuilt following a new street design.

- a. True.
- b. False.
- c. We don't know.



## Vocabulary Pg 234 y 235

Conflagration : Conflagración

Soiled : deslustrado

Consumed : Consumado

Buildings : edificios

estimated : estimado

Inhabitants : habitantes

Verified : Verificado

Reasoning : razonamiento

Victims : Víctimas

Pudding : Pudín

Rapidly : rápidamente

Major : importante