

Teachers' Notes: The Great Fire of London

The Great Fire of London

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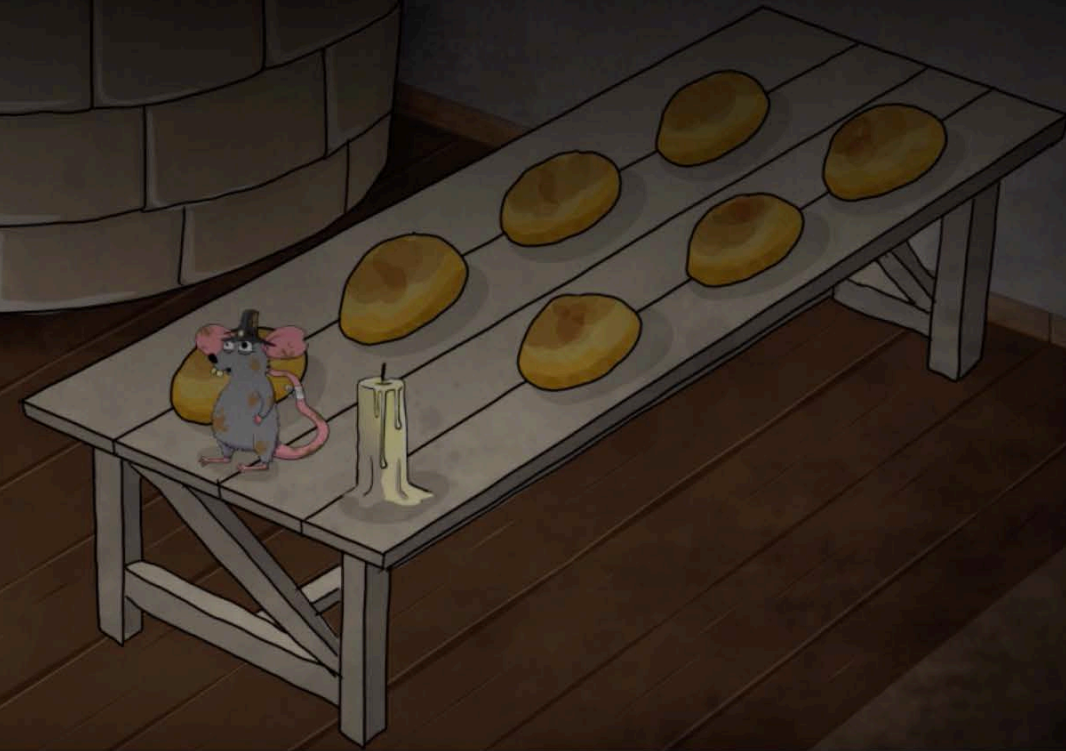
About this series

Throughout this series, we're invited to hear all about The Great Fire of London through the tales of a rat.

Our friendly presenter is an animated rat, Maureen. In each episode, Maureen recounts the stories passed on through her family, from generation to generation.

Her ancestors are all-seeing and all-hearing. They have access-all-areas passes to the dirtiest, darkest corners of history.

In this series, we'll discover the events and conditions that led to The Great Fire of London, what happened when the citizens, Lord Mayor and King tried to put it out - and the consequences of their actions. We encounter Samuel Pepys and Christopher Wren along the way, who helped to document and re-design London respectively.



How did The Great Fire of London start?



Introduction

This animation sets up the story of The Great Fire of London. It begins at a modern-day BBQ, adding some context to the story. We go back in time to understand the circumstances that led to the fire starting, meet key characters and learn how London began to react to the fire.

Before the video

Discuss the dangers of fire and the impact fires can have. You could make links with relevant new stories, for example Australian fires and their impact on wildlife and homes. Ask children where they have experienced fires and flames.

Look at images and artefacts from this era, e.g. clothes from mid-17th century to give children a 'sense of period'. Dates are not vital for teaching chronology at KS1, but by using artefacts we can help children understand what life was like at this time.

Look at paintings of The Great Fire and explain we will learn about this fire. Ask children – How do you think it started? How long do you think it lasted? How did they put it out?

Questions during the video

How long ago was The Great Fire of London? *355 years ago.*

Who do we think started the fire? *Thomas Farriner*

Why did they not call for the fire brigade? *They didn't have one.*

Why was the Lord Mayor not concerned about the fire? *Fires were very common during this period and normally weren't as big as The Great Fire. Lots of people wouldn't have panicked at first- they were used to fires.*

Why were the houses so close together? *Lots of houses in London at the time were built in Tudor times and many people used 'overhangs' to gain more room on the first floor. They had to pay for the size of the plot of land and so were able to have a larger room upstairs by building an overhang. All the houses became very close together.*

Why did it spread so quickly? *Some houses were built in stone- not all were wood. However, stone was costly and used less frequently. With most building made from wood the fire spread easily. The dry summer and direction of the wind made the fire spread even quicker.*

How did they try to stop the fire? *Water squirters and basic tools. Every parish kept resources for this in their churches and people worked together to put out the fires that happened.*

After the video

Answer the question at the end of the video - What happens next? How long do you think the fire went on? What was the impact on London?

Should Thomas Farriner have been punished? Discuss the enquiry question as a class or debate it by putting the class in teams - for and against.

What happened during The Great Fire of London?



Introduction

This animation tells the story of The Great Fire of London.

We learn how the fire spread across the city and how the Lord Mayor, Samuel Pepys and King Charles II all played a part – alongside the citizens.

Before the video

Show children cheese, wine, gold and a diary and ask what they think these might have to do with the next part of the story.

Ask the children to make a prediction.

Questions during the video

Who was Samuel Pepys? *A politician, and administrator of the navy.*

Why is he significant? *He wrote diaries that told us lots about two important events - The Plague and The Great Fire of London.*

Who was Charles II? *The monarch at the time. He is known as the 'Merry Monarch' - he enjoyed socialising, especially going to the theatre. He ruled from 1660 - 1685.*

What did people do during the days of the fire? *Some helped to put it out. Some took their possessions and escaped London.*

What did Samuel Pepys bury? *Cheese and wine.*

Why did he do this? *They were valuable items to him.*

After the video

Write an extract from Samuel Pepys' diary and explain your worries about the fire.

Look at an image of the fire - list the reasons you can see that show the reasons why the fire spread so quickly.

Write a letter to the Lord Mayor to plead with him to use fire hooks and tear down buildings so the fire will stop.

Class debate - Who was to blame for the fire? Look at different roles and what people did during the fire. Is there somebody to blame? Children share ideas based on evidence.

What happened after The Great Fire of London?



Introduction

This animation explores the consequences of The Great Fire of London.

We discover what happened to the city when the flames finally died down, how it recovered and how we remember the fire today.

Before the video

Ask children what their favourite possession is.

What would they do if they lost it?

How do you think the people of London felt as their houses burned down?

Questions during the video

Who is Christopher Wren? *A 17th century architect, designer, astronomer and mathematician.*

What is a monument? *A statue, building, or other structure erected to commemorate a notable person or event.*

Why was this a significant event? *London was a major city and this was a significant fire. The rebuilding of the city helped to shape modern London and regulations.*

After the video

Sequence the events of the fire. This could be done using drama/freeze framing.

Write from the rat's point of view and explain what she sees.

Children to write to The King and show him their designs and persuade him to pick their vision of a rebuilt London.

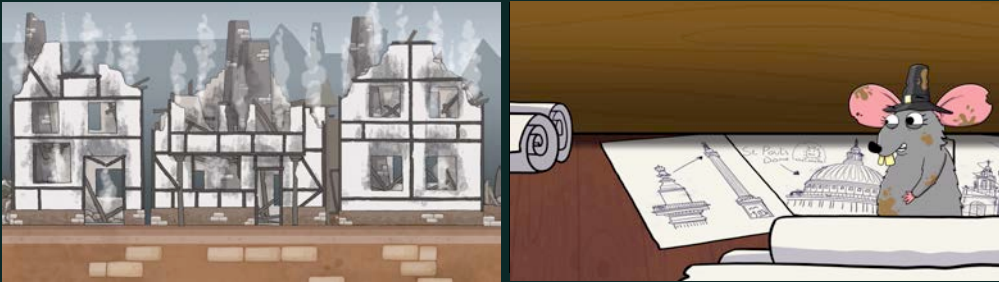
Compare London - now and then activity, research images.

Make Tudor houses. Recreate the fire - put the houses together and (safely!) burn to show how the fire spread. See cross-curricular links.

Use De Bono hats to discuss all aspects of the fire. Discuss the 'cause and consequence' of a historical event.

Create a new monument to commemorate this event. Explain your design.

Cross-curricular ideas on The Great Fire of London



Art/Design and Technology

Make landmarks in London using different materials. Make Tudor houses.

Design their own water squirter or other basic fire tools.

Develop sketching skills and draw St. Paul's cathedral like Wren's sketch.

PSHE

Fire safety. Invite fire brigade in to discuss how to keep safe. If making Tudor houses, children could line them up to recreate event. The fire brigade can 'put out' the fire safely for you.

Science

Why couldn't the houses be put back together? Investigate how heat can affect materials.

Which materials are best for each part of our houses and why? Write to the Lord Mayor and explain how the new buildings should be constructed.

English

Writing a diary entry from a specific person/character's point of view.

Write a biography of Samuel Pepys/Charles II.

Write a thought bubble to show emotions about losing homes, jobs etc.

Write a setting description - use of nouns and noun phrases when the fire has taken hold.

Freeze frame events and then write speech bubbles to show might have been said.

Listen to the rhyme at the end of the third video. Discuss rhythm and intonation in poems. Look at fire poems and create their own using their senses.

Write a non-chronological report about the event. Explain why it is significant.

Geography

Capital cities of the UK - locate on maps.

Study of London, then and now. How did the city grow after the fire?

Compare London to the countryside, how was life different for those that fled?

Look at maps to compare the changes in London from 1666 to now.

Mathematics

Days of the week- use the events of the fire to help consolidate days of the week.

2D and 3D shapes - look at buildings- can children identify different shapes within them?

Pattern- creating/continuing patterns on the houses

Daily news: what happened today?

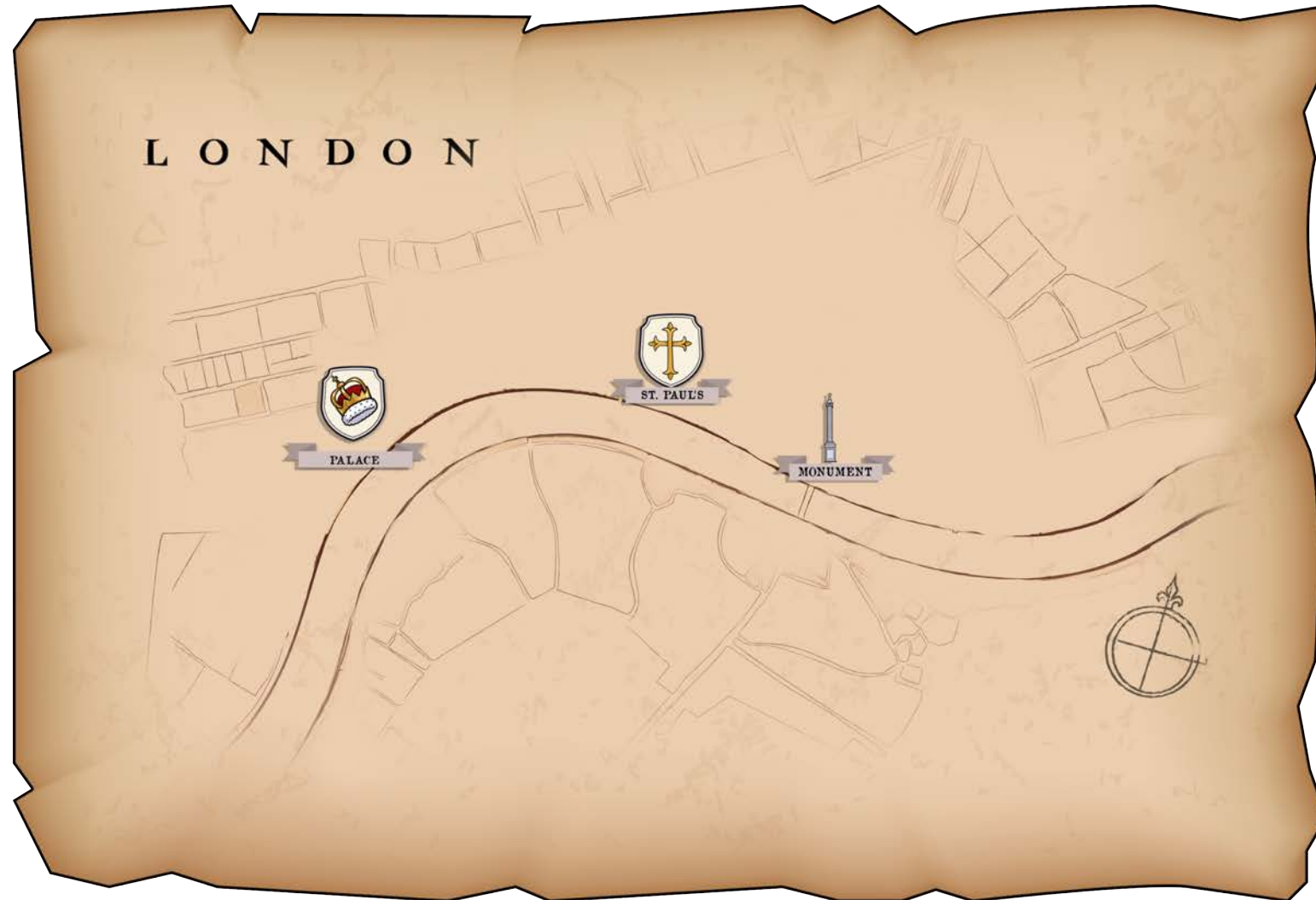
Be the news reporter – interview a character and find out what happened!

Materials: one stick per character, glue and scissors



Redesigning London: My city

Design your own dream city



Write your own building rules

My rules...

Rule 1:

Rule 2:

Rule 3:

Rule 4:

Rule 5:

Design your own dog:

If you were the King or Queen, would you have a dog that looked like you?



Me

Dog me