

Great Fire sources: compare two viewpoints

Pupil activity

Audience: Year 5 pupils

These are classroom summaries, not quotations. Use the summary and source details shown here.

Source A: Samuel Pepys's private diary

Who: Samuel Pepys, a senior Navy Office official. Date: 2 September 1666. Form: private diary, written in shorthand. The diary was first published in 1825. The classroom summary says people moved belongings and Pepys asked the King for orders to pull down houses. A specific intended reader is not stated.

Source B: London Gazette

Form: printed public report approved by royal officials. The London Gazette was published by authority from 3 to 10 September 1666; this issue is dated Whitehall, 8 September. The classroom summary describes the fire spreading and credits royal leaders with giving orders. A specific intended reader is not stated.

Compare the summaries

1. Which source is described as a private diary? Which is a public newspaper report?

2. What date is supplied for Pepys's diary entry? What date range and issue dateline are supplied for the Gazette?

3. What does each classroom summary say about the response to the fire?

4. What might the different forms help a historian investigate? Label this as an inference.

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5. What can neither short summary tell you about every person's experience?

Write: "The summary of Source __ says __. Its form may help show __. It cannot establish __."
