Fire Through Sources

Compare an eyewitness diary with a historian's account.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.9 "Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details in Source A that come from Pepys's firsthand observations. Circle details in Source B that add broader information, then draw a line between one underlined detail and one circled detail that connect.

The Great Fire of London

1 London's Great Fire in 1666 left records from people who lived through it and later accounts from historians. Read two sources about the disaster. Source A is an excerpt adapted from the diary of Samuel Pepys, a government official who traveled through London during the fire. He wrote his entries in September 1666. Source B is an excerpt from a historian's article published centuries later. It uses eyewitness accounts, city records, and research to explain the fire's wider effects.

2 Source A, Diary of Samuel Pepys, September 1666: I went by boat along the River Thames and saw the fire spread across the city. People crowded the riverbank, carrying goods they had saved from their homes. At first, officials had not pulled down enough houses to stop the flames. A few days later, I walked through streets where buildings had burned to the ground. The ruined area seemed enormous, and smoke still rose from some places.

3 Source B, historian's article: The Great Fire destroyed about 13,000 houses, 87 parish churches, and St. Paul's Cathedral. Most of the city's buildings stood close together and were made partly of wood, so wind and dry materials helped the fire move quickly. Officials eventually used gunpowder to create firebreaks by blowing up houses. Pepys's diary helps historians picture the fear and confusion of people near the river, but city records help historians measure how much of London was destroyed.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which detail from Source A shows that Pepys had a close view of the disaster? Explain what he saw.

2. How does Source B add to Pepys's statement that the ruined area seemed enormous?

3. What information does Source B say historians use besides Pepys's diary, and what can that information help them do?

4. Compare the two sources' descriptions of officials' response to the fire. What does each source show?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write exactly three sentences explaining how the two sources work together. Name which source best helps a reader imagine the fire, name which source best helps a reader measure its damage, and use one detail from each source.

ANSWER KEY

Fire Through Sources

GRADE 7 · RH.6-8.9

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline details in Source A that come from Pepys's firsthand observations. Circle details in Source B that add broader information, then draw a line between one underlined detail and one circled detail that connect. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which detail from Source A shows that Pepys had a close view of the disaster? Explain what he saw.	**Pepys saw people crowding the riverbank and carrying goods from their homes, showing that he observed people escaping the fire.**
2	How does Source B add to Pepys's statement that the ruined area seemed enormous?	**Source B gives measurable evidence, stating that about 13,000 houses, 87 parish churches, and St. Paul's Cathedral were destroyed.**
3	What information does Source B say historians use besides Pepys's diary, and what can that information help them do?	**Historians use other eyewitness accounts, city records, and research. City records help them measure how much of London was destroyed.**
4	Compare the two sources' descriptions of officials' response to the fire. What does each source show?	**Source A shows that officials did not pull down enough houses at first. Source B explains that officials later used gunpowder to create firebreaks by blowing up houses.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Source A best helps a reader imagine the fire because Pepys saw people carrying goods along the riverbank. Source B best helps a reader measure the damage because it reports that about 13,000 houses were destroyed. Together, the sources show both people's experiences and the fire's huge impact on London.

Accept equivalent evidence-based comparisons between Pepys's firsthand observations and the historian's broader facts and explanations. For the open task, require all three sentences, a correct source choice for each purpose, and accurate details from both sources.