

# THE MASKED HISTORIAN'S GUIDE TO

Pay attention,  
Small Student,  
and you will  
learn what to do  
and how to do it!



**SUCCESSFULLY ANSWERING THE  
COMMON ENTRANCE EVIDENCE SECTION.**

***A Really, Really Useful* Publication  
For Historically Minded Students of  
St. Hugh's School.**



# First Things First.

Just what can I expect to find in the Common Entrance evidence section, Masked Historian?



The Powers That Be will give you **THREE** pieces of evidence. At least one of these will be **PICTORIAL** and the remainder will be pieces of written evidence. These pieces may be from modern historians or people writing at the time of a particular historical event.



The Powers That Be

But what topics will the sources be about? Am I supposed to know a lot about them?



Each year The Powers That Be will choose **ONE** topic from a choice of **TWO**. The sources will cover this chosen topic.

In 2008 the sources will be about either **THE PLAGUE IN LONDON 1665** or **MARY I AND THE PROTESTANTS**.

In 2009 the sources will be about either **THE CAUSES OF THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR** or **HENRY VIII AND THE "GREAT MATTER"**.

In 2010 the sources will be about **JAMES II AND THE GLORIOUS REVOLUTION** or **THE JACOBITE REBELLION OF 1745**.

You don't need to know a lot about each topic, but some background knowledge may help you.



OK! I understand that! So how many questions will I have to answer and what will they be like?

Just FOUR questions to answer. The first three questions will add up to 12 marks and the last question will be worth 8 marks. The whole section is worth 20 marks:

1. This will ask you to look at Source A and will be a simple comprehension question to test your understanding of the source. A short answer will do nicely for this one.
2. This will be about Source B and will be a more demanding comprehension question requiring a longer response.
3. This question will ask you to compare all three sources. You may be asked how well two sources support the third or not. A pretty lengthy answer will be needed.
4. This question will investigate the usefulness of sources. It will also ask about provenance in some form: how / who wrote the sources, or when the sources were written, why they were written, or whether the nationality of the writer might make a difference as to the reliability of the sources. 8 marks on offer...the longest answer of the section is required.

So let's now have a look at some sample sources and the questions that are asked about them.



TURN OVER THE PAGE.....

DO IT NOW!!!!!!!

## **PART A: EVIDENCE QUESTIONS**

Study the sources and then answer all the questions.

*The sources all provide evidence about the Great Fire of London, 1666.*

A1. Look at **Source A**. What can we learn from **Source A** about why the great fire spread so rapidly? (2)

A2. Look at **Source B**. How were ordinary people reacting to the fire? (4)

A3. Look at **Source C**. In which ways does this source help our understanding of **Sources A and B**? (6)

A4. Look at **all** the sources. Which do you think might be the most useful to someone studying the Great Fire of London? Explain your answer. (8)

**SOURCE A:** from the book “The Year of Portents” by Loquacious Pedagogue, written in 2004.

Soon after midnight on Sunday 2 September, 1666, a fire broke out in a baker’s shop in Pudding Lane, near London Bridge. It spread rapidly through the narrow streets where the high houses were tightly packed together. Like trees in a forest, they were tinder-dry after a long summer. The Thames was so low that little water could be pumped up to fight the flames. The fire soon burnt the waterwheels under the bridge which worked the pumps. By dawn it had reached the warehouses around London Bridge.

**SOURCE B:** from the Diary of Samuel Pepys. Entry dated 2 September, 1666.

So down I went, with my heart full of trouble, to the Lieutenant of the Tower, who tells me that it began this morning in the King's baker's house in Pudding Lane, and that it hath burned St. Magnus's Church and most part of Fish Street already. So I rode down to the waterside, . . . and there saw a lamentable fire. . . . Everybody was endeavouring to remove their goods, and flinging into the river or bringing them into lighters [small boats] that lay off; poor people staying in their houses as long as till the very fire touched them, and then running into boats, or clambering from one pair of stairs by the waterside to another. And among other things, the poor pigeons, I perceived, were loth [reluctant] to leave their houses, but hovered about the windows and balconies, till they were, some of them, burned at their wings and fell down.

**SOURCE C:** a contemporary engraving showing the Great Fire of London from the south bank of the River Thames.





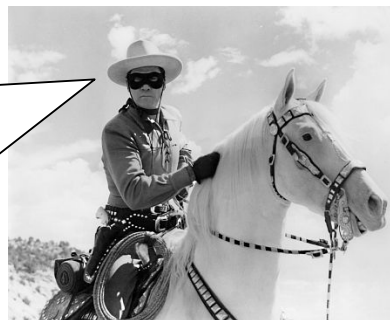
Righto, Small Student! What are all these sources about and how do you know?

Well, they are all about the Great Fire of London. It tells me this just before question A1... "The sources all provide evidence about the Great Fire of London in 1666."



Most excellent, Small One! Now, before we answer the questions let us take a few moments to examine who wrote or made the sources, when and why they were written or made, and any other information we are given about their **PROVENANCE** [where they came from and why they were written]. Let us then think about how this may affect the usefulness and reliability of each source.

Small Student, speak about Source A!



Well... it says "**SOURCE A**: from the book "The Year of Portents" by Loquacious Pedagogue, written in 2004." So, this is a piece of evidence written by a modern historian quite recently. It is a **SECONDARY** source because it was not written at the time. I hope that this historian has used lots of sources, primary and secondary, to **RESEARCH** this topic before writing. If so, then it will be pretty reliable because the information can be trusted and this account, as a result, should be **BALANCED** and **NOT BIASED**. It will be useful too because we should be able to learn facts about the Great Fire and also the sequence of events.

I have taught you well, Small Student!  
Now tell me about the **PROVENANCE**  
of the other two sources.

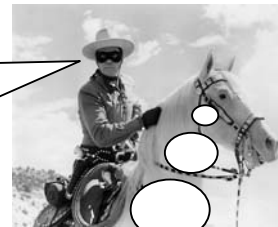


Hmmm.... It says “Source B: from the Diary of Samuel Pepys. Entry dated 2 September, 1666.” This is a **PRIMARY** source, written at the time. It is also a diary entry from an **EYEWITNESS**...he saw and experienced the Great Fire! I do know that Pepys never intended to have his diaries published and that they were a personal record of his daily life and experiences so he has recorded the things that he thought were important. He wasn't writing for anyone else's benefit but his own so I think that we can trust what he writes as being accurate and because of that, pretty useful too!

Source C is a “contemporary engraving”. This means that it was made at the time. This is also a **PRIMARY** source but we don't know made this. We don't know if this person actually saw the fire! He may have copied this from someone else! It might be an **ARTIST'S IMPRESSION** to give people who wanted news about the fire an *idea* of what London may have looked like when it was ablaze. He may have used his imagination and made the fire look worse than it actually was or perhaps made it seem less severe. Is it reliable? Hmm...not as much as the other two sources but it is useful because we too can get an idea of the size and scale of the fire if, like the artist, we use our imagination.

I commend you, O Vertically Challenged Child. You are ready to answer the questions. Heed my advice and construct the perfect response to each question.

Begin with question A1. This is a comprehension question. You need a short response but get a quote in to show the reader that you know exactly what you are writing about...just as you would quote a word or a phrase from a text in an essay in English.



Hmmm.. not all diaries are balanced. Some people write a diary that they intend to publish. Politicians do this so they might record events with a biased perspective. Remember you had this from the Horse's Mouth!



A1. Look at **Source A**. What can we learn from **Source A** about why the great fire spread so rapidly? (2)

We learn from Source A that the fire spread so rapidly because the tall houses were packed tightly together. The author writes “Like trees in a forest they were tinder dry after a long summer”. This tells us that the very material that made the houses was perfect fuel for the fire and like a forest fire it would spread quickly and burn for a long time.



Good response, Bespectacled One! Two marks in the bag. Good level of comprehension and a quote to boot!

Now respond to A2. Remember, this is another comprehension question, this time about Source B. It carries more marks so we need a much longer response, more detail and a quote or two for good measure.

Off you go, Shorty!

A2. Look at **Source B**. How were ordinary people reacting to the fire? (4)

According to Source 2, many people were attempting to save their possessions from the fire by either throwing them into the river or by putting them into small boats that were by the river’s edge. Pepys also says that some people, especially poorer Londoners, were reluctant to leave their houses, staying inside until the building caught fire; “poor people staying in their houses as long till the very fire touched them.” Once people had left their houses they fled to the river and tried to get on board boats or remained on the river bank moving along as the fire came close to them; “clambering from one pair of stairs by the waterside to another.

How’s that, Masked Historian?



Excellent! 4 marks to your credit! A3 needs a careful structure. Use these sentence starters:

Source C helps us understand Source A because...

Source C helps us understand Source B because...

Think carefully...and off you go!





A3. Look at **Source C**. In which ways does this source help our understanding of **Sources A and B**? (6)

Source C helps us understand Source A because it gives us an idea of the scale of the fire and how it has spread through the cramped streets that are described in this source. Source A describes how the “tinder-dry” houses helped the fire spread and Source C shows us the end result, a massive fire out of control.

Source C helps us understand Source B because Pepys mentions that people used small boats to escape the fire and we can clearly see lots of small boats on the river, but Source C is giving a wide long range view of the fire and an impression of the scale of the disaster while Source B describes what Pepys saw happening on a smaller scale around him. We can imagine how terrible it must have been to be in the Fire when we look at Source C and think about what Source B describes.

Well done, Shorty! You have given the Powers That Be plenty to think about there and that’s important. There is no right or wrong answer when they ask you to give an opinion. Just make sure that you support your point of view by referring to the sources.

Are you ready to tackle the big question? Eight marks on offer so you need a full and expanded answer. To gain top marks, you need to **MAKE SURE THAT YOU WRITE ABOUT EACH SOURCE IN TURN AND THEN TELL THE POWERS THAT BE WHICH IS MOST USEFUL AND WHY**. You may decide that none of them are useful...but tell them why! You might decide that they are all of equal use...write down why. You might decide that one of them is better than the others, but explain why. Get the idea?

Gird yourself, Small Student and organise your thoughts.

I’d start on the next page if I were you.





A4. Look at **all** the sources. Which do you think might be the most useful to someone studying the Great Fire of London? Explain your answer. (8)

Source A is useful to someone studying the Great Fire because it gives us plenty of factual information such as the date of the Fire, where it started, some reasons as to why the fire was able to spread so rapidly and how far it had reached by dawn on 3<sup>rd</sup> September. What the source does not do is give us any information about how long the fire raged for, the scale of the damage by the end or how the fire was eventually put out.

Source B is useful because it gives us some eyewitness information about how people reacted to the Fire. Pepys does not describe a lot of panic, but it seems that people were relatively calm, concentrating on saving their possessions and in some cases remaining in their houses until the fire eventually reached them. It also gives us some details that may not be included in a history book such as the deaths of many pigeons. It also tells us how people used the river as a way of escaping the danger.

Source C is useful because it allows us to have an understanding of the scale of the disaster and what London may have looked like at the height of the blaze. To do this we need to use our imaginations. Beyond this, there is very little information we can gain. It does tell us that there was interest in the fire because this engraving was probably sold to inform people about recent events.



Well done, Small Student. That was a pretty impressive and well thought out answer. It will give the Powers That Be plenty of opportunity to award you marks. You made sure that you wrote about each of the sources. This is important. If you only mention two of the sources then The Powers That Be can only give you minimum marks.



And now it's your turn. As you try out some past CE papers, remember the advice and tips in this guide. Success can be yours, but you have to work for it!

**Best of Luck!**

The Masked Historian is now available as a fully articulated action figure.



