

Wren's London

Dr Lucy Jessop recently completed her PhD at the Courtauld Institute of Art on the patronage of early-modern English architecture. She has taught courses for UCL, the Courtauld, City University, and the University of Reading on various aspects of British architecture, often focusing on London, and lectures weekly at Somerset House.

There are 2 possible ways to complete this worksheet:

OPTION A (more difficult): watch the video and make notes before you look at the following questions. Then try to answer the questions using the notes you have made.

OPTION B (easier): Read the following questions before you watch the video. Then close the question book, watch the video and make notes. Finally, re-open the question book and try to answer the questions using the notes you have made.

FOR BOTH OPTIONS, YOU SHOULD FAMILIARISE YOURSELF WITH THE VOCABULARY BELOW BEFORE YOU WATCH.

Key Vocabulary

Concave – curved inwards like the inner surface of a ball

Convex – curved outwards like the outside of a ball

Dome – a round roof with a circular base

Elongated – long and thin, stretched out

Section A: True/false

1. According to the lecturer, Sir Christopher Wren is probably the best known architect in Britain.
2. The lecture covers the period from around 1660 to 1720.
3. Prior to 1660, England had experienced a period of political stability.
4. Charles I lived in exile in France and Holland.
5. Westminster Bridge was the first bridge to be built across the Thames.
6. Before the Great Fire of London, most houses were made of wood.
7. Sir Christopher Wren spent many years studying architecture.
8. Wren had visited Paris in 1665 but didn't like the architecture there.
9. The dome of St Paul's Cathedral is the biggest in the world.

10. In the late 1600's, there were more domed buildings in London than in Paris.
11. Over 90 parish churches had to be rebuilt after the Great Fire of London.
12. It was cheaper for Wren to build new churches out of stone than brick.
13. According to the lecturer, City churches are best visited at the weekend.

Section B: Comprehension questions

1. What happened to the English royal family in 1649?
2. What adjective does the lecturer use to describe the Protestant government of the 1650s?
3. Which royal Palace was established in 1530?
4. London and Paris were (and still are) designed differently. What is the main reason for this?
5. What percentage of the population of London died in the Great Plague of 1665?
6. When was the Great Fire of London?
7. What example does the lecturer give to demonstrate how narrow the streets of London were in the seventeenth century?
8. After the Great Fire, Wren proposed to completely redesign London. Why did this never happen?
9. Why was the Great Fire of London 'convenient' for Wren?
10. How was Wren's dome for St Pauls' Cathedral revolutionary?
11. Why do very few people live in the City of London?
12. According to the lecturer, what was Wren's greatest legacy?

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ANSWER KEY

Section A: True/false

1. According to the lecturer, Sir Christopher Wren is probably the best known architect in Britain. **True**
2. The lecture covers the period from around 1660 to 1720. **True**
3. Prior to 1660, England had experienced a period of political stability. **False – it had experienced political instability**
4. Charles I lived in exile in France and Holland. **False, Charles II lived there**
5. Westminster Bridge was the first bridge to be built across the Thames. **False – London Bridge was the first**
6. Before the Great Fire of London, most houses were made of wood. **True**
7. Sir Christopher Wren spent many years studying architecture. **False – it was not possible to study architecture then**
8. Wren had visited Paris in 1665 but didn't like the architecture there. **False – he visited Paris and liked the architecture**
9. The dome of St Paul's Cathedral is the biggest in the world. **False – St Peter's is the biggest in the world**
10. In the late 1600's, there were more domed buildings in London than in Paris. **False – there were more domes in Paris (but Italy had even more)**
11. Over 90 parish churches had to be rebuilt after the Great Fire of London. **True**
12. It was cheaper for Wren to build new churches out of stone than brick. **False – stone was very expensive**
13. According to the lecturer, City churches are best visited at the weekend. **False – they are best visited in the week**

Section B: Comprehension questions

1. What happened to the English royal family in 1649? **It was 'kicked out' of the country [this means forced out]**
2. What adjective does the lecturer use to describe the Protestant government of the 1650s? **severe**
3. Which royal Palace was established in 1530? **Whitehall Palace**
4. London and Paris were (and still are) designed differently. What is the main reason for this? **Paris was planned and London developed over time**
5. What percentage of the population of London died in the Great Plague of 1665? **About 33% (one third of the city)**
6. When was the Great Fire of London? **1666**
7. What example does the lecturer give to demonstrate how narrow the streets of London were in the seventeenth century?
People could learn out their windows and shake hands with the people who lived across the road from them
8. After the Great Fire, Wren proposed to completely redesign London. Why did this never happen?
Because people moved back to where their homes were and started re-building them. After this happened, it was impossible to make them leave again.
9. Why was the Great Fire of London 'convenient' for Wren? **Because he planned to redesign st paul's before the fire. When it was destroyed in the fire, he had the perfect opportunity to begin working on it**
10. How was Wren's dome for St Pauls' Cathedral revolutionary? **It had a third dome in the middle (instead of the traditional two)**
11. Why do very few people live in the City of London? **After the fire of London, depopulation occurred (people leaving the city) and this has continued until today.**
12. According to the lecturer, what was Wren's greatest legacy? **London's skyline**