

Christopher Wren

Early life

Christopher Wren was born in Wiltshire in 1632 and grew up in Windsor, Berkshire. As a child, Christopher loved drawing, inventing things and making things. He was very good at science and mathematics, and went on to study them at Oxford University.

Scientist

After completing his studies, Wren became a professor of astronomy. Like many astronomers at the time, he designed and constructed his own telescopes. His interest in designing and constructing buildings may have developed from this.

First buildings

The first buildings Christopher Wren designed were a chapel for one of the colleges of Cambridge University, and the Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford. It was this second building that made him famous.

Disaster and opportunity

In 1666 The Great Fire of London consumed the heart of the city. Christopher Wren drew up a plan to rebuild the whole of the burned area, but this was rejected. Instead, he was given the job of designing and rebuilding the 52 churches that had been destroyed. One of these was the most important church in London: St Paul's Cathedral. This work kept him busy for the next thirty-five years.

His monument

The rebuilt St Paul's Cathedral opened in 1697, although the dome wasn't completed until 13 years later. By this time, Wren was 79 years old. When Christopher Wren died at the age of 91, he was buried in St Paul's Cathedral. His gravestone has an inscription in Latin. Translated, it reads: *If you seek my monument, look around you.*

1.

When was Christopher Wren born?

- 1) ☐ 1832
- 2) ☐ 1623
- 3) ☐ 1328
- 4) ☐ 1632

2.

What clues were there in Christopher's childhood to what he would do when he was an adult? Choose **two**.

- 1) ☐ He loved making things.
- 2) ☐ He was good at science.
- 3) ☐ He liked playing games.
- 4) ☐ He was very sporty.

3.

Find and copy the word in the text that means "the study of stars, planets and the universe".

4.

What does the text suggest might have helped Christopher Wren's interest in designing buildings?

- 1) ☐ Making his own telescopes.
- 2) ☐ Becoming a professor.
- 3) ☐ Studying stars.
- 4) ☐ Finishing his studies.

5.

Which building made Christopher Wren famous?

6.

"In 1666 The Great Fire of London consumed the heart of the city."

What does the phrase "consumed the heart of the city" mean? Choose the best answer.

- 1) ☐ damaged the central parts of the city
- 2) ☐ damaged some of the city
- 3) ☐ burned down some of the city
- 4) ☐ burned down the central parts of the city

7.

Why do you think the writer chose to write "consumed the heart of the city" instead of the phrase you ticked for Question 6?

- 1) ☐ The writer wants to show that the city had a heart.
- 2) ☐ The writer wants the text to be difficult to understand.
- 3) ☐ The writer wants to show how violent the fire was.

8.

What is Christopher Wren's monument? Choose the best answer.

- 1) ☐ a gravestone
- 2) ☐ an inscription in Latin
- 3) ☐ St Paul's Cathedral
- 4) ☐ the dome

9.

What is the purpose of the headings in this text?

- 1) ☐ To make the text more interesting.
- 2) ☐ To make the text not seem as long.
- 3) ☐ To help the reader find information quickly.
- 4) ☐ To help people who read slowly.

10.

Show the order of these events in Christopher Wren's life by connecting them to the numbers 1 to 4.

He designed a chapel for one of the colleges of Cambridge University.

1

He studied science and mathematics at Oxford University.

2

He drew up a plan to rebuild London after The Great Fire.

3

He became a professor of astronomy.

4