

NAME: _____

Responses to Daniel Defoe's excerpt from *A Journal of the Plague Year* pp. 556-565

Before reading...

Read the biographical info. on p. 556 about Daniel Defoe and record information relevant to his writing career and life.

Then, read about the history of the plague that affected London at this time, either [here \(warning: graphic skeleton images\)](#) or on p. 557 in the "Reading Focus: The Contagion of Fear," and summarize what you learn about the plague.

Read "Elements of Literature: Journal." Write about your thoughts on the question posed at the end of this segment: *How far can journalists go in stretching the literal truth in order to recreate a real event?*

****NEXT, READ THE EXCERPT FROM**

A JOURNAL OF THE PLAGUE YEAR, pp. 558-564**

After reading...

What did you feel was the strongest image in this account of an urban epidemic? Why?

What techniques does Defoe use to make his journal seem authentic?

Few words in the English language have the shock value of “plague.” Can you think of anything in your own time that is described as a “plague”? How does the plague Defoe describes compare to the “plagues” of today? Do all plagues have to be physical diseases, or can the term be applied to situations and choices?

About Historical Fiction... extension and connections...

Authors today follow a similar research pattern when writing historical fiction accounts, represented through the first-person eyes of someone who lived through it.

- Go [HERE](#) and scroll to the bottom to watch a video of author Lauren Tarshis explaining how she uses research to place her characters and build their story.
- Choose 2 books that you would like to read or learn more about the disaster that the books are written about. Record the book title and why it would interest you.

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- Then, go to [this site](#), [Historical Fiction Set Around the World - Five Books Expert Recommendations](#), or [this GoodReads site](#) to read about a current historical fiction novel. Provide a short summary of the book and why it interests you. Then, go to the author's website to see how (or if) he/she provides research materials that can be used to further explore the era of this book.

Finally, choose a book from the front of the room to read for a bit. You may also choose to download and read an excerpt of one of the books studied above for the next step.

Then, in a short, written response, consider how this author represents a historical perspective through his/her main character (the character who is narrating the story). What is the time period and how can you tell this from his/her writing? Write about the style this author uses, and how he/she makes history "come alive" to the reader. Be sure to include the book title and author.

Book Title:

Author:

