



NAME _____

Read the passage about fires at the White House. Then answer the questions.

THE PRESIDENT'S HOUSE

The White House is the official home and workplace of the president. It has 28 fireplaces, thousands of employees, and a maintenance staff that constantly paints, repairs, and renovates. All this activity leaves the White House at risk for fire hazards. In its 208-year history, the White House has had two major, and a handful of minor, fires.

THE BIG ONES

It was the year 1814, two years into the War of 1812. First Lady Dolley Madison received word the British planned to attack. She grabbed George Washington's portrait from the wall and escaped to safety. Minutes later, 4,000 British soldiers marched into Washington, D.C. They destroyed every public building in the city. The White House and many other government buildings burned to the ground. Today, the scorch marks remain on the part of the White House that survived the fire.

On Christmas Eve, 1929, another big fire broke out at the White House. As President Herbert Hoover and his wife hosted a holiday party, a loud alarm sounded. The West Wing was on fire! President Hoover left the party and helped remove important documents from the Oval Office. Workers quickly repaired the building before President Hoover left office.

SAFETY AT THE WHITE HOUSE

Today, most fires at the White House happen during renovations. When the fire alarm sounds, firefighters hurry to the scene with at least five engines and two ladder trucks. Firefighters must go through security checks at the White House and are escorted to the fire by the secret service.



★★ Reading Check ★★

1. Why do you think Dolley Madison saved the painting of George Washington?

2. What happens when the fire alarm sounds at the White House?

3. What should you do if the fire alarm sounds at your house?

