

## Key stage 2 exercise 1

### Pupil C – Piece C: a non-chronological report

Context: as part of a theme on 'Medicine through the Ages', the pupils researched the role of the plague doctor. They then wrote a non-chronological report, aimed at year 6+ pupils, informing them of this important role. An appropriate image to describe how the plague was spread has been removed from the top of the second page.

### The history of The Plague

In the summer of 1665, London was hit by a terrible disease which spread quickly across Europe, causing many people to die. The plague killed approximately 30-60% of Europe's total population, therefore people were terrified to catch it. At the time, many people perceived that the plague was caused by miasma, <sup>(dirty air)</sup> but it was actually caused by rats.

### The plague doctor's outfit

In 1620, Charles de L'Orme invented the plague doctor's outfit, so when the doctor treated the victim, he would not get infected. It was worn to protect the plague doctor from airborne diseases. The outfit was: an ankle length overcoat, a beak-shaped mask, usually filled with a strong substance (herbs), gloves, boots and a wide-brimmed hat. They also held a wooden cane to push the victims away if they came too close.



This is an image of the plague doctor's outfit.

### What caused the plague?

The majority of the doctors believed that miasma (dirty air) caused the plague, but it was actually caused by the bacteria found on rats. The fleas, which were carried in the rat's fur, would bite the rat, therefore it would become infected. After biting the rat, the creature would infect humans and they would cough, sneeze and splutter, which spread the debilitating <sup>illness</sup> disease.

Many people believed that this is how the plague spread

### 'Treatments' and 'cures'

People created their own 'treatments' that they predicted would work and make the victim better, but then discovered that they were unsuccessful with their creations. These 'cures' were as ~~so~~ simple as: drinking fire wine, eating toads, bathing in milk and holding a small bunch of flowers and herbs held up to the nose. They also believed that tobacco was highly valued as a medicine! ~~Did you know that the multiple of doctors were unqualified?~~