**Discussion Prep Sheet for Samuel Pepys’s *Diary***

ENGL 1302-49, Spring 2012

On Tuesday, we will have our first in-class discussion over a reading assignment. The purpose of this sheet is to help you prepare for the high level of discussion that instructors expect in a university classroom. You should always come to a discussion prepared to make a thoughtful contribution. The best participants in discussion demonstrate that they have not only read the text, but have also thought about it carefully and identified specific passages to explain or support their comments.

For Tuesday’s discussion, please consider the following questions and come to class prepared to contribute to a discussion of each one. While you may not always be given specific questions to prepare (either in this class or others), you can always prepare for discussion of a reading by identifying and explaining significant passages. Thus, the last question simply calls for you to pick any passage and explain why it is important to the book.

*Nb. The* Diary *excerpts you are reading begin with Pepys’s first-hand account of the fire in September of 1666, then jump to February, March, and May of the following year (1667) where, as you will see, Pepys is still thinking and writing about the fire.*

1. Trace the movement and destruction of the fire through the various days Pepys records in these *Diary* excerpts. Where do you see major shifts in the fire’s progress and/or in Pepys’ attitude toward the fire?
2. Identify passages in the text where Pepys gives his readers specific details about *place.* What does 1666 London look, smell, sound, feel and taste like? Next, identify moments in the text where Pepys suggests that this landscape—the *place* in which he lives—changes after the fire.
3. According to Pepys, did the fire affect all Londoners equally? Why or why not?
4. What explanations did Londoners give for how the fire started and stopped, according to Pepys’s account?
5. What does Pepys write about his own *feelings* toward the fire? How do Pepys’s reactions to and representations of the fire change as time passes? (Compare his initial reaction in September 1666 to his diary entries from the following year.)
6. Identify one passage in the text that strikes you as particularly significant and be prepared to explain its significance.