“The Story of an Eyewitness”

Name ____________________________________________ Date _________________

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1. Who was Jack London and why did he go to San Francisco?

2. What does the word ‘conflagration’ mean? What evidence from the text supports your answer? What effect does using ‘conflagration’ have?

3. Why didn’t the fire department respond right away? What particular challenges did they face? Point to specific examples in the text.

4. Explain how dynamite was used to contain the fire.

5. In paragraph 5, London uses a specific word in his description of the destruction he sees. What word does he use and what is the effect of the author’s repetition of this word?
6. Reread the section titled, “A Caravan of Trunks”. Why were the shopkeepers and members of the middle class at a disadvantage during the fire? Cite evidence to support your response.

7. Why does London use the subheading “The Doomed City” to describe the same section of downtown San Francisco? What specific details from the text support this answer?

8. Why do you think London chose to use the image of the cavalry men in this section of the passage? Use evidence from the text to support your conclusions.

9. How did the conflagration affect the victims’ perceptions of what things were worth? Give examples from the text that support your answers.

10. What mood does London create using imagery in the section subheaded “The Dawn of the Second Day”? Create a chart listing specific details and images for the mood(s) you selected!