

The Spark of History: Bonfire Night

Learning objective: To develop reading comprehension skills through historical enquiry, focusing on retrieving information and making inferences about the origins of Bonfire Night.

Read the text carefully. Use the word bank to help you understand tricky terms. Answer the questions in full sentences, using evidence from the text to support your ideas.

Every year on the 5th of November, the night sky across the United Kingdom is illuminated with vibrant fireworks, while bonfires crackle in gardens and parks. This tradition marks the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605. During this time, a group of men, including Guy Fawkes, plotted against King James I. They intended to ignite barrels of gunpowder beneath the Houses of Parliament to cause a catastrophic explosion. However, the plot was uncovered before it could be carried out, and the conspirators were captured. To celebrate the King's safety, people lit bonfires across London. Today, we continue this historical commemoration. While we enjoy the spectacle of glowing embers and colourful pyrotechnics, it is also a time to reflect on why we remember this event. Some families purchase sparklers, costing around £2.50 for a pack, and share traditional treats like toffee apples. It is a moment where history meets modern celebration, reminding us of a significant turning point in British history that has echoed through the centuries.

Word bank: Parliament · treason · commemoration · tradition · conspirator

1. What date is Bonfire Night celebrated on, and what specific event from 1605 does it commemorate? (2 marks)

2. According to the text, what did the group plan to hide underneath the Houses of Parliament? (1 mark)

3. Why do you think people began lighting bonfires on the very first 5th of November? (2 marks)

4. Explain why the author describes Bonfire Night as a time where 'history meets modern celebration'. (2 marks)

5. Do you think Bonfire Night is still an important tradition for people today? Justify your answer using reasons. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene of a historical bonfire, including a label explaining one reason why you think this event is still remembered in the modern day.



Extension challenge: Imagine you are Nova the owl watching the night sky. Write a short journal entry (50-70 words) describing the sights and sounds of the fireworks from your perch in the ancient oak tree. Use at least three descriptive adjectives to bring your observations to life.