

A Spark in the Night: Bonfire Night Literacy

Learning objective: To use descriptive vocabulary and inferential reasoning to analyze a narrative passage about Bonfire Night.

Read the passage below carefully. Use the word bank to help you understand the descriptive language, then answer the questions that follow. For the greater depth tasks, ensure you provide full sentences and explain your reasoning clearly.

The chilly November air bit at Leo's cheeks, but he hardly noticed the cold. Above the village green, the sky had been transformed into a gargantuan canvas of velvet black. Suddenly, a golden rocket whistled upwards, a defiant streak of light against the gloom, before erupting into a cascade of sapphire and emerald stars. Nova, the barn owl, watched from her perch in the old oak tree, her wide eyes reflecting the vibrant display. Below, the bonfire crackled and spat, sending a flurry of glowing embers swirling towards the clouds like tiny, wandering fireflies. Every time a firework reached its crescendo, the crowd gasped in unison, their faces momentarily illuminated by the brilliant, fleeting colors. It was a spectacular celebration, a symphony of light and sound that turned the darkest night of the year into a memory of warmth.

Word bank: catherine wheel · crescendo · illuminated · ember · spectacular · crackled · vibrant

1. Identify two adjectives the author uses to describe the colors of the fireworks. Why do you think the author chose these specific words? (2 marks)

2. What does the phrase 'a gargantuan canvas of velvet black' suggest about the night sky? Explain the metaphor. (2 marks)

3. Using evidence from the text, explain how the people at the bonfire are reacting to the display. (2 marks)

4. What might happen to the atmosphere of the story if the author had described the bonfire as 'silent' instead of 'crackling'? (3 marks)

5. Compare and contrast the way Nova the owl experiences the event compared to the people standing on the village green. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene from the perspective of Nova the owl looking down at the village green. Include at least three different types of fireworks in the night sky and show the bonfire glowing below.



Extension challenge: Justify why the author chose to describe the embers as 'wandering fireflies'. Write a short, descriptive paragraph (4–6 sentences) using at least three words from the word bank to describe your own imaginary firework display.