

The Night of Glowing Embers

Learning objective: To develop retrieval, inference, and evaluative skills through a non-fiction text about the history and traditions of Bonfire Night.

Read the text carefully. Use the word bank to help you understand the vocabulary, then answer the questions in full, detailed sentences.

On the fifth of November, the night sky across the United Kingdom erupts into a vivid spectacle of light and sound. Families gather around roaring bonfires to commemorate the thwarting of the Gunpowder Plot in 1605. History tells us that Guy Fawkes and his associates attempted to destroy the Houses of Parliament, but their plan was discovered before it could be executed. Today, the tradition continues, though the focus has shifted towards community celebration. Many people construct an effigy, often called a 'guy', to place atop the bonfire, representing the historic conspirators. As the embers glow against the cold autumn darkness, the air fills with the scent of woodsmoke and the crackle of Catherine wheels. It is a time for reflection on our nation's history and an appreciation of the safety we enjoy today. While the fireworks provide a dazzling display, it is the warmth of the community gathering that remains the true heart of the celebration. Pip the caterpillar often watches from the safety of a nearby oak tree, marvelling at how the dark sky transforms into a canvas of shimmering colours.

Word bank: commemorate · treason · parliament · effigy · spectacle · tradition

1. What specific historical event are people commemorating on the fifth of November, and when did it take place? (2 marks)

2. According to the text, what is the purpose of the 'guy' that is placed on the bonfire? (2 marks)

3. Explain why the author suggests that the atmosphere of Bonfire Night has changed since 1605. (3 marks)

4. What might happen if the community did not gather together during this celebration? Use evidence from the text to support your answer. (3 marks)

5. Do you believe that fireworks are an appropriate way to mark a historical event? Justify your opinion using your own reasoning. (4 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene of a community bonfire at night. Include the glowing embers, a silhouette of a tree where Pip the caterpillar might be hiding, and colourful sparks in the sky above.



Extension challenge: Compare and contrast Bonfire Night with another cultural celebration that involves lights or fire. Write a short paragraph explaining the similarities and differences in how these events are observed today.