

The Spark of History: Bonfire Night

Learning objective: To develop reading comprehension skills by retrieving information, making inferences, and justifying personal opinions regarding historical traditions.

Read the text carefully and answer the questions below. Ensure you use evidence from the passage where required.

Every year on the 5th of November, the night sky across the United Kingdom erupts with colour. People gather for Bonfire Night, a tradition that commemorates the failure of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605. During this historic event, a group of men attempted to destroy the Houses of Parliament. However, their plan was discovered, and the plot was foiled. Today, we mark this date by lighting large bonfires and setting off spectacular fireworks. In some towns, people build a model known as a 'guy' to sit atop the bonfire, representing the historical figures involved in the plot. While the night is filled with excitement, it is vital to remember safety. Families follow strict firework safety codes to ensure everyone stays protected from burns. Max, our maths-loving monkey, calculates that thousands of pounds are spent on these displays annually, as communities come together to enjoy the warmth of the fire and the dazzle of the sparks. It is a time for sharing hot food, watching the glowing embers dance, and reflecting on how history has shaped our modern celebrations.

Word bank: commemorate · parliament · treason · tradition · spectacular · precautions

1. What specific historical event does Bonfire Night commemorate, and in which year did it take place? (2 marks)

2. According to the text, what is the purpose of the model known as a 'guy'? (1 mark)

3. Why does the author mention that families follow 'strict firework safety codes'? (2 marks)

4. What suggests that Bonfire Night is an important event for local communities? (2 marks)

5. Do you think Bonfire Night is still a relevant tradition to celebrate today? Give a reason for your answer. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene of a community bonfire at night. Include Nova the owl watching the fireworks from a nearby tree branch, and ensure you show safety precautions, such as a bucket of water nearby.



Extension challenge: Research one other historical event that is commemorated annually in the UK and write a short paragraph explaining why it is still celebrated today.