

A Night of History and Sparkles: The Story of Bonfire Night

Learning objective: To develop reading comprehension skills by identifying key information and inferring meaning from a historical non-fiction text.

Read the passage below carefully. Use the word bank to help you with tricky vocabulary, then answer the questions that follow. Remember to use full sentences for your answers.

On the 5th of November each year, the night sky across the United Kingdom is illuminated by colourful fireworks, and the air is filled with the scent of woodsmoke. This tradition commemorates the events of 1605, when a group of conspirators, led by Robert Catesby, plotted the Gunpowder Plot. Their aim was to blow up the Houses of Parliament in London to remove King James I from the throne. Guy Fawkes was the man discovered guarding thirty-six barrels of gunpowder beneath the building. He was arrested, and the plot was foiled. Today, we mark the date with bonfires and displays to remember that the plot failed. In some towns, people still build a 'Guy'—an effigy made of old clothes stuffed with newspaper—to place on top of the bonfire. While the history is serious, it has become a time for communities to gather, share toffee apples, and watch the spectacular patterns in the sky.

Word bank: Parliament · treason · conspirators · commemorate · effigy · tradition

1. Why do we celebrate Bonfire Night on the 5th of November? Use evidence from the text to support your answer. (2 marks)

2. What was the primary goal of the conspirators in 1605? (1 mark)

3. Look at the word 'effigy'. Based on the context of the passage, explain what an effigy is in your own words. (2 marks)

4. How has the way we celebrate the 5th of November changed from its original historical meaning to how it is celebrated today? (2 marks)

5. If a community group spends £150 on fireworks and £45 on food for a bonfire event, what is the total cost of the celebration? (1 mark)

Draw: Draw a scene of a winter night sky filled with vibrant, symmetrical firework patterns, inspired by the way Zara the zebra sees art in the world.



Extension challenge: Imagine you are a reporter in 1605. Write a short, formal news report (no more than 100 words) describing the discovery of the gunpowder beneath Parliament.