The History and Heritage of Bonfire Night: A Sequencing Challenge

Learning objective: To understand the historical context of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 and the significance of Bonfire Night as a commemorative event in British history.

Below are eight key events regarding the Gunpowder Plot and the tradition of Bonfire Night. Your task is to order them chronologically from 1 to 8. Once you have sequenced the events, use the historical context to answer the questions provided.

Word bank: Parliament · Guy Fawkes · King James I · Treason · Discovery · Commemoration · Gunpowder · Conspirators

1. 1. King James I survives a plot to destroy the Houses of Parliament.
2. The authorities conduct a search of the cellars beneath the building.
3. A group of conspirators seeks to change the leadership of the country.
4. Guy Fawkes is found guarding thirty-six barrels of explosives.
5. The public lights bonfires to celebrate the King's safety.
6. The conspirators are arrested and brought to trial for high treason.
7. The tradition of lighting bonfires continues annually on the 5th of November.
8. The plotters store gunpowder in secret locations. (8 marks)

2. Explain why the act of lighting bonfires became a symbolic tradition following the events of 1605. How does this link to the concept of 'commemoration'? (3 marks)

3. Compare and contrast the perspective of the government in 1605 with the perspective of the conspirators. Why was secrecy so essential to the success of their plan? (3 marks)

4. Justify your answer: If the Gunpowder Plot had succeeded, how might the course of British history have been irrevocably altered? Consider the political impact. (4 marks)

5. Max the monkey is buying sparklers for a community display. A pack of 10 sparklers costs £2.50. If he buys 4 packs, what is the total cost? If he pays with a £20 note, how much change should he receive? (3 marks)

6. What might happen if the authorities had not searched the cellars on the evening of the 4th of November? Discuss the potential consequences for the monarchy. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a detailed scene depicting an 17th-century street scene in London on the night the news of the discovery of the plot spread. Consider the architecture and the atmosphere of the era.

Extension challenge: Nova the owl is curious about the science of light and color. Write a short explanation of how the metallic salts in fireworks produce different colors, and research why we use the term 'Guy' to refer to the effigy burned on the bonfire.