

# Bonfire Night

## Bonfire Night

Bonfire Night is a reminder of the failed attempt to kill the King of England and the important people of England on, 5th November, 1605.

Bonfires were lit that first night to celebrate the King being saved, but as the years went by, the burning of straw dummies began as a reminder that traitors cannot get away with plotting to kill the king.

## The Plot Itself

The English Catholics hoped that the new king, James I, would be more accepting of people being Catholic even though he himself was not Catholic. However, he was no more accepting of Catholics than the previous ruler.

A group of angry Catholics began to meet and discuss what could be done. The leader of the group, Robert Catesby, was very keen to take violent action. Their plan was to blow up the Houses of Parliament and kill many important people who they did not agree with. This was an act of terrorism.



Some of the plotters began to think the plot wasn't such a good idea after all, because some innocent people would be killed too. And they all knew they would be put to death for being a traitor, if they were caught.

## The Letter

Lord Monteagle was handed a letter warning him not to go to the Houses of Parliament on the 5th November. Not knowing who had sent the letter, he showed it to the king, who immediately ordered his soldiers to search the building.

**Act of Terrorism:**  
Deliberate attempt to kill or injure many innocent people, for religious or political reasons.

In the cellars, they found a man beside 36 barrels of gunpowder. They arrested him and took him away for questioning. So who was he?

## Who Was Guy Fawkes?

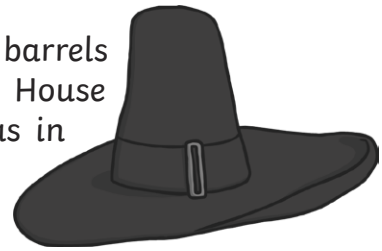
The soldiers had found the Catholic soldier, Guy Fawkes. He had been born in York and moved to Spain to fight other countries in support of Spain.

Fawkes hated the Protestant King of England. Therefore, when Thomas Wintour (one of the plotters) asked if he would like to join them, because he was impressed with Fawkes' knowledge of war and skill with gunpowder, he was keen to accept.

For 18 months, Guy Fawkes met with the gang and



they plotted what to do and when to do it. They got 36 barrels of gunpowder and stored them in the cellars of the House of Lords. Each man had a job to do. Guy Fawkes was in charge of the gunpowder and to light the fuse!



### Caught in the Act!

When Guy Fawkes was arrested and questioned, the rest of the gang went into hiding. Fawkes refused to say who he was, or give the names of anyone else involved. Soldiers were given permission by the king to torture Guy Fawkes to make him tell them everything they wanted to know.

Guy Fawkes was a strong man and although he suffered agony being stretched on the rack, it took two days to get him to confess. Fawkes finally told them the names of everyone involved. He was found guilty of high treason and sentenced to a traitor's death.

#### High treason:

The crime of betraying your country, by attempting to kill or overthrow the country's king, queen or government.

The eight surviving plotters were also sentenced to a traitor's death, which meant they would be hanged, drawn and quartered. However, despite his weak and pained body, Guy Fawkes jumped from the scaffold where he was to be hanged, and broke his own neck as he fell.

### The Plotter's Legacy

The foiled Gunpowder Plot is remembered each year through the lighting of bonfires and fireworks. Every year before the State Opening of the Houses of Parliament, the tradition of checking the cellars of the building continues, just in case another plot should be discovered!



# Bonfire Night Questions

1. Why do people light bonfires each year on 5th November?  

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2. Why did the plotters want to kill the King of England?  

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3. What was their plan?  

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4. Explain why some plotters began to think the plan wasn't such a good idea.  

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5. How was the King made aware of the plot?  

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6. Why was Fawkes a good choice to join the group of plotters?  

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7. Who asked Guy Fawkes if he wanted to join the gang?  

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8. How did the soldiers make Fawkes confess everything?  

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9. Explain in your own words, what you understand 'high treason' means.  

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10. Why are the cellars checked before the State Opening of the Houses of Parliament every year?  

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# Bonfire Night Answers

1. Why do people light bonfires each year on 5th November?

**People light bonfires each year on 5th November, as a reminder of the failed attempt to kill the King of England and the important people of England**

2. Why did the plotters want to kill the King of England?

**The plotters wanted to kill the King of England because he was a Protestant and not a Catholic.**

3. What was their plan?

**Their plan was to blow up the Houses of Parliament when the King was there with all the important people of England.**

4. Explain why some plotters began to think the plan wasn't such a good idea.

**Some plotters began to think the plan wasn't such a good idea because they realised that a lot of innocent people would be killed and they knew they would have a traitor's death if they were caught.**

5. How was the King made aware of the plot?

**The King was made aware of the plot when Lord Monteagle took a letter that he had been given, warning him not to go to the Houses of Parliament that day.**

6. Why was Fawkes a good choice to join the group of plotters?

**Fawkes was a good choice to join the group of plotters because he hated the King of England and had knowledge of war and skill with gunpowder.**

7. Who asked Guy Fawkes if he wanted to join the gang?

**Thomas Wintour asked Guy Fawkes if he wanted to join the gang.**

8. How did the soldiers make Fawkes confess everything?

**The soldiers made Fawkes confess everything by torturing him and stretching him on the rack until he told them everything.**

9. Explain in your own words, what you understand 'high treason' means.

**Pupil's own explanation based on the crime of betraying your country, by attempting to kill or overthrow the country's king, queen or government.**

10. Why are the cellars checked before the State Opening of the Houses of Parliament every year?

**The cellars are checked before the State Opening of the Houses of Parliament in case there should be another plot.**

# Bonfire Night

## Bonfire Night

Bonfire Night commemorates the failed attempt to kill the King of England and the important people of England, as they gathered for the State Opening of Parliament on 5th November, 1605.

The bonfires were lit that first night in a joyful celebration of the King being saved, but as the years went by, the burning of straw dummies representing one of the men involved with the plan, Guy Fawkes, started to happen as a reminder of how traitors cannot get away with plots to overthrow the king.

## The Plot Itself

After Queen Elizabeth I died in 1603, the English Catholics were led to believe that although the new king, James I, was a Protestant, he would be more accepting of people following the Catholic faith especially as he had had a Catholic mother. However, he was no more accepting of Catholic people than the previous ruler. Some people began to wish he was off the throne so that a Catholic could rule the country.



A small group of men began to meet and discuss what could be done. The leader of the group, Robert Catesby, was very keen to take violent action. Their plan began to take shape; they would blow up the Houses of Parliament and kill many important people who they did not agree with. This was an act of terrorism.

### Act of Terrorism:

Deliberate attempt to kill or injure many innocent people, for religious or political reasons.

They planned to kill the king, the heir to the throne, the Prince of Wales, and all the Members of Parliament who were making life difficult for the Catholic people.

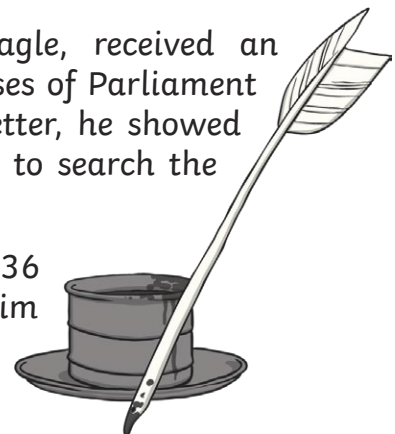
As the plot took form, some of the plotters realised that many innocent people would be killed; many people who were supportive of the Catholics would also be in the Houses of Parliament that day. Some of

the plotters began having second thoughts about the whole plot.

## The Letter

One of the Members of Parliament, Lord Monteagle, received an anonymous letter warning him not to go to the Houses of Parliament on 5th November. Not knowing who had sent the letter, he showed it to the King, who immediately ordered his soldiers to search the building.

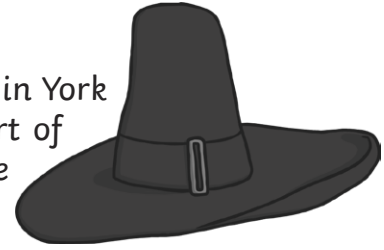
They entered the cellars, and found a man beside 36 barrels of gunpowder. They arrested him and carted him off for questioning. So who was he?





## Who Was Guy Fawkes?

The soldiers had found Guy Fawkes. He had been born in York but moved to Spain to fight other countries in support of Spain and became highly skilled 'in matters of war'. He changed his name to the Italian version, Guido.



Fawkes hated the Protestant king of England. Therefore, when he was approached by Thomas Wintour, one of the plotters (who was interested in Fawkes' knowledge of war and expertise in gunpowder) and asked if he would like to join them, he was keen to accept.

For 18 months, Guy Fawkes met with the gang and they plotted what to do and when to do it. They got 36 barrels of gunpowder and stored them in the cellars of the House of Lords. Each man had a job to do. Guy Fawkes was in charge of the gunpowder and was to light the fuse!

### High treason:

The crime of betraying your country, by attempting to kill or overthrow the country's king, queen or government.

### Caught in the Act!

When Guy Fawkes was arrested and questioned, the rest of the gang fled to different parts of the country. Fawkes refused to say who he was, or give the names of anyone else involved. The special forces of the king were given permission by the king to torture Guy Fawkes, even though it was illegal.

Guy Fawkes was a strong man and despite suffering enormous agony on the rack, it took two days to get him to confess. Even the king was impressed with what he called Fawkes' 'Roman resolution'. Fawkes broke and gave the names of everyone involved. He was found guilty of high treason and sentenced to a traitor's death.

The eight surviving plotters were also sentenced to death, which meant they would be hanged, drawn and quartered. However, despite his weak and pained body, Guy Fawkes jumped from the scaffold where he was to be hung, and broke his own neck as he fell.



### The Plotter's Legacy

The foiled Gunpowder Plot is remembered each year through the lighting of bonfires and fireworks. Every year before the State Opening of the Houses of Parliament, the tradition of checking the cellars of the building continues, just in case another plot should be discovered!

# Bonfire Night Questions

1. Why did people start burning dummies of Guy Fawkes on bonfires?  

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2. What did the English Catholics hope for when James I became King of England?  

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3. How did Robert Catesby want to deal with the problem of the Protestant King?  

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4. Why did some of the plotters begin to have second thoughts about the plot?  

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5. What word did the author use that means no one knew who sent the letter to Lord Monteaagle that warned him not to go to the Houses of Parliament on that day?  

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6. Name some of Guy Fawkes' characteristics which made Thomas Wintour think he would be interested in joining the plotter's gang.  

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7. What was Fawkes' role in the gang?  

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8. Who gave permission for Fawkes to be tortured to confess?  

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9. How did Fawkes escape being hung, drawn and quartered?  

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10. What is the legacy of the Gunpowder Plot 400 years ago?  

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11. What do you think of the plot and what happened in the end?  

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# Bonfire Night Answers

1. Why did people start burning dummies of Guy Fawkes on bonfires?

**People started burning dummies of Guy Fawkes on bonfires as a reminder of how traitors cannot get away with plots to overthrow the king.**

2. What did the English Catholics hope for when James I became King of England?

**The English Catholics hoped that when James I became King, he would be more accepting of people following the Catholic faith.**

3. How did Robert Catesby want to deal with the problem of the Protestant king?

**Robert Catesby wanted to deal with the problem of the Protestant King with violent action.**

4. Why did some of the plotters begin to have second thoughts about the plot?

**Some of the plotters began to have second thoughts about the plot because they realised that many innocent people, who had been supportive of the Catholics, would also be killed.**

5. What word did the author use that means no one knew who sent the letter to Lord Monteagle that warned him not to go to the Houses of Parliament on that day?

**The author used the word 'anonymous', which means no one knew who sent the letter to Lord Monteagle warning him not to go to the Houses of Parliament on that day.**

6. Name some of Guy Fawkes' characteristics which made Thomas Wintour think he would be interested in joining the plotter's gang.

**Pupil's own response based on Fawkes' knowledge of war; skill with gunpowder; hatred of the king.**

7. What was Fawkes' role in the gang?

**Fawkes' role in the gang was being in charge of the gunpowder and lighting the fuse.**

8. Who gave permission for Fawkes to be tortured to confess?

**The King gave permission for Fawkes to be tortured to confess.**

9. How did Fawkes escape being hung, drawn and quartered?

**Fawkes escaped being hung, drawn and quartered by jumping from the scaffold and breaking his own neck as he fell.**

10. What is the legacy of the Gunpowder Plot 400 years ago?

**The legacy of the Gunpowder Plot is that people still light bonfires on the 5th November and the cellars are still checked each year before the State Opening of the Houses of Parliament, in case of another plot of terrorism.**

11. What do you think of the plot and what happened in the end?

**Pupil's own response based on the facts in the text.**



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Bonfire Night commemorates the failed attempt to kill the King of England and the important dignitaries of England, as they gathered for the State Opening of Parliament on 5th November, 1605.

The bonfires were lit initially in joyful celebration of the King being saved, but as the years went by, the burning of effigies – straw dummies - of one of the men involved with the plan, Guy Fawkes, began to take place as a reminder of how traitors cannot get away with plots to overthrow the monarchy.

## The Plot Itself

After Queen Elizabeth I died in 1603, the English Catholics were led to believe that although her successor, James I, was a Protestant, he would be tolerant of the Catholic faith especially as he had a Catholic mother. However, this was not the case, and he was no more tolerant of Catholics than the previous monarch. Some people began to wish he was off the throne so that a Catholic could rule the country.



A small group of men began to meet and discuss what could be done. The leader of the group, Robert Catesby, was very keen to engage in violent action. Their plan began to take shape; they would blow up the Houses of Parliament. This is a historical act of terrorism.

### Act of Terrorism:

Deliberate attempt to kill or injure many innocent people, for religious or political reasons.

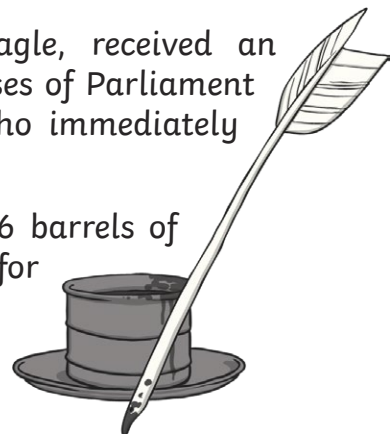
They planned to kill the king, the heir to the throne, the Prince of Wales and all the Members of Parliament who were making life difficult for the Catholic people.

As the plot took form, some of the plotters realised that many innocent people would be killed; many of the people who were supportive of the Catholics. Some of the plotters began having second thoughts about the whole plot.

## The Letter

One of the Members of Parliament, Lord Monteagle, received an anonymous letter warning him not to go to the Houses of Parliament on the 5th November. He showed it to the King, who immediately ordered his soldiers to search the building.

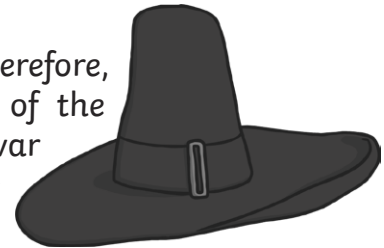
They entered the cellars, and found a man beside 36 barrels of gunpowder. They arrested him and carted him off for questioning. So who was he?



## Who Was Guy Fawkes?

The soldiers had found Guy Fawkes. He was a military man who had been born in York and moved to Spain to fight other countries in support of Spain. He was so highly skilled 'in matters of war', he was recommended for a captaincy and adopted the Italian version of his name, Guido. He had even approached the King of Spain about attacking England and killing King James I, but the Spanish King had refused.

So Fawkes hated the Protestant King of England. Therefore, when he was approached by Thomas Wintour, one of the plotters (who was interested in Fawkes' knowledge of war and expertise in gunpowder) and asked if he would like to join them, he was keen to accept.



For 18 months, Guy Fawkes met with the gang and they plotted what to do and when to do it. They acquired 36 barrels of gunpowder and stored them in the cellars of the House of Lords. Each man had a specific job to do. Guy Fawkes was in charge of the gunpowder and was to light the fuse!

### High treason:

The crime of betraying one's country, especially by attempting to kill or overthrow the country's monarch or government.

### Caught in the Act!

When Guy Fawkes was arrested and questioned, the rest of the gang fled to different parts of the country. Fawkes refused to give his own name, or the names of anyone else involved. The special forces of the King were granted permission by the monarch to torture Guy Fawkes, even though it was illegal.

Guy Fawkes was a strong man and despite suffering enormous agony on the rack, it took two days to get him to confess. Even the King was impressed with what he called Fawkes' 'Roman resolution'. Fawkes broke and gave the names of everyone involved. He was found guilty of high treason and sentenced to a traitor's death.



The eight surviving plotters were also sentenced to death, which meant they would be hanged, drawn and quartered. However, despite his weak and pained body, Guy Fawkes jumped from the scaffold where he was to be hanged, and broke his own neck as he fell.

### The Plotter's Legacy

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# Bonfire Night Questions

1. Why were bonfires lit initially after the failed Gunpowder Plot, and what happens now?  

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2. Why did the English Catholics think that James I might be more tolerant of Catholics despite being a Protestant?  

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3. Explain what made the Gunpowder Plot an act of terrorism.  

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4. What words has the author used that means some of the plotters thought that the plan might not be such a good idea after all?  

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5. Why is it not known who sent the letter to Lord Monteagle?  

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6. In your own words, explain what made Guy Fawkes a perfect addition to the plotter's gang.  

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7. How did the special forces eventually persuade Guy Fawkes to confess and who allowed it to happen?  

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8. What impressed the King about Fawkes and what do you think he meant?  

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9. Why were the plotters found guilty of high treason?  

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10. Describe what still happens to this day, as a result of the failed Gunpowder Plot. Explain your own thoughts about the plot and the outcome.  

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# Bonfire Night Answers

1. Why were bonfires lit initially after the failed Gunpowder Plot, and what happens now?

**Initially bonfires were lit after the Gunpowder Plot, in celebration of the King being safe. Nowadays effigies are burnt as a reminder that traitors cannot get away with plotting to overthrow the monarchy.**

2. Why did the English Catholics think that James I might be more tolerant of Catholics despite being a Protestant?

**The English Catholics thought that James I might be more tolerant of Catholics despite being a Protestant because his mother had been a Catholic.**

3. Explain what made the Gunpowder Plot an act of terrorism.

**The Gunpowder Plot was an act of terrorism because the plotters were planning to kill people because they did not agree with their religion.**

4. What words has the author used that means some of the plotters thought that the plan might not be such a good idea after all?

**The author has said that some of the plotters were having 'second thoughts' about the plot, which means they thought the plan might not be such a good idea after all.**

5. Why is it not known who sent the letter to Lord Monteagle?

**It is not known who sent the letter to Lord Monteagle because it was anonymous.**

6. In your own words, explain what made Guy Fawkes a perfect addition to the plotter's gang.

**Pupil's own response based on Guy Fawkes' military career; knowledge about war and gunpowder; hating the English king.**

7. How did the special forces eventually persuade Guy Fawkes to confess and who allowed it to happen?

**The special forces eventually persuaded Guy Fawkes to confess by torturing him. The King had allowed this to happen by giving his permission even though it was illegal.**

8. What impressed the King about Fawkes and what do you think he meant?

**The King was impressed by Fawkes' "Roman resolution". Pupil's own response regarding the meaning.**

9. Why were the plotters found guilty of high treason?

**The plotters were found guilty of high treason because they had plotted to kill the King which was a crime.**

10. Describe what still happens to this day, as a result of the failed Gunpowder Plot.

**Pupil's own response based on bonfires being lit and the cellars of the Houses of Parliament still being checked on the night before the State Opening of Parliament.**

11. Explain your own thoughts about the plot and the outcome.

**Pupil's own response.**