

Webquest: Bonfire Night

by Gabrielle Jones

Level: Intermediate / Upper intermediate
Target age: Teenagers / Young adults
Time needed: 60 minutes
Key skills: Reading, speaking
Materials: One copy of the worksheet per student

Introduction

Bonfire Night is a traditional British celebration, also known as Guy Fawkes' Night. Every 5 November, bonfires are lit and firework displays are held to remember an unsuccessful plot to blow up the Houses of Parliament and kill the king in 1605.

These activities are designed to inform students about the history of this celebration, the people involved and traditions which are practised today.

How to do the activities

The webquest is designed for students to work from activity to activity. Most tasks require them to compare their answers in pairs or small groups and there is always an element of discussion or interaction involved. The lesson could, however, be made more competitive by assigning teams one activity each and giving them a limited amount of time to complete their activity. When they are finished, they can then form new teams, with one member from each activity group, who share the information they read. Teachers could assign points per team for the most correct answers and/or the quickest team to complete the webquest.

Activity 1: Warmer

Students discuss the vocabulary in pairs. It is very important that they are familiar with the meaning of each word before they begin the main webquest activities.

Activity 2: The Gunpowder Plot

www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/15351828

Key:

1. a 'Guy' – a dummy of Guy Fawkes
2. He planned to blow up King James I and his government.
3. to set off an explosion in the Houses of Parliament

4. One member of the group wrote a letter to a friend who worked in the parliament – some of the King's supporters found the letter and realized what was being planned.
5. They were arrested and executed.
6. Guy Fawkes and the group wanted England to return to the Catholic faith.

Note to teacher: Activities 3 and 4 may be very challenging for lower-level learners – teachers may wish to skip these sections and continue with activity 5.

Activity 3: The people involved in the Gunpowder Plot

www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/parliamentaryauthority/the-gunpowder-plot-of-1605/overview/people-behind-the-plot

Working in groups of three, students visit the website to find out about different people involved in the Gunpowder Plot. They then share three pieces of information about the people they read about.

Activity 4: Bonfire Night celebrations

www.bonfirenight.net/bonfire.php

Students visit this site – they work to answer a set of questions, which they later discuss in pairs.

Key:

Student A:

1. Bonfire Night celebrations began the same year as the Gunpowder Plot.
2. As the years progressed, Bonfire Night rituals became more elaborate.
3. Effigies of Guy Fawkes and sometimes the Pope were placed on the fire.
4. People prepare for Bonfire Night by making a dummy of Guy Fawkes. Sometimes, children take the dummy in the street and ask passersby for money to buy fireworks.

Student B:

1. Apart from a Guy Fawkes effigy, people typically light fireworks on Bonfire Night.

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- Lewes is in South East England and it attracts visitors because of its famous Bonfire Night festivities.
- Bonfire Night was also celebrated in the British colonies. It was celebrated in New England as late as the 18th century, and New Zealand and Newfoundland in Canada still celebrate Bonfire Night.
- New England gave Bonfire Night an alternative name – Pope Day.
- The exceptions are:
 - November 5 – until 12 midnight;
 - New Year's Eve – until 1 am;
 - Chinese New Year – until 1 am;
 - Diwali night – until 1 am.
- People are not allowed to throw, cast or fire their fireworks into highways, streets, thoroughfares or public places.

Activity 7: Review task

www.bbc.co.uk/history/interactive/games/gunpowder/index_embed.shtml

If time and technological resources allow, students can complete an online interactive game to review the main facts about the Gunpowder Plot.

Activity 5: Bonfire Night recipes

Students read the recipes of three different traditional foods which British people eat on Bonfire Night. They note the ingredients, method and time required to prepare the dish. When they are finished, they give a summary of the information to other students.

Student A: parkin cake

www.learnenglish.de/recipe/parkin.html

Student B: toffee apples

www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/13599/homemade-toffee-apples

Student C: baked potatoes

www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/1759659/bonfire-night-baked-potatoes

Discussion: Students discuss if they eat these dishes, or something similar, in their country. Furthermore, they discuss what people typically eat on a cold night in their own country.

Activity 6: Fireworks – staying safe

www.learnenglish.de/culture/bonfirenight.html

Students read about how to stay safe while using fireworks and watching firework displays.

Key:

- People must be 18 to use fireworks.
- Only licensed pyrotechnics professionals can hold professional fireworks displays.
- Normally people can't use fireworks between 11pm and 7am.