

1. The Gunpowder Plot

The subject of this week's lesson is the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 in which a group of thirteen conspirators attempted to blow up the Houses of Parliament in London and kill the English king. They didn't succeed, but they did leave an inadvertent legacy in the form of 'Guy Fawkes Night', which is still celebrated every year on the night of November 5th.

Level

Intermediate and above

How to use the lesson

1. Ask if your students have heard of the Gunpowder Plot or Guy Fawkes. It's unlikely that they have, so be prepared to broaden the question by asking if they can think of any historical examples of people trying to kill the ruler(s) of a country. Why did they do it? Did they succeed? Was the attempt justified? What happened to them afterwards?

2. Divide the class into two groups, A and B. Give one copy of Worksheet A to each student in Group A and one copy of Worksheet B to each student in Group B.

3. Tell your students they have the same text on the Gunpowder Plot, but there is some information missing from each worksheet. Explain that they are going to ask a member of the other group some questions to help them complete the text, but first they need to prepare the questions.

4. Give the students at least ten minutes to read through the text and check any new vocabulary, then give them another 5–10 minutes to work together in their groups to prepare and write down the questions they need to ask in order to complete the text. Monitor this activity to make sure that the students are formulating the questions correctly (see suggestions below).

5. When all the students have prepared their questions, ask a student from Group A to work with a student from Group B. They should take it in turns to ask and answer the questions they have prepared and write the answers in the spaces in the text. Allow 5–10 minutes for this activity.

6. When both students have finished asking and answering, allow them to compare worksheets.

7. Check answers in open class.

8. Ask the students to put away Worksheets A and B or to temporarily hand them back to you. Then, keeping the students in pairs, hand out Worksheet C and give the students another 5–10 minutes for the gap-fill exercise in which they have to replace individual words that are now missing from the text. If the students cannot remember what the words were, encourage them to try to work them out from the context of the sentence. You might also want to point out that some of the words feature in the students' glossaries.

9. Check answers in open class.

Answers

Part A (questions/answers)

Suggested questions:

1. Who did the thirteen men plan to kill?
2. How did the thirteen men plan to destroy Parliament?
3. What was the plot a result of?
4. Why were the plotters angry with King James I?
5. What did the plotters hope to cause?
6. What did the plotters feel bad about?
7. Whose brother-in-law was Lord Monteagle?
8. What did Tresham advise Lord Monteagle to do?
9. What was Guy Fawkes carrying when the soldiers discovered him?
10. Where was Fawkes taken?
11. What happened to the rest of the plotters?
12. What is the night of November 5th called?
13. How is Guy Fawkes Night celebrated?
14. What doesn't Guy Fawkes Night have nowadays?
15. What did the scientists use in their spectacular test?
16. Who would have been killed by the explosion?

Part B (gap-fill)

1. blowing
2. cellar
3. Protestant
4. aristocracy
5. monarch
6. eventually
7. brother-in-law
8. suspicious
9. set
10. revealed
11. continued
12. off
13. effigy
14. socialise
15. anniversary
16. powerful

2. Related Websites

Send your students to these websites, or just take a look yourself.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/find_out/guides/uk/fireworks_night/newsid_2369000/2369105.stm

Section on Guy Fawkes and Fireworks Night from BBC *Newsround*. Aimed primarily at children and younger teenagers, and accessible to intermediate-level students.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/civil_war_revolution/gunpowder_robinson_01.shtml

A series of pages on the Gunpowder Plot from the History section of the BBC website. Upper-intermediate and above.

<http://www.gunpowder-plot.org/>

Website of the Gunpowder Plot Society. A huge amount of information, but mostly suitable only for upper-intermediate and above.