

How should we remember Guy Fawkes?

For over 400 years, people in the UK have celebrated Guy Fawkes Night every 5 November, by singing songs, setting off fireworks and burning a 'Guy' on a bonfire. Based on the last worksheet, you should know this is because Guy Fawkes and other plotters tried to blow up the Protestant King James I and Parliament as revenge for the way English Catholics were being treated. However, what was Guy Fawkes really like, and how true is the traditional story of the Gunpowder Plot?

Recap Task: The Details of the Gunpowder Plot

Based on the last work-sheet, read the following statements and circle the ones that are correct:

- James I liked the Catholics living in England and wanted to let them worship freely.
- The Catholics living in England in 1605 did not like James I.
- James I forced Catholics to pay fines if they did not go to Protestant churches.
- A small group of Catholics thought that they would stab the King.
- A small group of Catholics thought they would blow up the King.
- Guy Fawkes and the other plotters hid the gunpowder in a cellar under Parliament.
- One of the Catholic plotters sent a letter to James I to warn him.
- One of the Catholic plotters sent a letter to a man called Lord Monteagle to warn him.
- Guy Fawkes was caught rowing a boat up the River Thames near Parliament.
- Guy Fawkes was caught in the cellar waiting to set fire to the gunpowder.

Introduction Task: Who was Guy Fawkes?



Born: 1570 in York (a city in northern England, a part of the country where many people remained loyal to the Catholic Church)

Parents: Edward and Edith, who were both Protestants

Education: Went to St Peter's School in York, whose headmaster had links to Catholics and many of the students were Catholics

Religion: Baptised a Protestant but became a Catholic when he was a teenager

Personality and views: Pleasant, cheerful, energetic, intelligent and loyal to his friends but did not like James I

Appearance: Tall, strong, with thick reddish-brown hair and a beard and moustache

Job: In 1592 left England and joined the Spanish Army - he had a reputation as a good fighter, and remained in the Spanish Army until 1603, when he returned to England

Other names: Nicknamed Guido (from the Italian for 'Guy') - also called himself 'John Johnson' to hide his identity

Instructions:

1. Read the secret fact file on Fawkes.
2. In your book write down two reasons Fawkes would want to overthrow James I.
3. In your book write down two reasons why Fawkes would be useful to someone plotting against James I

Challenge: Imagine you are a spy working for James I - use the information in the fact file to write a one paragraph description of Fawkes.

Main Task

Some historians do not believe the traditional story of the Gunpowder Plot. They believe that Fawkes and the other plotters were framed by James I's chief minister Sir Robert Cecil, who wanted to make Catholics look bad, but make James I more popular with his new English subjects. Although James was popular when he first became king, not everyone liked him. An attempt on his life would help to make him popular by uniting the English people behind him against Catholics. Which version is correct? The purpose of the rest of this worksheet is to help you make up your mind.

Instructions:

1. Read each source.
2. Answer the questions about each them in your book.
3. There is also a challenge task for you to attempt!

Source A: An extract from the letter sent to Lord Monteagle, 26 October 1605

My lord, I have a care for your safety. Therefore I would warn you to make some excuse to miss your attendance at Parliament. ... Go into the countryside, for they shall receive a terrible blow this Parliament.

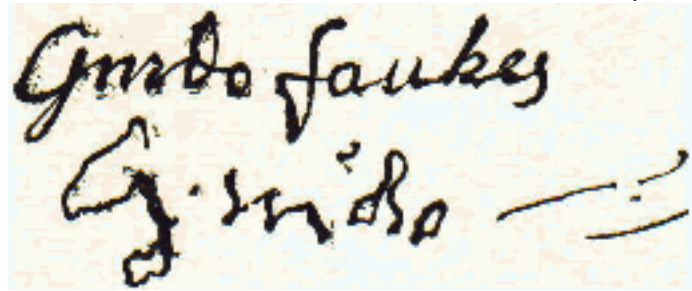
Source B: James I's orders about Guy Fawkes' questioning, 6 November 1605

If he will not confess, the gentler tortures are to be first used, and then the ones which cause great pain.

Source C: Guy Fawkes' Confession, 17 November 1605

Catesby suggested... digging under Parliament... barrels of gunpowder were moved to the cellar... It was agreed to seize Lady Elizabeth, the king's eldest daughter... and to proclaim her Queen.

Source D: Guy Fawkes' normal signature (top) and the signature he wrote on his confession after he had been tortured (bottom)



Source E: Some facts put forward by modern historians

1. The 36 barrels of gunpowder were placed in a cellar under Parliament. This cellar was owned by John Whynniard, a royal official and close friend to Sir Robert Cecil.
2. The government seemed to know where all the plotters were. On 7 November they were surrounded in Holbeach House in the Midlands. They offered little resistance and yet some of them were shot dead, including Robert Catesby, the leader of the plot.
3. All the plotters were killed and or captured quickly, except one Francis Tresham, who died of a mysterious illness in the Tower of London.
4. The government said the plotters had dug a tunnel under Parliament to place their gunpowder in but it has never been found.
5. Only the government was allowed to purchase gunpowder - so how did the plotters get it?
6. Why was there a 9 day delay between James I finding out about Monteagle's letter and ordering a search of Parliament?

1. What does Source A advise Monteagle to do?
2. What do Sources B and D tell us about how Fawkes was treated after he had been arrested?
3. What does Source C say the plan of the plotters was? As we know Fawkes was tortured, how much can we trust what Source C says?
4. Read the facts in Source E. Do they convince you that Fawkes was framed by Cecil and James I? Write 1-3 sentences explaining your answer.

Challenge: Use the evidence from the sources to write a newspaper article about the Gunpowder Plot (1 paragraph). If you think Fawkes was framed your headline should be: **EVIL KING FRAMES INNOCENT CATHOLICS!** but if you think the plot was real your headline should be: **EVIL PLOTTERS TRY AND KILL OUR BELOVED KING!** You can draw a picture to illustrate it if you wish.