

Bonfire Night

Topic

Bonfire Night, festivals

Aims

- To develop reading skills
- To practise question formation
- To practise speaking skills
- To focus on pronunciation

Age group

10 - 14

Level

A2/ B1

Time

60 minutes

Materials

1. Bonfire Night student worksheet and Jigsaw Reading texts
2. Internet links: http://www.bbc.co.uk/food/occasions/bonfire_night - Recipes for Bonfire Night
<http://resources.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/customs/guy.html> - information about November 5th
http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/civil_war_revolution/launch_gms_gunpowder_plot.shtml - online game based around the gunpowder plot
<http://www.nfpa.org/safety-information/for-consumers/holidays/fireworks/fireworks-safety-tips> - Safety information on fireworks
<http://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/uk-now/read-uk/bonfire-night-0> - LearnEnglish Teens lesson

Introduction

November 5th 2005 marks the anniversary of the famous Gunpowder Plot when Guy Fawkes and his conspirators attempted to blow up the Houses of Parliament in London. Bonfire Night is celebrated throughout Britain on the evening of the 5th of November with firework displays. As a language assistant you can really bring this class to life by adding your own experiences of how you've spent Bonfire Nights in the UK.

The introduction task is to find out how much your students already know about Bonfire Night and to look at the important vocabulary. Task 1 is a jigsaw reading about the history of the Gunpowder Plot. Task 2 asks students to talk about similar festivals in their own country and Task 3 gives students the opportunity to talk about winter food and design a Bonfire Night menu. Task 4 is a pronunciation task based on a traditional rhyme and Task 5 looks at firework safety, with the opportunity for students to produce a poster.

Procedure

1. Introduce the topic: Bonfire Night	<p>Draw a picture on the board or show a real image of a bonfire with a figure (an effigy of Guy Fawkes) on the top and people standing around with sparklers. Draw the moon and fireworks in the sky. Ask students what the things are and label them – fireworks, moon, bonfire etc.</p> <p>Write the date at the top – November 5th and ask your students if they know anything about this British festival. If they do, elicit as much as possible and fill in any missing information. If they know nothing about Bonfire Night at all, give a brief and simple explanation, but not too much as they will find out more in Task 1.</p>
2. Task 1 – Guy Fawkes jigsaw reading	<p>Put students into pairs, and put As together and Bs together. Give them their text and encourage them to write the questions that they will need to ask to get their missing information. Monitor and help with question formation. Depending on the level of your group, decide how much of the vocabulary to pre- teach. Make sure all students know the meaning of the following, before they begin the reading: blow up, a plot, gunpowder. Then re-group the pairs so that As are with Bs and get them to ask and answer their questions to complete the texts.</p>
3. Task 2 – Discussion questions	<p>These questions are to follow on from task 1. If you haven't done task 1, but have explained the events of Bonfire night in another way, you could still use the questions as a starting point for talking about similar/other festivals in the students' country. Put students into small groups or discuss the questions as a whole group if your class isn't too big.</p>
4. Task 3 – Bonfire Night food	<p>Try to remember if there was any typical food you would eat on Bonfire Night. Soups, jacket potatoes, burgers, toffee apples? Tell students that food for Bonfire Night has to be hot and you have to be able to eat it outside, sometimes standing up as you watch the firework display. Think of some ideas together and ask students to think up a menu for Bonfire Night.</p> <p>If they need a structure, get them to think of one type of soup, a jacket potato filling and something sweet that they would like to eat on a cold, winter evening.</p>

<p>5. Task 4 – Remember, remember the fifth of November</p>	<p>This is a pronunciation activity. Depending on what problems your students have with individual sounds or intonation you can adapt the task to their needs. You say a line and get the students to repeat the same line. Gradually build it up until they say the whole rhyme all together. You may feel a bit nervous about doing this type of ‘choral drilling’ at the beginning, but lots of students do appreciate the chance to practise their pronunciation in this way and it can be quite fun. You could also focus on word stress, or do a disappearing dialogue, where you remove a couple of words from the board at a time until students can drill the rhyme by heart.</p>
<p>6. Task 5 – Firework safety</p>	<p>This is a group task and would be suitable for lower levels and/or younger students. Tell students that before Bonfire Night in the UK there is always a campaign to ask people to use fireworks safely. IN the UK you have to be 18 to buy fireworks. This may be a shock for some of your students who are used to having access to fireworks from an early age, as is the case in Spain for example.</p> <p>This activity asks students to think about firework safety and to design a poster for children to keep them safe on Bonfire Night – or at any festival that uses fireworks. Brainstorm a few ideas with the group about firework safety, such as keeping pets indoors and not returning to a lit firework that hasn’t gone off etc. Then ask the groups to design a poster to encourage firework safety. Use some of the weblinks above to help with ideas. You could have a vote for the most effective poster.</p>
<p>7. Task 7 - Discussion</p>	<p>These discussions questions are suitable for higher level classes. Ask the students to discuss the questions in pairs or small groups.</p>

Contributed by

Jo Budden