

A large, stylized graphic of a fireworks explosion in shades of blue and white, serving as a background for the main text.

# **FIREWORKS BE SAFE NOT SORRY**

**ALWAYS FOLLOW THE CODE**

**BIS** | Department for Business  
Innovation & Skills

**SCHOOLS PACK - KEY STAGE 2**

Firework Safety

July 2010

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The following material has been designed primarily to teach the fireworks safety message through use in the Literacy/Citizenship elements of the National Curriculum. The material included also contains cross-curriculum links where appropriate.

We suggest that these lessons are scheduled to take place in the week leading up to November 5th.

The website should be your first port of call for any information on the safe and responsible use of fireworks: [www.direct.gov.uk/fireworks](http://www.direct.gov.uk/fireworks).

## Teachers' planning notes: The Gunpowder Plot

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Remember, remember the 5th of November,  
Gunpowder, Treason and Plot.

I see no reason why Gunpowder Treason  
Should ever be forgot.

The rhyme reminds people why on the 5th of November each year, bonfires are lit around the land – very often with a Guy made of cloth sitting on top.

The Gunpowder Plot took place in 1605. Its roots lay in the politics of the time and the way that religious beliefs divided different sections of the community.

The background to it lay in the unhappiness felt by Catholics about the way they were being treated in England. Eighty years earlier King Henry VIII had broken away from Rome because the Pope refused to let him divorce his first wife, Catherine of Aragon.

Then when the Protestant Queen Elizabeth I came to the throne in 1558 she persecuted Catholics, fearing they may side with an invader from the European continent.

When Elizabeth died in 1603, King James VI of Scotland became James I of England. English Catholic leaders hoped he would be more tolerant. These hopes were quickly dashed however, and the persecution continued.

Most Catholics accepted the situation, but a small number were determined to do something about it and try to force change.

The five central figures of the Gunpowder Plot were Robert Catesby, Thomas Percy, Thomas Wintour, John Wright and – best known of all – Guy Fawkes. Fawkes, who had been born in York in 1570, was a mercenary, or soldier of fortune, who had spent more than 10 years fighting for Spain in Flanders as part of a regiment of English exiles. He was recruited because of his knowledge about the use of gunpowder. The five swore to blow up James and the Houses of Parliament at the official opening of Parliament, killing the King and all his leading advisers.

They first rented a house near to Parliament and began digging a tunnel, but this plan was abandoned when they came up against the foundations of the Palace of Westminster. Instead Thomas Percy managed to acquire a cellar within the Parliament buildings directly under the House of Lords. Fawkes – posing as Percy's manservant and using the name John Johnson – was installed as caretaker. Here the plotters eventually stacked 36 barrels of gunpowder. They ferried the barrels across the River Thames at night, and hid them under firewood.

Delays in the opening of Parliament and the rising costs incurred by the plotters, who were storing arms at various points around the country for use in the revolt they were planning to lead following the death of the King, led to

more people being brought into the conspiracy. All these were close to the original conspirators, most of them being related.

It is believed that it was one of these people – Francis Tresham – who wrote a letter which was delivered to his brother-in-law Lord Monteagle on October 26th, 1605. The letter warned Monteagle not to attend the opening of Parliament. Monteagle immediately took the letter to King James' Secretary of State Robert Cecil.

Despite becoming aware of the existence of the letter, the plotters continued with their plans, sure the authorities remained unaware of the details of the scheme. Guy Fawkes spent the day before the opening of Parliament – scheduled for November 5th – in the cellar containing the gunpowder. A slow burning fuse was in position. Fawkes was to light it and then escape to the continent.

On the night of November 4th, however, searches were made of the cellars beneath the Houses of Parliament. During the first search of the cellar in which Fawkes was holed up it was noticed it contained a suspiciously large amount of firewood. At around midnight a magistrate accompanied by soldiers returned and overpowered Fawkes. The gunpowder was discovered and Fawkes was arrested and taken before the King for questioning.

Despite being tortured he kept up the pretence that he was John Johnson, the servant of Thomas Percy. Government spies had, however, already linked him to Catesby and the other conspirators.

Catesby and most of the others had fled London for the Midlands. They and their sympathisers – around 60 in total – finally arrived at Holbeche House on the Staffordshire/Warwickshire border on November 7th. The following day the house was surrounded by a force led by the Sheriff of Worcester. In the fighting that followed,

Catesby, Wright and Percy were killed and the other plotters arrested. They were tried and convicted as traitors at the end of January 1606 and were summarily executed.

Guy Fawkes and Thomas Wintour, along with two other conspirators, were put to death in the Old Palace Yard at Westminster.

Francis Tresham, believed to have been the author of the letter which alerted the authorities to the Gunpowder Plot, had been taken to the Tower of London following his arrest. It is recorded that he died there in December 1605, possibly as a result of poisoning, though some historians believe he was allowed to escape.

On November 5th, 1606, people in London lit bonfires to mark the anniversary of the foiling of the plot to kill the King, beginning a tradition which has survived right through to the present day.

Another tradition also survives. As part of the ritual at the State Opening of Parliament each year, the Yeoman of the Guards, complete with their Tudor uniforms and armed with pikes, carry out a search of the buildings.

**(The Monteagle Letter, now kept in the Public Records Office:**

“My lord, out of the love I bear to some of your friends, I have a care for your preservation. Therefore I would advise you, as you tender your life, to devise some excuse to shift of your attendance of this Parliament, for God and man hath concurred to punish the wickedness of this time. And think not slightly of this advertisement but retire yourself into your country, where you may expect the event in safety, for though there be no appearance of any stir, yet I say they shall receive a terrible blow, the Parliament, and yet they shall not see who hurts them. This counsel is not to be contemned, because it may do you good and can do you no harm, for the danger is past as soon as you have burnt the letter: and I hope God will give you the grace to make good use of it, to whose holy protection I commend you.”)

**Some possible website links:**

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[www.gunpowder-plot.org](http://www.gunpowder-plot.org) (the website of a society devoted to the study of the Gunpowder Plot).

[www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/civil\\_war\\_revolution/gunpowder\\_haynes\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/civil_war_revolution/gunpowder_haynes_01.shtml)

[www.parliament.uk/documents/upload/g08.pdf](http://www.parliament.uk/documents/upload/g08.pdf)

## **Teachers' background notes: Firework Festivals around the world, and Fireworks and the Law**

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Fireworks have been used in festivals and celebrations around the world for many years. The following background information will help you when planning lessons.

Also included here is a brief summary of fireworks and the law.

### **The history of fireworks**

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Firework manufacture probably started in China in the 9th Century. Bamboo shoots were filled with gunpowder and then exploded at New Year. There is more information about how the Chinese New Year is celebrated today in this insert.

It is thought that the first fireworks arrived in Europe in the 1300s. They were brought back by travellers – including the Crusaders – who had been to the East.

Fireworks are used around the world to commemorate events and as part of festivals and celebrations. These are some of the most popular today.

### **Bonfire Night (November 5th)**

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In England, Scotland and Wales fireworks are used to celebrate the anniversary of Guy Fawkes failed attempt to blow up Parliament.

### **Diwali – the festival of lights**

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Diwali has been celebrated by Hindus around the world for thousands of years. It starts on Amavasya. This is the 15th day of the month of Ashwin, which is in either October or November. Diwali means 'row of lights' and the festival lasts for five days. Each day has its own significance with a number of myths, legends and beliefs. Traditionally, rows of little lights are lit in houses to welcome Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth and Prosperity and to drive out evil. Fireworks are lit as part of the celebrations.

You can find out more about Diwali by visiting:

[www.reachgujarat.com/diwali.htm](http://www.reachgujarat.com/diwali.htm)

### **The Chinese New Year**

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The Chinese New Year is celebrated in the middle of February. Preparations start in January when people buy special food and presents, just like at Christmas.

Houses are cleaned from top to bottom and doors and window frames are often painted red. On Chinese New Years Eve people have a special meal and often wear red cloths to ward off evil spirits. At midnight fireworks are let off in celebration and people visit family and friends with New Year greetings. The end of the New Year is celebrated by the Festival of Lanterns with singing, dancing and lantern shows.

## **National Festivals**

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Other countries have their national equivalents of Bonfire Night. These include:

France – Bastille Day. This is on July 14th and celebrates the storming of the Bastille (prison) during the French Revolution in 1789. French people have parties, parade and firework displays.

America – Independence Day is celebrated on July 4th with fireworks and parties. It commemorates the Declaration of Independence from Great Britain made by the United States of America in 1776. There's lots of information about this at [www.ushistory.org](http://www.ushistory.org)

Canada Day – July 1st. The annual World Fireworks Championship is held in Canada on July 1st. Canada Day is one of Canada's most important holidays and it honours the day that the British colonies of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and the province of Canada became united as one country called the Dominion of Canada.

## **Fireworks and the Law**

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Recent years have seen a number of changes in the law surrounding the sale and use of fireworks. These changes are summarised below.

### **Fireworks curfew**

There is a curfew on firework use between 11pm and 7am (in line with the Noise Act), with the exception of the following nights where the curfew will vary:

November 5th – until midnight

New Years Eve – 1am on the following day

Chinese New Year – 1am on the following day

Diwali – 1am on the following day

### **Fireworks and the under 18s**

Under 18s are not permitted to buy fireworks or to possess them in a public place

### **Retailers' responsibilities**

- As with alcohol sales, retailers are responsible for ensuring they do not sell to under 18s.
- Retailers must not split retail boxes of fireworks
- Retailers wishing to sell fireworks all year round must be licensed

### **The following fireworks must not be supplied to the general public**

- Aerial wheels.
- Bangers, flash bangers or double bangers.
- Jumping Crackers.
- Jumping ground spinners.
- Spinners.
- Mini rockets.
- Shot tubes – previously known as air bombs.
- Shot tubes – previously known as shell - in – mortar.
- A battery containing bangers, flash bangers or double bangers
- A combination (other than a wheel) which contains one or more bangers, flash bangers or double bangers.
- All Category 4 fireworks.



## Teachers' planning notes: November the Fifth teaching objectives

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### Year 3 – term 1:

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Text level 6: to read aloud and recite poems, comparing different views of the same subject.

Text level 8: to express their views about a story in a poem, identifying specific words and phrases to support their viewpoint.

Text level 12: to collect suitable words and phrases in order to write poems and short descriptions; design simple patterns with words, use repetitive phrases; write imaginative phrases.

Sentence level 3: the function of verbs in sentences.

### Text level work – reading and discussion

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- Discuss the layout of this poem and the rhyme.
- Discuss how the poet describes his view of bonfire night by building up the small details.
- Compare the two poems and discuss responses and preferences.

### Sentence level work – grammar

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- Discuss the verbs used in this poem.
- Consider how the poem might be re-written in the past tense.
- Identify the adverbs in this poem ending in 'ly' and discuss their impact on the poet's descriptions.

### Year 4 – term 1:

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Sentence level 4: to identify adverbs and understand their function in sentences.

Text level 7: compare and contrast poems on similar themes, particularly their form and language, discussing personal responses and preferences.

Text level 14: to write poems based on personal or imagined experience, linked to poems read. List brief phrases and words, experiment by trimming or extending sentences; experiment with powerful and expressive verbs.

### **Text level work – writing**

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- Change some of the verbs in this poem for others having a similar impact.
- Collect verbs which might be used in describing how fireworks go off.
- Write some phrases to describe memories of bonfire night – e.g. particular fireworks, food, the Guy etc.
- Use some of the verbs and phrases in a poem about bonfire night.

### **Word level work – phonics, spelling and vocabulary**

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Use a thesaurus to find synonyms for words to add to the collection of verbs and phrases for a bonfire night poem.

### **Curricular links**

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Use an art lesson to provide opportunities for pupils to work with a variety of media to illustrate their bonfire poems.

## Teachers' planning notes: Remember Remember teaching objectives

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### Year 3 – term 1:

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Text level 8: to express their views about a story or poem, identifying specific words or phrases to support their viewpoint.

Text level 12: to collect suitable words and phrases in order to write poems and short descriptions.

Text level 13: to invent a range of shape poems.

### Text level work – reading and discussion

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- Discuss this traditional verse, including the choice of words and the rhyme.
- Compare the two poems, in particular their form.
- Discuss the rhythm and the metre of this verse.

### Sentence level work – grammar

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- Discuss the contraction 'twas and consider the two words it brings together.
- Investigate other contractions.
- Discuss tense of verbs as it relates to this verse.

### Year 4 – term 1:

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Text level 7: to compare and contrast poems on similar themes, particularly their form and language, discussing personal responses and preferences.

Text level 14: to write poems based on personal or imagined experience, linked to poems read.

### Text level work – writing

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- Write couplets which tell episodes in the story of the Gunpowder Plot.
- Put them together to make a poem.

### **Word level work – phonics, spelling and vocabulary**

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- Find two-syllable words in the poem with double consonants.
- Investigate others.

### **Curricular links**

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In history investigate the accuracy of what is reported in this verse. Identify what is fact and what is fiction.

## Teachers' planning notes: Newspaper Article teaching objectives

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### Year 4 – term 1:

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Text Level 20: to identify the main features of newspapers including layout, range of information, voice, level of formality; organisation of articles, advertisements and headlines.

Word level 11: to define familiar vocabulary in their own words, using alternative phrases and expressions.

Sentence level 14: to identify adverbs and understand their function in sentences.

### Text level work – reading and discussion

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- Discuss the sequence of events leading up to the girl's accident.
- In role question the young people involved in the incident – hot seat.
- Discuss the effect of fireworks on animals.

### Sentence level work – grammar

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- Examine the adjectives used to describe the people in this newspaper report – youths.
- Use other newspaper reports to highlight the ways in which newspapers describe people.

### Year 4 – term 1:

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Text level 24: to write newspaper-style reports including:

- Composing headlines
- Using IT to draft and lay out the reports
- Editing stories to fit a particular space
- Organising writing into paragraphs

Text level 5: to prepare, read and perform playscripts; compare organisation of scripts with stories – how are settings indicated, story lines made clear?

Text level 13: to write playscripts.

Word level 11: define familiar vocabulary in their own words using alternative phrases and expressions.

### **Text level work – writing**

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- Write a short scene in which the youths find out about the injuries to the young girl.
- Write the young girl's diary for the few days before the accident.
- Write a newspaper report of an accident.

### **Word level work – phonics, spelling and vocabulary**

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- Examine the headline used in the report – discuss the use of inverted commas.
- Investigate other words for 'said'.

### **Curricular links**

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PSE investigate other types of antisocial behaviour in young people.

## Teachers' planning notes: The Firework Display teaching objectives

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### Year 5 – term 1:

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Text level 3: To investigate how characters are presented, referring to the text:

- through dialogue, action and description
- how the reader responds to them.

Text level 4: to consider how texts can be rooted in the writer's experience.

Sentence level 5: to understand the difference between direct and reported speech.

Word level 9: to collect and classify a range of idiomatic phrases, clichés and expressions.

### Text level work – reading and discussion

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- Discuss the characters of mother and son. What can we say about them from evidence in this extract?
- Discuss "That's when she clouted me." Is it humour or domestic violence?
- Summarise their views about fireworks and consider the reasons for their views.
- Compare children's experiences of a similar exchange of views between an adult and a child.
- Discuss how children feel about both characters in this extract.
- Predict the ending.

### Sentence level work – grammar

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- Revise punctuation of direct speech and discuss how dialogue is set out in text.
- Discuss use of non-standard or dialect words – e.g. clout, blooming.

### Year 6 – term 1:

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Text level 6: to manipulate narrative perspective by:

- writing in the voice and style of a text.

- writing a story with two different narrators.

### **Text level work – writing**

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- Rewrite the extract from George Layton's story as if you were the mother telling the story.
- Write a conversation between an adult and child showing they have different views on a subject.

### **Word level work – phonics, spelling and vocabulary**

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- Brainstorm some idiomatic phrases, clichés and expressions.
- Speculate about their meaning.
- Use some of those collected to illuminate dialogue between two people.

### **Curricular links**

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In PSE (Citizenship) discuss some of the issues arising from this extract – e.g. saving and spending; fireworks and safety; parents' views and children's views.



# Teachers' planning notes: Firework Safety Poster teaching objectives

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## Year 5 – term 1:

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Text level 22: to read and evaluate a range of instructional texts in terms of their:

- purposes.
- organisation and layout.
- clarity and usefulness.

Text level 25: to write instructional texts and test them out.

Sentence level 8: to revise and extend work on verbs.

## Text level work – reading and discussion

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- Discuss the language of the poster – comment in particular on the fitness for purpose of the language.
- Compare this safety poster with others and identify common features. How do the different posters use photographs and other illustrations, cartoons, bullet points, tone, style etc.
- Discuss the effectiveness of this poster with the children.

## Sentence level work – grammar

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- Revise active and passive verbs.
- Discuss the use of active verbs on posters, in particular safety posters.
- Consider how active verbs are used in a range of advertising posters.

## Year 6 – term 1:

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Text level 12: to comment critically on the language, style and the success of examples of non-fiction such as leaflets.

## Text level work – writing

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- Discuss written instructions to ensure safety.
- Write instructions for: e.g. lighting a barbecue or changing an electric plug, with particular attention on safety.

### **Word level work – phonics, spelling and vocabulary**

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- Discuss the spelling of words on posters – consider examples of where the spelling of a word has been changed for a particular effect.
- Consider the ways in which words with more than one meaning are used on posters.

### **Curricular links**

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In PSE, discuss safety in the home.

In art, design a large poster, paying particular attention to the style and tone of the language.

## November the Fifth

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And you big rocket,  
I watch how madly you fly  
Into the smoky sky  
With flaming tail;  
Hear your thin wail.

Catherine wheel  
I see how fiercely you spin  
Round and round on your pin;  
How I admire  
Your circle of fire.

Roman candle  
I watch how prettily you spark  
Stars in the autumn park  
Falling like rain  
To shoot up again.

And you, old guy  
I see how sadly you blaze on  
Till every scrap is gone;  
Burnt into ashes  
Your skeleton crashes.

And so,  
The happy ending of the fun,  
Fireworks over, bonfire done;  
Must wait a year now to remember  
Another fifth of November.

Leonard Clark

## Remember, remember...

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Remember, remember  
The fifth of November,  
The gunpowder treason and plot.  
I see no reason why gunpowder treason  
Should ever be forgot.

Guy Fawkes Guy, 'twas his intent  
To blow up King and Parliament.  
Three score barrels were laid below  
To prove old England's overthrow.

By God's mercy he was caught  
With a dark lantern and lighted match.  
Holler boys Holler boys let the bells ring  
Holler boys Holler boys God save the King

Traditional

## Extract from: The Firework Display, by George Layton

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'Mum, it's called spending money, isn't it? That means it's for spending. If it was meant for saving, people would call it saving money. You're only trying to get out of it.'

I was fed up. My Mum was only trying to get out of getting me fireworks. She came over.

'Don't you be so cheeky young man. Who do you think you are talking to?' I thought for a minute she was going to clout me one.

'Well even if I had some money saved, you wouldn't let me buy fireworks, would you?'

She didn't say anything.

'Well would you, eh?'

She told me not to say 'Eh' because it's rude. I don't think it's rude. It's just a word.

'Well would you, Mum? If I had my own money, I bet you wouldn't let me buy fireworks with it.'

'Stop going on about it, for goodness sake. You are not having any fireworks and that's final.'

It blooming well wasn't final. I wanted my own fireworks this year and that was final. Blimey, kids much younger than me have their own fireworks. Why shouldn't I?

'Apart from being a waste of money, they're dangerous.'

Dangerous. Honest, she's so old-fashioned, my Mum.

'Mum, there are instructions on every firework. As long as you light the blue touchpaper and retire, they're not dangerous.'

She started going on about how many people were taken to hospital every Bonfire Night, and how many children were injured, and how many limbs were lost, and if all fireworks were under supervised care like they are at the Children's Hospital, then there'd be far less accidents. She went on and on. I'd heard it all before.

'But I'll be careful, Mum, I promise. Please let me have my own fireworks.' That's when she clouted me.

'The Firework Display' from The Fib and Other Stories by George Layton  
©George Layton, reprinted by permission of Pearson Education Limited

## Firework Girl - 'May be scarred for life'

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A YOUNG girl today faces surgery in hospital for injuries caused by a firework.

The ten-year-old suffered serious burns to her face, hands and arms when she picked up a rocket which then exploded. She had been watching a group of youths setting off fireworks in a play area at Barton Street in Devonholme.

People living nearby said the rocket had been placed in a bottle by one of the youths. The fuse had been lit but the bottle had fallen over. The girl, who had been on swings nearby, ran over to pick it up and at that point the firework had gone off. An ambulance took the girl to the emergency unit at Devonholme Hospital where her condition was last night describe as 'poorly'.

Inspector Peter Smith of Devonholme police said: "She was very badly burnt and it could be that she will be scarred for life. She is the innocent victim of the reckless actions of others.

"Fireworks can bring a lot of joy in their proper place, which is at organised displays or at properly supervised private parties. This is a tragic illustration of the dangers of misusing fireworks."

He said they had spoken to a number of youths following the incident and inquiries were being made as to how they had acquired the fireworks.

Insp. Smith confirmed that police had been called to a disturbance in the same area two nights earlier. That followed complaints from people whose pets had been terrified by the noise of fireworks being set off. However, the youngsters involved had run off before they could speak to them.

# Follow Ben for a safe fireworks night

Fireworks will scare your pets, so keep them safely indoors.

Never give sparklers to a child under five.

If you are given a sparkler, always wear gloves. Always hold sparklers at arm's length and only hold one at a time.

When you are watching fireworks, always stand well back.

Only adults should handle and light fireworks.

Never go near a firework when it has been lit. Even if it hasn't gone off, it could still explode.

When a sparkler goes out, **DON'T TOUCH IT**. It could still burn you, so put it in a bucket of water, hot end down.

You have to be **18 years old** before you are allowed to buy fireworks in the shops.

**Never play with fireworks.** They are dangerous and can hurt you.

**Ben loves fireworks night.** To make sure he stays safe every year, he follows the **Firework Code**.

[www.direct.gov.uk/fireworks](http://www.direct.gov.uk/fireworks)

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