

# The Gunpowder Plot

## The Gunpowder Plot

The aim of The Gunpowder Plot, which took three years of planning, was to blow up the king of England, Members of Parliament and many important people that ran the country at that time.

So why did a group of thirteen men want to cause such destruction?

## How the Plan Came to Be

In 1604, England was ruled by King James I. He was a Protestant but his mother had been a Catholic. For many years, Catholics had been badly treated in England; so when a king whose mother had been Catholic was crowned, the Catholics hoped he would be a little kinder towards them. In fact, he was no better and he passed new laws against Catholics. People began to feel very angry about King James I ruling England.

In February of that year, a man called Robert Catesby met with two other Catholics in London. Catesby told them of his idea. His plan was to get rid of the people that he thought were harming the Catholic religion.

## Gathering the Plotters

One of the plotters, who was called Thomas Wintour, travelled to Flanders in Belgium. Flanders was ruled by Spain at the time. Wintour went to ask their Spanish leader if they would help with the plot as the plotters would need money for the plan to work. Spain had been a rival of England for years but at that time there was peace between the two countries. Spain wanted this peace to continue so refused to help.



While Wintour was in Flanders, he met Guy Fawkes. Fawkes was in the military and was an explosives expert. He was a Catholic, who also hated the king. He agreed to help and so the two men sailed back to England together.

That night, Wintour and Fawkes met with Catesby and two other men in the Duck and Drake pub in London. They all swore an oath of secrecy.

## Planning

Thomas Percy, who was another plotter, arranged to rent a house very near the House of Lords. This meant the plotters could dig a tunnel from his house right underneath the building.

Percy then managed to rent a vault, which was like a cellar, right under the House of Lords. This meant they no longer had to dig a tunnel. Instead, Guy Fawkes began hiding the barrels of gunpowder in the vault at night.

## The Anonymous Letter

On 5th November, Lord Monteagle was due to attend the opening of parliament, but he received an anonymous letter warning him not to go to the ceremony.

The king was shown the letter, who immediately ordered an investigation. The House of Lords was searched and there in the vault was Guy Fawkes with 36 barrels of gunpowder!

**anonymous** - The person who wrote the letter did not put their name on it.

## The End of the Plot

Most of the other plotters escaped to the Midlands. Catesby, Percy and the Wright brothers were killed in a gunfight. The rest were captured and taken to the Tower of London. They were later executed.

Fawkes was arrested and questioned under extreme torture. It took two days for him to eventually confess, and give the names of the other men involved. He was also executed.



# The Gunpowder Plot Questions

1. Why did the Catholics hope King James I would be kinder towards them?

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2. What did King James I do that proved to them he was no better than any other king?

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3. When did Robert Catesby first tell others about his idea?

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4. Why did Thomas Wintour ask Spain to help with the plot?

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5. Name two reasons that Guy Fawkes was a good choice to help the plotters?

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6. Why did Thomas Percy rent a house near the House of Lords?

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7. What date was Parliament due to open?

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8. Why do you think someone sent Lord Monteagle a letter warning him of the danger?

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9. How did Catesby die?

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10. What adjective does the author use that shows Fawkes would have endured a lot of pain during questioning?

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11. What does it mean when it says Fawkes eventually confessed?

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