

Diwali: The Festival of Lights

Learning objective: To understand the significance, traditions, and cultural importance of the Hindu festival of Diwali.

Read the text carefully and answer the questions that follow, ensuring your answers are based on the information provided.

Diwali, often known as the Festival of Lights, is one of the most significant festivals celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs, and Jains across the world. The word 'Diwali' comes from the Sanskrit word 'Deepavali', which translates to 'row of lights'. During this five-day celebration, families clean their homes and decorate them with colourful rangoli patterns made from sand or flower petals. The most iconic tradition involves lighting small clay oil lamps, called divas, which are placed in rows along windowsills and doorways. These lights symbolise the triumph of light over darkness and knowledge over ignorance. Families often wear new clothes, share delicious sweets, and exchange gifts to celebrate prosperity and new beginnings. For many, it is a time to reflect on the past year and set positive intentions for the future. In the UK, communities often gather to enjoy firework displays and traditional music, creating a warm, joyful atmosphere that brings friends and neighbours together to share in the spirit of peace and kindness.

Word bank: festival · tradition · celebrate · symbolise · rangoli · diva · prosperity

1. What is the origin of the word 'Diwali' and what does it translate to in English? (2 marks)

2. List two ways that families prepare their homes for the Diwali festival. (2 marks)

3. Why do you think families choose to light divas during the festival? (2 marks)

4. Based on the text, how does the celebration of Diwali impact the wider community in the UK? (2 marks)

5. Why is it important for people to celebrate festivals that focus on themes like 'light over darkness'? Justify your answer. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a beautiful, symmetrical rangoli pattern using bright colours, and add a few glowing diva lamps around the edges of your design.



Extension challenge: Research one other festival celebrated in the UK that uses light as part of its traditions. Write a short paragraph comparing it to Diwali.