

Diwali: The Festival of Lights with Ellie the Elephant

Learning objective: To understand the cultural significance of Diwali and use descriptive language to recount the traditional narrative.

Read the questions carefully. Ellie the Elephant has remembered many stories from her travels, but she needs your help to articulate the themes and vocabulary associated with the Festival of Lights.

Diwali, the vibrant Festival of Lights, is celebrated by millions of people globally. It is rooted in ancient traditions that mark the triumph of light over darkness and knowledge over ignorance. Families decorate their homes with intricate rangoli patterns, light small clay lamps called diyas, and share delicious sweets. The story often associated with Diwali tells of the return of a noble king to his kingdom after fourteen years of exile, with his people lighting his path home using rows of oil lamps.

Word bank: triumph · symbolise · diaspora · tradition · benevolence · illumination · prosperity · narrative

1. Explain why the act of lighting diyas is considered a central symbol of Diwali. How does this connect to the theme of 'light over darkness'? (2 marks)

2. Compare and contrast how Diwali might be celebrated in a bustling city compared to a quiet village. Use rich vocabulary to describe the atmosphere. (3 marks)

3. Justify why it is important for communities to share stories like the return of the king during festivals. What role does this play in keeping traditions alive? (2 marks)

4. If you were to write a short poem about the 'illumination' of the night during Diwali, which two adjectives would you choose to describe the lamps and why? (2 marks)

5. What might happen to the spirit of the festival if the traditional elements, such as rangoli or diyas, were replaced by modern technology? Explain your reasoning. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a traditional diya lamp placed inside an intricate geometric rangoli pattern. Use vibrant colours to represent the joy and warmth of the festival.



Extension challenge: Imagine you are a reporter visiting a home during Diwali. Write a descriptive paragraph (80-100 words) capturing the sights, sounds, and smells of the celebration. Use at least three words from the word bank provided.