

Diwali: The Festival of Lights

Learning objective: To understand the historical and symbolic significance of Diwali and explore how it is celebrated as a time of reflection, renewal, and the triumph of light over darkness.

Read each question carefully and use your knowledge of the festival of Diwali to provide detailed, thoughtful responses. Where prompted, justify your opinions using evidence from your learning.

Diwali, the Festival of Lights, is a significant celebration observed by millions of people across the globe. It commemorates the triumph of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance, and good over evil. The festival is marked by the lighting of clay lamps known as diyas, the creation of intricate rangoli patterns, and the gathering of families to share meals and exchange gifts. Across different traditions, the festival is associated with various stories, such as the return of Lord Rama and Sita to Ayodhya, or the worship of Goddess Lakshmi, who represents prosperity and wealth. For many, it is a time for deep reflection, house cleaning to welcome positivity, and the renewal of friendships.

Word bank: Diyas · Rangoli · Lakshmi · Auspicious · Rama · Sita · Ayodhya · Symbolism · Reflection · Victory

1. Max the monkey is helping his friends decorate for Diwali. Explain why the act of lighting diyas is considered more than just a physical action. What does the light represent in a symbolic sense? (2 marks)

2. Compare and contrast the traditions of cleaning the home before Diwali with the act of creating rangoli patterns at the entrance. How do both activities contribute to the spirit of the festival? (3 marks)

3. Nova the owl is curious about why Diwali is celebrated at different times each year. Based on your understanding, how is the date of Diwali determined compared to a fixed date like Christmas? (2 marks)

4. Justify why many people choose to give gifts of money or sweets during Diwali. What do these gifts signify regarding the relationships between family and friends? (2 marks)

5. What might happen to the community spirit of Diwali if families stopped sharing food and gifts, and instead celebrated only in private? Explain your reasoning. (3 marks)

6. If you were designing a rangoli pattern for a school display, which geometric shapes would you include and why? Link your design choices to the theme of 'light and harmony'. (2 marks)

Draw: Create a vibrant and symmetrical rangoli pattern. Use geometric shapes (triangles, circles, and squares) to form a design that you think would bring joy and a sense of 'welcome' to a doorstep during the Diwali festival.



Extension challenge: Research a specific regional variation of Diwali celebrated in a different part of the world (e.g., in India versus the UK). Write a short, persuasive paragraph explaining why it is important for schools to learn about diverse cultural festivals, even if they do not practice them personally.