

A Festival of Lights: Hanukkah Fact-File

Learning objective: To research and explain the historical origins, symbols, and significance of Hanukkah for Jewish people.

Use your library books or approved online resources to investigate the celebration of Hanukkah. Complete each section below to build a comprehensive fact-file. Use precise, academic vocabulary and ensure your explanations are clear and detailed.

Word bank: Menorah · Hanukkah · Maccabees · miracle · dedication · dreidel · oil · tradition · synagogue · celebration

1. Historical Origins: Explain the historical event that led to the celebration of Hanukkah. Who were the Maccabees and what were they fighting for? (3 marks)

2. The Miracle of the Oil: Describe the miracle associated with the Temple in Jerusalem. Why is the quantity of oil significant to the story? (3 marks)

3. Symbols and Rituals: Compare and contrast a standard Menorah with a Hanukkah. What is the specific purpose of the 'Shamash' candle? (4 marks)

4. Festive Traditions: Justify why certain foods, such as those fried in oil (like latkes or doughnuts), are eaten during Hanukkah. How do these connect to the story? (3 marks)

5. Personal Reflection: Explain why Hanukkah is considered a 'Festival of Lights'. In what ways does this festival promote themes of hope and resilience? (4 marks)

6. Critical Thinking: What might happen if the oil had lasted for only one day instead of eight? How might this have changed the way the festival is observed today? (3 marks)

Extension challenge: Imagine you are Ellie the elephant, who loves history. Write a short, formal diary entry from the perspective of someone living during the time of the Maccabees, describing the atmosphere as the Temple was rededicated. Use descriptive language to capture the sights and sounds of the event.