Diwali: The Festival of Lights Fact-File

Learning objective: To understand the significance, traditions, and symbolism of Diwali within Hinduism, Sikhism, and Jainism.

Use this fact-file to organise your research on Diwali. Think carefully about the symbolism behind the lights and the diverse ways different communities celebrate this festival. Use the word bank to help enrich your explanations.

Word bank: Deepavali · Diyas · Rangoli · Prosperity · Symbolism · Deities · Triumph · Tradition · Devotion · Community

1. Origins and Significance: Explain why Diwali is celebrated by different groups and what the 'triumph of light over darkness' symbolises in their faith. (4 marks)

2. The Role of Light: Describe the traditional use of 'diyas' (oil lamps). Why is light so central to the rituals performed during the festival? (3 marks)

3. Artistic Expressions: Compare the purpose of creating 'rangoli' patterns at the entrance of homes to the preparation of special festive meals. (4 marks)

4. Explain why the concept of 'giving' and 'charity' often features prominently in Diwali celebrations alongside the personal focus on family and prayer. (3 marks)

5. Justify your answer: Does the celebration of Diwali have universal themes that can be appreciated by people of all faiths, or is it strictly tied to specific religious narratives? (5 marks)

6. What might happen if the traditions of Diwali were celebrated in a climate or environment where traditional oil lamps could not be used? How might the symbolism change or adapt? (4 marks)

Extension challenge: Imagine you are a reporter for a community newspaper. Write a descriptive paragraph (150 words) about the atmosphere of a street celebrating Diwali. Use sensory language to describe the sights, sounds, and smells of the evening. How does the community atmosphere contribute to the feeling of unity?