Diwali: The Festival of Lights

Learning objective: To understand the significance and traditions of Diwali, the Hindu festival of light, through reading comprehension.

Read the passage carefully, then answer the questions that follow. Ensure you use full sentences and refer back to the text to support your answers.

Diwali, often called the Festival of Lights, is a significant celebration observed by millions of people across the globe. For many, it marks the triumph of light over darkness and knowledge over ignorance. To prepare, families clean their homes thoroughly and decorate them with bright, colourful patterns called rangoli on the floor. These intricate designs are made using sand, rice flour, or flower petals to welcome good fortune. As the sun sets, the celebration truly begins. Small oil lamps, known as diyas, are placed in rows along windowsills and doorways, creating a warm, golden glow that banishes the shadows. Families share delicious sweets and exchange gifts to show their love and appreciation for one another. In some regions, people wear new clothes and enjoy magnificent firework displays that light up the night sky. Diwali is a time for reflection, joy, and unity, reminding everyone that even a small light can make a big difference in the world. As Max the monkey might say, the patterns in the rangoli are a fascinating mathematical puzzle of symmetry and precision!

Word bank: festival · tradition · celebrate · rangoli · diya · symbolise · victory

1. What materials can be used to create a rangoli pattern? (2 marks)

2. At what time of day do families light the diyas, and why do they do this? (2 marks)

3. Why do you think families clean their homes thoroughly before the festival begins? (3 marks)

4. Compare the symbolism of the diya lamp to the concept of 'knowledge over ignorance' mentioned in the text. (3 marks)

5. If you were planning a Diwali celebration, which tradition would you find most meaningful and why? (4 marks)

Draw: Design your own symmetrical rangoli pattern inside a circle, using geometric shapes and repeating colours, just as Zara the zebra would imagine.

Extension challenge: Explain why the theme of 'light over darkness' is a universal message found in many cultures. What might happen if a community decided to celebrate Diwali without using any artificial lights? Justify your answer.