The Festival of Lights: Understanding Hanukkah

1. Latkes (potato pancakes) and sufganiyot (jam-filled doughnuts). (2 marks)

Working: Found in the paragraph: '...such as latkes (potato pancakes) and sufganiyot (jam-filled doughnuts)...'

1 mark for each correct food item identified.

2. Eight candles (plus the shamash). (1 mark)

Working: The text states: 'Each night, one additional candle is lit until all eight are glowing brightly on the final evening.'

Accept 'eight' or 'eight candles'.

3. Families eat foods cooked in oil to remember the miracle of the oil that burned for eight days in the Temple. (2 marks)

Look for: Linking the food choice to the historical miracle mentioned in the text.

Good: They eat them because the text says it is to remember the miracle of the oil.

Better: Families eat foods like latkes cooked in oil to remember the miracle where the small amount of oil lasted for eight days.

Best: They choose foods cooked in oil as a symbolic way to remember the miracle mentioned in the text, where the oil in the Temple burned for eight days instead of one.

What moves an answer up: Moving from a simple statement to a detailed explanation that connects the action (eating oil-based food) to the specific historical event (the miracle).

4. The shamash is used to light the other eight candles, whereas the other candles are the ones that represent the eight days of the miracle. (2 marks)

Working: Text states: 'The ninth candle, called the shamash, is used to light the others.'

1 mark for identifying the shamash lights the others; 1 mark for noting it is the ninth candle/distinct from the eight.

5. Yes, it is important because it brings families together to celebrate joy, gratitude, and reflect on the importance of freedom and faith. (2 marks)

Look for: An opinion supported by a reason derived from the text's description of the festival's purpose.

Good: Yes, it is important because it is a time of joy for families.

Better: I think it is important because the text says it is a time for families to gather and reflect on freedom and faith.

Best: Yes, it is an important festival because it encourages families to gather together to share food and reflect on values like gratitude, freedom, and faith during the winter.

What moves an answer up: Moving from a vague opinion to one that incorporates specific themes mentioned in the text.

What a secure answer looks like

A secure answer demonstrates the ability to locate specific facts and link them to the broader themes of the text, such as the connection between food and historical memory.

If your child is stuck

Ask the child to highlight the sentence in the text that mentions the specific topic of the question (e.g., 'food' or 'candles') before they write their answer.

Common mistakes to watch for

Children may confuse the total number of candles (nine) with the number of candles lit to represent the miracle (eight), or forget to mention the shamash's specific purpose.