



## Teacher's notes

**Age:** Adults/teenagers

**Level:** Intermediate–Upper-intermediate (B1–B2)

**Time:** 60–90 minutes

**Activity:** In this lesson, students will:

1. read a short text about the festival of Diwali, looking at the language used;
2. discuss Diwali and other celebrations they have attended that involve fireworks;
3. discuss and design an information poster for a local Diwali celebration.

**Language focus:** vocabulary related to Diwali, and the language involved in advertising a festival and issuing safety warnings

**Materials:** one copy of the worksheet per student and one sheet of paper per group for designing a poster

## Procedure

### 1. Warmer

- a. Students read the captions and write them below the images they relate to. Even if they haven't heard of *rangoli* before, they will be able to complete the task by first matching the things they know and then seeing what's left.
- b. Next, students read the text to find out how these things are connected with the festival of Diwali and write the day each image is most connected with next to its caption.

### Key:

 <p>Lights and lamps Day 2</p>	 <p>Rangoli Day 2</p>
 <p>Brothers visiting sisters Day 5</p>	 <p>Giving gifts Day 4</p>
 <p>Cleaning and decorating the home Day 1</p>	 <p>Buying kitchen items, new clothes and gold or silver Day 1</p>
 <p>Fireworks and firecrackers Day 3</p>	 <p>Family parties Day 3</p>



# CELEBRATIONS

## Diwali

### Exercise 1: Diwali traditions

a. Match the descriptions in the box with the images of things that happen during the Diwali festival.

giving gifts	buying kitchen items, new clothes and gold or silver	family parties
brothers visiting sisters	cleaning and decorating the home	
lights and lamps	rangoli	fireworks and firecrackers

 <p>_____</p> <p>Day: _____</p>	 <p>_____</p> <p>Day: _____</p>
 <p>_____</p> <p>Day: _____</p>	 <p>_____</p> <p>Day: _____</p>
 <p>_____</p> <p>Day: _____</p>	 <p>_____</p> <p>Day: _____</p>
 <p>_____</p> <p>Day: _____</p>	 <p>_____</p> <p>Day: _____</p>

b. Now read the text to find out on which day of Diwali these things happen. Write the number of the day below the pictures.

### DIWALI



The biggest and most significant festival of the year in India is Diwali, which is known by many people around the world as the 'festival of the lights'. Diwali celebrates the victory of good over evil, hope over despair and brightness over darkness. Consequently, during the five days of Diwali, the whole country is lit up by the joyous glow of lamps, candles and fireworks.

Diwali celebrates the return of Lord Rama and his wife Sita to their kingdom of Ayodhya, after Lord Rama and Hanuman, the monkey god, rescued Sita, who was being held captive by the ten-headed demon King Ravana.

The exact date of Diwali changes slightly from year to year, in order for day three of the festival to coincide with the full moon that occurs between the end of October and beginning of November. Diwali also marks the beginning of a new year in the Hindu calendar and is as important to Hindus as Christmas is to Christians.

Traditionally, each of the five days of Diwali has a different focus:

- On day one, people clean their homes and go shopping for gold and silver, new clothes and kitchen utensils.
- On day two, they decorate their newly cleaned homes with clay lamps, called *diyas*, and create elaborate patterns called *rangoli* on the ground outside the entrances to their homes using coloured powders, rice or sand. *Rangoli* are said to prevent evil from entering.
- The next day is the main day of the festival. Families come together to offer a prayer to the goddess Lakshmi, who visits every home on Diwali, bringing prosperity and good fortune with her. It is said that she visits the cleanest homes first. After this special prayer, called Lakshmi Puja, families sit down to a mouth-watering feast, which is followed by fireworks and firecrackers.
- On day four, the first day of the new year, people visit their friends and families taking gifts of sweets or clothes.
- The fifth and last day of Diwali is dedicated to celebrating sisters. On this day, brothers visit their married sisters, who cook them a lavish meal to honour the love and bond that exists between them.

Diwali is peak travel time in India, so if you are there during the festival, be prepared for delays. You might also want to keep ear plugs and a mask with you, as the fireworks and firecrackers are not only very loud, but they also greatly increase the amount of pollution in the air.

Although the rituals and traditions connected with Diwali vary slightly from region to region in India – as well as across the world – Diwali is always a joyful family-orientated festival wherever you are.

# CELEBRATIONS

## Diwali

### Exercise 2: Key words and talking about the festival

**a. Find words in the text that match the definitions below. The definitions are in the order that the words appear in the text.**

1. very important \_\_\_\_\_
2. the feeling that a situation is so bad that nothing you can do will change it  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. as a result \_\_\_\_\_
4. a soft warm light coming from something \_\_\_\_\_
5. kept as a prisoner (two words) \_\_\_\_\_
6. happen at the same time as something else \_\_\_\_\_
7. items that you use for cooking or eating with \_\_\_\_\_
8. the situation of being successful and having a lot of money \_\_\_\_\_
9. when a period of time is used for a particular thing (two words) \_\_\_\_\_
10. something that is this is given in a very large amount, especially if it costs a lot  
of money \_\_\_\_\_
11. a strong connection that gives people a reason to love one another or feel they have a duty to  
one another  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. used to describe the time when the largest number of people are doing something  
\_\_\_\_\_

**b. Note how the words are used in context and then use them to talk about Diwali.**

### Exercise 3: Discussion – festivals, fireworks and lights

**If you have ever attended or taken part in Diwali celebrations, talk about your experiences. If you haven't, talk about another festival or celebration you have experienced that involved lights and/or fireworks.**

### Exercise 4: Group task – staying safe at Diwali

**Your community is planning to hold Diwali celebrations this year. There will be fireworks, firecrackers, oil lamps and candles. The celebrations will mostly take place after dark, and you expect many visitors.**

**Talk about how you are going to make sure that all those involved – children as well as adults – stay safe during the celebrations.**

**Then prepare a poster about your festival. Include information about what people can expect at the festival, how they should behave, what they should or should not do, etc.**