

CELEBRATIONS

Diwali

Teacher's notes

Age: Adults/teenagers

Level: Pre-intermediate (A2) +

Time: 60–90 minutes

Activity: In this lesson, students will:

1. read a short text about the festival of Diwali and look at the language used;
2. discuss Diwali and other celebrations they have attended that involve fireworks;
3. complete 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; one sheet of paper per group suitable for designing as a poster

Procedure

1. Warmer: Diwali traditions

- a. Students read the descriptions and write them below the images they relate to. Even if the students 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 below its description.

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>

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2. Key words

Students read the definitions and match them with the key words in the text that have been underlined.

Note: the definitions are not in the order that the words appear in the text.

Key:

1. clay
2. demon
3. entering
4. evil
5. feast
6. firecrackers
7. powders
8. prayer
9. rescued
10. victory

3. Using the key words

Students use six of the key words from task 2 to complete the sentences.

Key:

1. evil
2. prayer
3. clay
4. entering
5. rescued
6. firecrackers

4. Discussion – festivals, fireworks and lights

a. Working on their own, students read the incomplete sentences and decide which one they could make true for them. If students have ever attended or taken part in Diwali celebrations, they should complete the first sentence about their experiences there. If they haven't yet had the opportunity to attend Diwali festivities, they should complete the second sentence about another festival they have attended which involved fireworks and/or firecrackers.

b. Then put students into pairs for the next part of this task. They first should read their sentences to each other and then hold a short conversation in which they ask questions about the other's experience and answer the questions providing as much information as they can.

5. Group task – Diwali poster

Students read the information. Then in small groups they plan and design a poster advertising their Diwali celebrations. Ask them to include as much practical information as they can about the celebration, and remind them to concentrate more on coming up with a really good text than pretty images.

Display the posters in class and allow time for students to look at and read all of them.

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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

 _____ Day: _____	 _____ Day: _____
 _____ Day: _____	 _____ Day: _____
 _____ Day: _____	 _____ Day: _____
 _____ Day: _____	 _____ Day: _____

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 festival of the year in India is Diwali. Diwali is a five-day festival that celebrates the victory of good over evil, and light over dark. Lamps, candles, fireworks and firecrackers are a very important part of the celebrations. Diwali is also called the 'festival of the lights'.

Diwali celebrates the return of Lord Rama and his wife Sita to their home in Ayodhya, after Lord Rama and Hanuman, the monkey god, rescued Sita from the ten-headed demon King Ravana.

Diwali is the beginning of a new year in the Hindu calendar, and it is as important to Hindus as Christmas is to Christians.

The five days of Diwali are celebrated in this way:

- On day one, people clean their homes and buy gold or silver, new clothes and new things for their kitchens.
- On day two, they decorate their clean homes with clay lamps called *diyas* and create *rangoli* outside their homes. These beautiful designs, made from coloured powders, rice or sand, stop evil entering into people's homes.
- Day three is the main day of the festival. Families come together and say a special prayer to the goddess Lakshmi who visits every home on Diwali, bringing good luck with her. She visits the cleanest homes first. Then families have a wonderful feast and watch fireworks and firecrackers.
- On day four, the first day of the Hindu new year, people visit their friends and family and take gifts of sweets or clothes.
- On the fifth and last day of Diwali, brothers visit their married sisters.

Diwali is a happy family festival that is usually busy, loud and full of smoke.

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Exercise 2: Key words

Match the underlined key words from the article with the definitions below. Write the correct word next to each definition.

1. a type of soft, wet earth that becomes hard when it is baked in a kiln (or oven), used for making cups, plates and other objects _____
2. a very bad creature or devil _____
3. going into a place _____
4. things that are very, very bad; the opposite of good _____
5. a large meal for a lot of people, usually to celebrate something _____
6. small fireworks that make a lot of loud noises when they explode _____
7. soft dry material that looks like dust or sand _____
8. the words that someone says when they are speaking to God or a god _____
9. saved someone from a dangerous or bad situation _____
10. a win in a fight or competition _____

Exercise 3: Using the key words

Use some of the key words from the previous exercise to complete these sentences.

1. People said he was an _____ man, but that was not true.
2. Aunt Emily always says a _____ before she goes to bed.
3. We found some old _____ pots in the field next to our house.
4. Take off your shoes before _____ the temple.
5. The strong prince _____ the young princess from the bad dragon.
6. The naughty boys set off _____ and scared their grandmother.

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Exercise 4: Discussion – festivals, fireworks and lights

a. Complete one of the sentences below and make it true for you.

I took part in Diwali celebrations in _____ (year/place).

It was _____

I haven't experienced Diwali celebrations, but I have been to another celebration where there were fireworks.

It was _____

b. Read your sentence to a partner. Ask each other questions and give more information about the celebration.

Exercise 5: Group task – Diwali poster

Your school is planning to hold Diwali celebrations this year. There will be fireworks, firecrackers, oil lamps, candles and food. It will be in the evening and you hope many people will come.

Make a poster for your Diwali celebration. Include the following information:

- **the place, date and time;**
- **what to wear;**
- **what to bring with you;**
- **how to stay safe (e.g. *Do / Do not ...*).**