



DIWALI

A unit by Julie O'Keeffe

Diwali is the Indian New Year. It lasts for five days between mid-October and mid-November and marks the end of the monsoon season. The monsoon season is the rainy season.

Everyone cleans and washes their home. The whole house, including the doorway, is painted with colourful pictures and designs.

People try to pay off their debts by the last day of Diwali so they can start the new year without owing any money.

Diwali is a time to put on new clothes, eat sweets, visit relatives and give gifts.

The highlight of the celebration of Diwali is the Festival of Lights. Fireworks light up the night sky. Small clay lamps, called dipas, are placed on every rooftop and windowsill. They twinkle like thousands of stars.

The tiny oil lamps are lit to welcome the goddess of wealth, Lakshmi. People believe she brings prosperity. People try to set off the loudest set of firecrackers to impress the goddess.

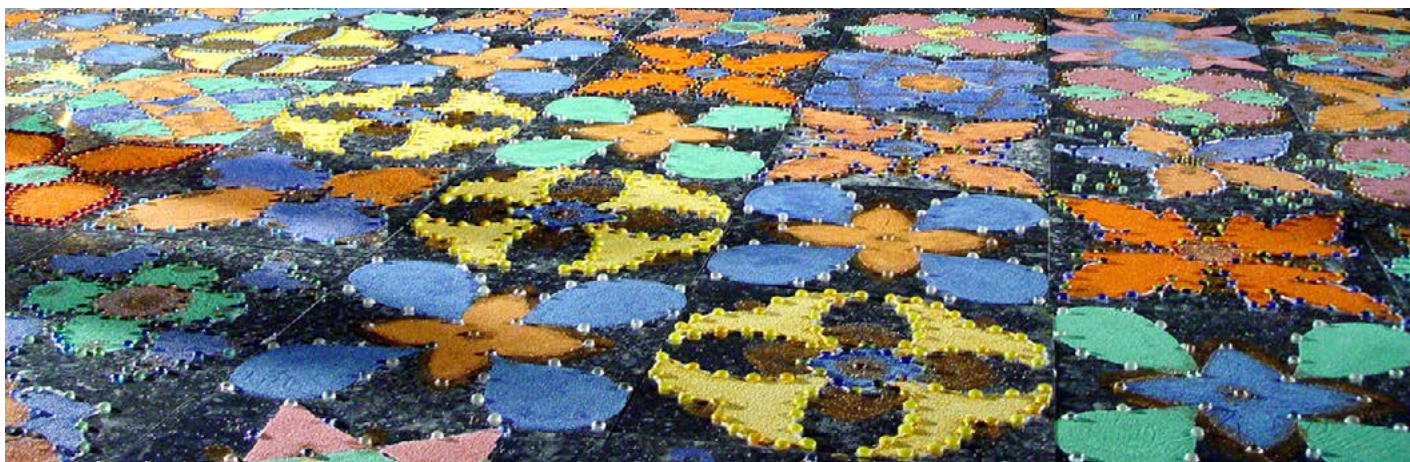
Diwali is a festival that is celebrated in spring in Australia by Indian-Australians and many other people.

DIWALI IN INDIA

Worksheet 1 – Diwali

Complete the following sentences

1. What is Diwali? Diwali is
2. How long does Diwali last? Diwali lasts for
3. What is the monsoon season? The monsoon season is
.....
4. What are two things people do to celebrate Diwali? People
celebrate Diwali by
and
5. What is the most exciting part of Diwali called and what do
people do? The most exciting part of Diwali is called the
.....
People
.....
6. Who is Lakshmi? Lakshmi is
.....
7. Use a dictionary to look up the meaning of 'prosperity'. What
does it mean? Prosperity means

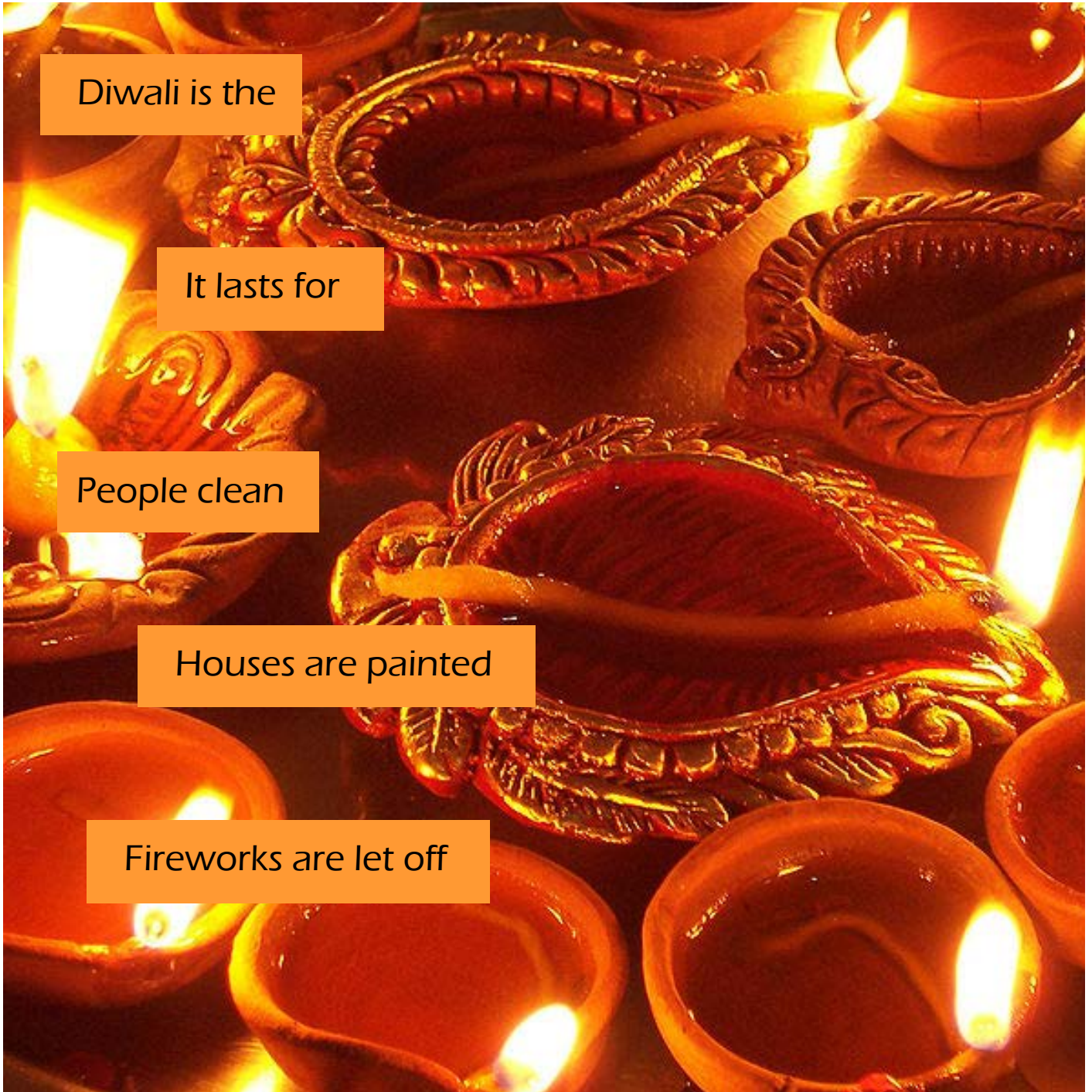


Rangoli decoration in a Singapore plaza. Source: Wikimedia Commons

DIWALI IN INDIA

Worksheet 2 – Diwali

Complete the sentences by matching them with the cards below.



Diwali is the

It lasts for

People clean

Houses are painted

Fireworks are let off

Festival of Lights

five days

their homes

Indian New Year

in bright colours

DIWALI IN INDIA

Worksheet 3 – Diwali Find-a-word

Read through the words you need to find. Cross out the words as you find them in the puzzle. Neatly colour the words in the puzzle grid

Rama
lights
rangoli
old
Ravana
new
row
joy
Sita
festival
sweets
battle
card

s	n	e	w	S	d	o	l	d
w	f	e	s	t	i	v	a	l
e	c	y	a	t	u	t	s	i
e	a	o	n	n	a	o	a	g
t	r	j	a	a	a	p	r	h
s	d	m	r	o	w	v	q	t
b	a	t	t	l	e	v	a	s
R	a	n	g	o	l	i	s	R



*Diwali fireworks and lights
spectacular, India 2012.
Source: Wikimedia Commons*

DIWALI IN INDIA



India cows decorated for Diwali Source: Wikimedia Commons

Worksheet 4 – Diwali Festival

These sentences don't make sense. Rewrite them correctly; use the capital letters and full stops as clues to find the first and last words of each sentence.

is a lights. Diwali festival of

.....

celebrated five Diwali for days. is

.....

are Rows lit homes. dipas in people's of

.....

Diwali are sent friends. cards Happy

.....

DIWALI IN INDIA

Worksheet 4 – What do you think?

The Festival of Diwali sounds similar to New Year in Australia.
How is it similar?

.....

.....

.....

.....



Diwali fireworks and lights spectacular, India 2012. Source: Wikimedia Commons

List three things that are different about Diwali when compared to New Year in Australia.

1.

.....

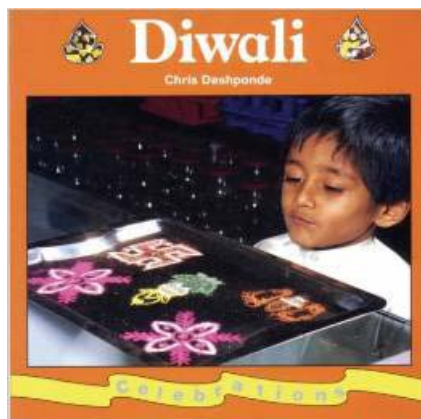
2.

.....

3.

.....

DIWALI IN INDIA



Responding to text, including picture books and novels

Diwali by Chris Deshpande
A&C Black (Publishers)
ISBN 0 7136 4082 0

- Use the book as a starting stimulus to introduce the festival of Diwali.
- Cover the illustration on the front of the book, showing the word only. Establish student knowledge of this festival. The meaning of Diwali could be explained.
- Reveal the photograph on the cover of the book. Discuss and predict what the festival could be about, who it involves and what things might be a part of the festival.
- Go through the book *first* without reading the written script. Encourage students to identify customs, practice, activities and events through discussion of the visual text.
- Read the text to the students and confirm and add to knowledge gleaned through the image study and discussion.
- Discuss text type/s of the story. Talk about the effectiveness of the use of both *narrative* and *information* text. Look in the 'sections' of the book, group the information that's about school activities, home activities, preparation activities and celebration activities.
- Students write sentences about each of the sections under the sub-headings of school, home, preparation and celebration.
- Create a mind map of information contained in the text. Examples of headings: Diwali as a main heading, and subheadings such as School, Home, Temple, Celebration symbols, Food, Clothing and Activities.
- Create a glossary for key words. Develop a matching activity using the key words and their meanings.
- Think about word meanings in the context of the story. Locate and discuss examples from the text (eg. *dipa* – lamp, *mandir* – temple).
- Ask open-ended questions to extend student understanding of the customs and the festival (eg. Temple page: Why would you take home some of the food? What is the purpose of the shrine in the house?).
- Collect Diwali cards from Indian spice shops. Students discuss the images and greetings.
- Students make a Diwali card or poster using a combination of the significant symbols of the festival. These cards can be compared with Christmas and New Year cards.
- Purchase a selection of Diwali sweets from an Indian sweet shop. Students sample, discuss and describe their impressions of the sweets.
- Read some Indian sweet recipes, including *barfi*, which is eaten during Diwali. Students make some *barfi*. Discuss procedure and structure of the recipes.
- Create *rangoli* patterns on paper or on asphalt. Caption the completed patterns with an explanation.
- Write a procedure for creating a *rangoli* pattern.
- Create a 3-D sculpture of *Ravana* the ten-headed monster.
- Read an age-appropriate version of The Ramayana to the students.
- Develop a drama performance around The Ramayana
- Diwali is very much a family and community celebration. Students discuss the family and community celebrations in which they participate.

DIWALI IN INDIA

Methods of applying henna (Mehandi)



Method of applying henna (mehandi):

1. Make fine dust or powder of dried leaves of henna. Henna powder is available from the market also. Sift the powder twice or thrice with the help of fine muslin cloth.
2. Pour eight to ten drops of eucalyptus oil into filtered lemon juice and add henna powder to it. Let this wet mixture "be soaked for about two hours to make it a lump. OR Drop leaves of tamarind and tea into water and have it boiled and filtered, then mix it with required henna powder. Let it be soaked for about two hours to make it a lump.
3. A thin small stick or a plastic paper cone should be used to apply this wet lump of henna. Such sticks of ivory, sandal and plastic are available at the market. The sharp end of a needle can also be used for applying henna.
4. A mixture of lemon juice and sugar should be kept ready in a small bowl. Continue applying this mixture gently with a clean cotton patch to that part of the hand or the leg where henna has been applied; so that the henna does not get dry and fall off. Then proceed with applying henna to other parts of hands and legs.
5. The henna, thus applied should be scraped off after four to five hours. Moreover, care should be taken not to allow water to touch that part where it was applied for about twelve to fourteen hours after scraping off the henna. This will cause the colour of the henna to grow deeper and deeper.
6. After scraping henna apply mustard oil on the parts where henna was applied, or heat the powder of four or five cloves on an iron pan and hold the parts to which henna was applied over that heat for some time.

