Diwali

Diwali is a festival that is celebrated by Hindu people all around the world. It is often talked about as 'the festival of light' because of the tradition of oil lamps that people use to light homes, shops and public places. This colourful celebration takes place over three to five days and marks the start of the new year. During the festivities, families and friends come together to celebrate. The date changes each year however it usually falls at the end of October or in early November.

The first day of Diwali is a time for cleaning and decorating homes and shops with rangoli patterns which are made using coloured flour or flower petals.

The second day is another day for preparations. Henna is painted on hands and food is prepared for the third day.

Diwali

The third is the day of Diwali - the main festival day. Best clothes and jewellery are worn, lamps are lit and prayers are said to Lakshmi – the goddess of wealth and good fortune. Hindu people believe that Lakshmi walks the earth on Diwali night so people will put lamps outside and open their doors and windows to welcome her inside their homes. Family and friends visit each other, give gifts and enjoy food together. Firework displays also take place. The day after Diwali is when husbands and wives celebrate their marriage and Bhai Dooj is the final day of Diwali. On this day, brothers and sisters show their love by saying prayers for each other.

Diwali is a festival to celebrate the victory of good over evil and light over darkness. In the story of Rama and Sita, Rama and his wife were told by his father and mean stepmother that they must go and live in the forest. Whilst living in the forest, Ravana the demon king captured Sita. Rama's friend, Hanuman the monkey king, found Sita on an island. Rama killed Ravana and rescued Sita. Rama and his wife safely returned home to their land. People lit lamps and put them in their windows to welcome them back.

The festival is also celebrated by some Hindu, Jain, Sikh and Newar Buddhist people. They remember the release of Guru Hargobind and 52 princes from prison in 1619.

Diwali **Questions**

1. Fill in the missing words.

   _____ is a festival that is _____ by Hindu people all _____ the world.

2. Over how many days does Diwali take place? Tick one.

   - ○ 1 day
   - ○ 6 days
   - ○ 5 days
   - ○ 7 days

3. What is the first day of Diwali a time for?

   _____

4. What happens after Diwali? Tick two.

   - ○ Families have a party to celebrate.
   - ○ Husbands and wives celebrate their marriage.
   - ○ Brothers and sisters say prayers for each other.
   - ○ People put lamps outside and open their doors and windows.

5. What is Lakshmi the goddess of? Tick one.

   - ○ The goddess of thunder and lightning
   - ○ The goddess of hope
   - ○ The goddess of love
   - ○ The goddess of wealth and good fortune

6. Read the following statements and tick whether they are true or false.

	True	False
Diwali is a festival to celebrate the victory of good over evil.		
Rama and his wife were told to go and live in the forest.		
Hanuman was a demon king who captured Sita.		
Diwali is also celebrated by some Sikh people.		

7. Why do you think cleaning the home is an important part of Diwali? Explain your reasoning.

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