



Gemma and Manisha have created works of art on the theme of the triumph of light over darkness, using their learning from the traditions of Diwali to do so.



Worship and Festivities: How and why do Hindus celebrate Diwali?

Year Group 3

This unit of work for Religious Education provides non-statutory exemplification of some good teaching and learning for any school to use.

Worship and Festivities: How and why do Hindus celebrate Divali?

YEAR GROUP 3

ABOUT THIS UNIT:

This unit uses active learning styles and strategies to help pupils aged 7-9 to understand the place of celebration and festivities in Hindu life, making links to their own experience of religious or family celebrations. It provides opportunities for discussion and debate about the place of festivals in religion, and encourages pupils to look below the surface of religious practice to think about religious beliefs and ideas as well.

It provides opportunities for pupils' own spiritual and cultural development through looking at themes of good and evil, light and darkness and unity and diversity in practice. The unit has a global dimension: Hindu festivals in India and in the UK are celebrated in ways that are similar and different.

Appendix: there is a chart of progression activities on the last page of this unit.

Where this unit fits in:

This unit will help teachers to implement the requirements for RE by providing opportunities to learn about Hindu religion and learn from its celebrations for themselves. The study unit gives scope for the development of understanding of religious diversity and of some key Hindu beliefs and concepts (e.g. in karma, dharma, the gods and goddesses and the triumph of good over evil, light over darkness).

The unit anticipates a further study of what it means for believers from different religions to celebrate their festivals and to worship later in key stage two.

Estimated teaching time for this unit: 12 hours. It is recognised that this unit may provide more teaching ideas than a class will cover in 12 hours. Teachers are invited to plan their own use of some of the learning ideas below, ensuring depth of learning rather than covering everything.

Issues of continuity and progression

This unit enables pupils to make progress particularly by enabling them to apply prior learning about, for example, Jewish, Muslim and Christian festivals to their study of Hindu celebrations, and by encouraging further development of their skills of discussion and self-expression with regard to questions about how festivals and celebrations have an impact on people's lives in the UK today. This connects to RE's purposes for community cohesion.

Key strands addressed by this unit

AT1 Learning about religion and belief

- knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, practices and ways of expressing meaning

AT2 Learning from religion and belief

- *skills of asking and responding to questions of identity, diversity, belonging and commitments.*

ATTITUDES FOCUS

Pupils will explore attitudes of

- **respect for all** by taking note of the special place Hindus give to celebration, and thinking about their own celebrations, similarities and differences. They are challenged to see the value of a plural community, in which all are respected;
- **open-mindedness** through considering the importance of festivals in Hindu traditions, and thinking through the ways in which a society like ours should take account of religious differences.

Background information for the teacher

Well over half a million British Hindu people celebrate divali in this country, and in India, hundreds of millions. The festival is much studied in schools, where the biggest need is for progression and depth. Divali cards and lamps might be nice for 5 year olds, but 7-9s need to think. So the focus of the festival on light overcoming darkness and on virtues like patience, courage, hopefulness and family love is worth exploring through the storytelling and cultural awareness.

Prior learning	Vocabulary	Resources
<p>It is helpful if pupils have:</p> <p>Recapped their knowledge and understanding of festivals in other religions from earlier units of RE</p> <p>Thought about the Hindu religion</p> <p>Become aware of Hindu traditions in London and the UK.</p>	<p>In this unit, pupils will have an opportunity to use words and phrases related to:</p> <p>Hindu traditions and religion:</p> <p>Divali divas aum mandir Rama Sita Hanuman Lakshmi Ramayana murti prasad Karma</p> <p>General religious terms:</p> <p>Celebrate Festival sacred devotion shrine ritual symbol worship</p>	<p>Texts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ My life as a Hindu Guy Mizon Morgan Pub Dref Wen ▪ Growing up in Hinduism Jacqueline Hirst and Geeta Pandey Longman • Opening Up RE: Hindus edited by Fiona Moss, RE Today 2010 • Exploring Celebrations, edited by Joyce Mackley, RE Today 2008. • Exploring Religion Around Me, edited by Joyce Mackley, RE Today, 2007 • Developing Primary RE: Stories about God, edited by Joyce Mackley, RE Today, 2005 • Developing Primary RE: Special Times, edited by Joyce Mackley, RE Today, 2003 ▪ For information on Hindu prayer and family life, see, eg, Dilip Kadodwala, 1996, <i>Living Religions: Hinduism</i>, Nelson Thornes, ISBN 0-17-428054-8. ▪ Religion through festivals series : Hinduism Longman ▪ Developing Primary RE: Home and Family (Worship in Hindu Home), RE Today, ed. Mackley ▪ Developing Primary RE: Faith Stories (Divali story activities) RE Today, ed. Mackley ▪ Developing Primary RE: Celebrations, Special Times, Faith Stories (Divali story activities) RE Today, ed. Mackley ▪ Curriculum Bank for RE – Bill and Lynn Gent Pub Scholastic pg 150/151 (Photocopiable materials – Mandir) ▪ Hindu story and symbol Jenny Rose (BFSS National RE Centre 1997 Tel 020 8891 8324 ▪ Stories from the Hindu world Jamila Gavin (Macdonald 1986) ▪ Hindu Scriptures VP Hemant Kanitkar (Heinemann 1994) ▪ The Elephant headed God and other Hindu tales Denjani Chatterjee (Lutterworth Press 1989) <p>Artefacts from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Articles of Faith (Tel: 0161 763 6232) ▪ <i>Religion in Evidence (Freephone 0800 137525)]</i> <p>Web</p> <p>Hindu shrine room – see http://www.devon.gov.uk/dcs/re/places/index.html http://www.hindunet.org/god/Gods/rama/ http://www.hindunet.org/puja/ light a lamp and say your prayers – sound file. http://www.btinternet.com/~vivekananda/ - worship http://www.hindukids.org/pray.shtml - audio + text</p> <p>For a wide range of free downloadable Hindu deity line drawings: http://www.strath.ac.uk/curricularstudies/re/db/redrawings/hindudeities/ http://atschool.eduweb.co.uk/manorlh/hinduism/hindui.html Puja described for primary pupils</p> <p>BBC Religion and ethics website: search for Hinduism pages.</p> <p>DVD</p> <p>Pathways of Belief (BBC) Hinduism</p>
<p>Contributions to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils</p> <p>The unit enables pupils to develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spiritually by discussing and reflecting on key questions of meaning and truth e.g. does good always win over evil? Is light stronger than darkness? • Socially by learning about and reflecting on important concepts and experiences e.g. coming together for family and community celebrations, freedom, salvation, victory of good over evil, enjoying diversity together. • Culturally by valuing diversity as they learn about different ways in which communities celebrate and remember important events and stories story, beliefs and celebrations of Divali, in the UK and the wider world. 		

EXPECTATIONS	
By the end of this unit:	
Nearly all pupils will be able to: [Level 2]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify the main characters of the Divali story ▪ retell the story in simple outline or by sequencing pictures. ▪ recognise that the terms 'worship' and 'festival' are connected with ideas about 'God', ▪ answer some simple questions about how Hindus worship and celebrate.
Most pupils will be able to: [Level 3]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describe the relevance of the story of Rama & Sita to the Festival of Divali ▪ Describe worship at a festival, using some religious words accurately, and know the names of some Hindu gods and goddesses. ▪ Describe ways in which Hindus worship suggesting why it is important to them ▪ Describe the use of some Hindu artefacts ▪ Describe some of the festivities and practices associated with Divali ▪ Make simple links between Divali and their own lives and celebrations. ▪ Connect good and bad things which happen today, making links to the symbolism of light and darkness from the Divali celebration: e.g. discuss the question: did light win over darkness for Sita? Does it win for us? ▪ Make links between ways of belonging to a Hindu community, and their own experiences of festival and celebration.
Some pupils might be able to: [Level 4]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Show clear understanding of some of the meanings of the Rama and Sita story. ▪ Respond to a range of questions relating to the meanings and purposes of the Divali festival. ▪ Use Hindu words and general religious terms confidently when expressing informed and thoughtful ideas about Hindu festivals, identifying similarities and differences with other festivals. ▪ Apply ideas about triumph of light over darkness and good over evil for themselves, to new examples. E.g. what would change if good triumphed over evil in Thurrock today? ▪ Describe a thoughtful understanding of Hindu beliefs such as karma and beliefs about the gods and goddesses. ▪ Understand festivals in their similarity and their difference
ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS	
Use the activities in the last lesson of this plan to gather evidence of achievement in relation to the festival:	
What can we learn from Hindu celebrations and festivals?	
An opportunity for reflection and for 'learning from Hindu festivals in AT2.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give pupils the four points below, and ask how they are seen at Divali time. How is this festival: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Connected with a story of event of significance to the religious community 2. Expressing beliefs about the faith 3. Involving celebrations for individuals and for the whole community 4. Having an impact for the believer • Identify and talk about festivals and celebrations they take part in. What story or event do they recall? How do they celebrate at home or in the community? Similar to Divali, and different? In what ways? • Why are festivals important? How do we feel? Why is it important to get together as a community? Why is it important to remember? Why is it important to celebrate? 	
Consider questions and express views: pupils can make up their own, but here are some to start the enquiry:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Should Divali be a day off work for Hindus in our town? 2. Can people who are not Hindus share the celebration? 3. What are the main beliefs that Divali expresses? 4. Does light win over darkness, good over evil? How? When? Why? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the pupils to say how Hindu people would feel if their festival was forbidden or banned. Could their religion and way of life continue without celebrations? 	

Key questions	LEARNING OBJECTIVES Pupils should learn:	TEACHING AND LEARNING	LEARNING OUTCOMES	POINTS TO NOTE
<p>Why do all communities have special days and celebrations?</p>	<p>To recognise and build understanding of some varied reasons for celebrations:</p> <p>Why do we celebrate?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to remember ▪ to say thank you ▪ to mark a special time of year or in life ▪ to focus on things which matter most (e.g. faith / God / family / relationships, beliefs, community) 	<p>Setting the scene on festivals and celebrations: ‘Some days are better than others.’</p> <p>How do we celebrate?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Get the children to enact in pairs very swiftly celebrations for a goal, a prize, a victory, finding what was lost, an escape. ▪ Talk about how celebrations have key features often include getting together with others / special food / gifts / gestures / generosity / special religious services / clothing / rituals. <p>Introduce ‘festivals’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is a religious festival? Can children name any? Can they do a ‘festivals alphabet’, naming something to do with celebrations beginning with each letter A-Z, in pairs, in 4 minutes? ▪ For each festival they name pupils in pairs of groups could try to answer 4 questions: Who? What? How? Why? E.g. Christmas, Eid, Divali, New Year, the first day of the holidays, a Birthday, a Cup Final, ▪ Introduce Divali as a key annual celebration for Hindus. Select and develop some of the following activities. 	<p>Enable children to respond to the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What does it mean to celebrate? ▪ What sorts of things do you and your family celebrate? ▪ How do we celebrate? ▪ What are the similarities and differences between celebrations and sacred days? (L3) 	<p>This unit needs to show progression from earlier studies of festivals.</p> <p>One main way this is planned is to help pupils generalise what they know about festivals, learning from similarities and differences, not mere storytelling.</p>
<p>What is the story of Divali?</p> <p>Who are the leading characters?</p> <p>What is the main action of the story?</p>	<p>To retell the story of Divali for themselves in ways which increasingly deepen their understanding of its significance.</p>	<p>Understanding the Divali story better</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read, retell, watch a video or dramatise the story of Rama and Sita, from the epic scripture the Ramayana. Tell pupils that this story is sacred to maybe 800 million people, and celebrated over thousands of years (“eat your heart out, Disney!”) Why is this? • The festival is important because it celebrates the victory of good over evil, and light over darkness. Emphasise these ideas in the way you tell it. You might use candles! • Pupils could retell the story from one person’s perspective; King Dasratha, Rama, Sita, Queen Kaikeyi, Bharat, Lakshman, Ravana or Hanuman. If different pupils take different characters, the literacy approaches to the voices within the text will help them to interpret this profound story. • Good work here takes time and preparation – see the resources list above to make it more exciting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To retell the story in different ways (L2) • To appreciate the power and depth of the story of Divali, and apply key ideas in the story myself (L4) 	<p>It’s really important that the initial activity of storytelling should be compelling here. Many teachers are brilliant storytellers – let this talent loose on the class. Use the narrative activities of the literacy strategy to make work interesting .</p>

<p>How can the Divali story be expressed in different ways?</p> <p>Why are there so many ways of telling this story?</p>	<p>To use their expressive skills, in art, dance, drama, movement and words, to deepen their engagement with the Divali story.</p> <p>To develop understanding of characters and actions within the story (link to literacy)</p>	<p>Select some of these activities to deepen understanding at appropriate levels for the pupils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sequence a set of comic strip pictures of Rama & Sita story. Add captions or retell story in own words. • Create ‘feelings graphs’ for some of the different characters, to show the ups and downs of the drama in the story. • Identify the hero of the story and say why in no more than ten words. Choose five words to describe the character of each of the major figures. • In pairs they could decide from what each character said and did in the story, why they did this and how they felt. • Discuss the action, and complete sentences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ If I was casting a movie of this story, I’d choose (name and justify actors for the different parts) ❖ My favourite person in the story is... because... ❖ I think this story has lasted thousands of years because... ❖ I think the main message of the story is... • The story is about good overcoming evil. Pupils could identify who represents what – and how these are personified. E.g. Explore Ravana – the many headed evil monster. Pupils could draw their own ‘visual metaphor’ for evil: what 10 words of evil or symbols would their ten headed ‘statue of nasty’ include? Link to artefacts of Hindu murtis (gods and goddess images). Note that evil and nastiness has many aspects – but good still wins in the story. • Dramatise the story. Show the performance to other younger children in school (possibly in assembly time). • ‘Happy Divali’ cards are sent to friends and family: look at some examples with pupils, who could then design their own: what cards would be good for children, teenagers, older members of the community? Ask them to make British and Indian Divali cards (context adds meaning to this simple activity). Can they write 4 or 6 lines of poetry to go in the cards that explores the celebrations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To make links between the characters and action clearly (L3) ▪ To develop their understanding of the power and meanings of the story (L4) ▪ To apply ideas about celebration and festivity for themselves with understanding (L4) 	<p>This part of the work has natural links with the expressive arts curriculum.</p> <p>It’s important that the work is not repetitive. If pupils have ‘done’ Divali cards lower down the school, then make sure the task has added challenge this time.</p>
<p>If Sita was a tweeter, then what would Sita tweet?</p> <p>This is a good way of processing the story. Ask pupils to take 6 mobile phone outlines and imagine they are tweeting from Sita’s point of view – no more than 140 characters per message. Get them to make up wise and witty tweets that tell the story for these 6 moments: the day she married Prince Rama / the day after their exile when they arrived in the forest / as she stood wondering what to do in the enchanted circle / on the terrifying chariot ride as Ravana was kidnapping her / when she saw the Monkey army and Prince Rama arriving to rescue her / when she saw all the rows of lights guiding them home to their rightful palace.</p>				

<p>What happens at Divali in Britain today?</p>	<p>To understand that UK Hindu communities, who number up to half a million people, are developing their own special ways of marking divali which are similar to and different from the ways of India.</p>	<p>What happens at Divali?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore with pupils the events and customs connected to the festival. Divali is a time of new beginnings: people often wear new clothes, business accounts are settled. There is a big street party in some towns, with Divali lights and celebrations in public. • If possible, invite a Hindu visitor to answer pupils' questions about how Divali is celebrated in their family, Mandir and community. Children should plan how the visitor is to be welcomed, and what questions they will ask. Can they write a magazine article, or even make a DVD about the visit? • Pupils can use video or websites to explore how Divali is celebrated in the UK today – for example in Leicester and Coventry. Try BBC Religion and ethics + search for Divali celebrations. See the resources section of this unit. These resources are often contemporary and inviting. 	<p>To make links between the story and the history of the festival and its current modern British expressions (L3).</p> <p>To apply ideas like 'respect' and 'community' for themselves (L4)</p>	<p>BBC Curriculum bites RE 2005 (series 2) has a short item in which 11 year olds dramatise the story, working with a Hindu dance instructor.</p>
<p>What's so special about Divali for Hindus?</p>	<p>To describe and understand the festival, taking account of insiders and outsiders points of view</p>	<p>Why does Divali matter?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is Divali important for Hindus? • Explore with pupils the beliefs and experiences of Hindus as they celebrate this festival. Some Hindus are reminded of Rama's victory over the demon king Ravana, and some of the goddess Lakshmi, the provider of wealth. Divas, or lights, guide Lakshmi to people's homes and also guided Rama and Sita back home after their exile. • Consider what kind of thoughts, intentions and plans come from the celebrations: Some Hindus plan more devoted, thankful, generous or enlightened living for the next year. How does this work? What impact might the festival have on the individual? 	<p>To understand the significance of Divali in the Hindu community (L4).</p>	<p>There is a community cohesion dimension to this part of the work. Good teaching will draw respectful lessons from the study, and give children the chance to express their own respectful attitudes.</p>

<p>What can we learn from Divali? What ideas in the Divali festival link with our lives?</p>	<p>To identify and comment on similarities and differences between Divali and another festival they know well</p> <p>To make links to their own experience of celebration and begin to generalise their understanding.</p>	<p>Divali: does it matter to me? What is it like?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify other stories pupils know where good conquers evil. Can small groups list ten examples from books, TV and movies? Explain how the diva originated from the story and why it's lit to celebrate Divali. Children can make divas using clay, plasticine or paper. They should also think about meanings, and write key ideas down to go with the models. What do these lights symbolise for the pupils? What experiences of welcome, hope, peace after conflict do they have? Link their experiences to the lights. <p>Links to life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils could write a story or produce poem (fiction or autobiographical) called: 'Light in the Darkness.' Talk to pupils about times when they have overcome difficulties: what were the 'lights' which guided them through? Their guiding lights might have been people, thoughts, actions: make Divali lights and write about these things inside the shapes, stringing the stars around the room to display them. Look for examples in other religions where light is used as a symbol. Compare and contrast. Discuss with pupils the idea of 'starting over', 'wiping the slate clean': if today is the first day of the rest of their life, what changes and promises to themselves might they like to make? What would they like people to forget about their old life? Divali is a time of new starts. Notice the 'fresh start'; in the story of Rama and Sita, when Sita returns from exile. Divali is also a time when Hindus are thankful for the material things of life, which are blessings from the Divine. Read the story of Lakshmi. What are pupils most thankful for? What are their treasured possessions? Why are they treasured and how is this shown? Which of the material things in life are essential, and which are luxuries? How do pupils differentiate? Divali is unique, like all festivals, but is similar to many others too. Ask pairs of pupils to write lists that compare Divali to another religious festival, or a shared / secular event like New Year of Comic Relief day. 	<p>To apply ideas about the festival for myself, and to my own life (L4)</p> <p>To compare Divali thoughtfully to another festival I know about (L4)</p> <p>To describe what is similar and different between various festivals, and suggest some reasons why there are similarities (L4)</p>	<p>This part of the work provides opportunities for high achieving pupils to work at level 5, explaining similarities and differences between the impact of different festivals on the lives of those who celebrate.</p>
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<p>What have we learned in this unit of RE about Hindu festivals and human celebrations?</p>	<p>To generalise and summarise their own learning</p> <p>To consider the things they think are worth celebrating</p> <p>To express their attitudes of sensitivity or respect for the celebrations of others.</p> <p>To consider what they can learn from a religion they do not belong to.</p>	<p>What can we learn from Hindu celebrations and festivals?</p> <p>This last lesson offers an opportunity for reflection and for ‘learning from Hindu festivals’ in AT2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recap on work in unit and summarise that religious festivals are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Connected with a story of event of significance to the religious community 2. Express beliefs about the faith 3. Involve celebrations for individuals and for the whole community 4. Have an impact for the believer • Identify and talk about festivals and celebrations they take part in. What story or event do they recall? How do they celebrate at home or in the community? Similar to Divali, and different? In what ways? • Discuss why festivals are important: how do we feel? Why is it important to get together as a community? Why is it important to remember? Why is it important to celebrate? • Consider questions: pupils can make up their own, but here are some to start the enquiry: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Should Divali be a day off work for Hindus in London or the UK? 2. Can people who are not Hindus share the celebration? Would they like to? 3. What are the main beliefs that Divali expresses? 4. Does light win over darkness, good over evil? How? When? Why? • Ask the pupils to say how Hindu people would feel if their festival was forbidden or banned. Could their religion and way of life continue without celebrations? Talk about how this question identifies the importance and impact of the festival. • Ask pupils to write or say: what have you learned about the festival, about festivals generally, and about your own attitudes in this work? 	<p>To understand why Divali matters in Hindu life (L4)</p> <p>To apply ideas and express views, including tolerant, sensitive or respectful attitudes, towards the celebrations of others (L4)</p> <p>To make sense of Divali as an example of religious community life for themselves (L4).</p> <p>To develop the skills of handling ‘big questions’ about community, values and truth in thoughtful ways (L4).</p>	<p>Gathering evidence of achievement in RE should be professional, but not burdensome. Some units will include a formal task assessing pupils work, but not all.</p>
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<p>Teaching and learning activity: progressed suggestions, often with a literacy link, never exclusive. There are loads of good ways to teach from the Divali stories.</p>	<p>Outcomes related to levels (in teacher – language, but can be translated to pupil – language) “I can...”</p>
<p>Stories and meanings. Children hear a well told version of the story of Rama and Sita. They sequence 6 pictures of the Divali story. They colour or outline a picture to show who is a ‘goody’ and who is a ‘baddie’ in the story. They choose two words to describe each of the different characters (Rama, Sita, Hanuman, Ravana)</p>	<p>Level 1: Show in my pictures some of the outline of the Divali story. Talk about the people in the story, and say why the story is special for Hindu people. Level 2: Identify some different ways Divali is celebrated and some ways my own special days are celebrated.</p>
<p>Generous Lakshmi. Children hear a story of the goddess Lakshmi, and learn that she personifies generosity, beauty, good fortune and prosperity. They discover that Lakshmi Puja (worship) is part of the celebration of Divali, and ask lots of questions about the artefacts. They think about their own ideas about generosity, kindness and good fortune.</p>	<p>Level 1: Talk about times when I have been generous, or received generosity. Level 2: Create labels for a murti (image) of Lakshmi, suggesting many meanings of symbols associated with her. Respond sensitively to ‘Divali values’ such as generosity, family togetherness and kindness.</p>
<p>Making sense of the stories: Pupils enter into the stories via hot seating, dramatising, writing the diaries and/or prayers of Sita at different moments in the story or creating ‘feelings graphs’ for the different characters. They ask: what other stories are like this? They compare the Divali story and a Disney movie (which will not last 4000 years!).</p>	<p>Level 3: Describe key features of the stories, and of celebrations of Divali, linking sources (text), beliefs (about the gods) and forms of expression (drama, puppets, dance). Compare features of these traditional stories from other cultures with other narratives (literacy). Look for meanings and values in the story of Divali & link the values in the story to my own life & ideas.</p>
<p>What matters most at Divali? Children hear the stories of Lakshmi, and of Rama and Sita, and of the celebration of Divali today in India and in (e.g.) Leicester (e.g. on video). From lists of 12 things that might matter at Divali, they choose, rank and explain the 5 things they think matter most. BBC Learning Zone has good materials here.</p>	<p>Level 3: Describe how the Divali celebrations express some Hindu ideas such as community, remembering, sharing, light winning over darkness. Rank ‘what matters at divali’ thoughtfully, making links to my own experience, and asking ‘what matters to me?’</p>
<p>Different expressions. Pupils read a story of Divali, watch a video about Divali in Britain today and take part in a shadow puppet play. They are asked: which of these three captures the ‘true meaning of Divali’ best? Why? They hear about the Sikh celebration of Divali, remembering the release of Guru Hargovind from Gwalior Jail. What is the same, and what is different between Hindu and Sikh Divali? Are there shared meanings between the two religions?</p>	<p>Level 3: Describe the practice & identify the impact of Divali in Hindu & Sikh communities. Describe & make links between my & others’ celebrations: what’s a “big day’ in my year? How does that day use food, gifts, family, community, generosity to mark the occasion? Level 4: Understand how Divali celebrations vary, suggest meanings in different forms of celebration. Apply ideas like ‘diversity’, ‘celebrations’, ‘culture’ and ‘spirituality’ to my understanding of Divali.</p>
<p>Explaining questions, expressing informed views: Who is most important in Divali festivities: Lakshmi or Rama? What would happen if Divali was banned? Is Sita a ‘feminist hero’? Should all Hindus in Britain be given a day off work for Divali? Why or why not? What is the real meaning of Divali? For higher achieving pupils, discussion, thinking skills (ranking and ordering) and writing structures are needed to explore these questions effectively.</p>	<p>Level 4: Apply my own ideas to these questions thoughtfully, with reference to examples of religious teachings and practices. Show that I understand the celebrations. Level 5: Express clear and well informed views on some of these questions in the light of my learning about Hindu tradition, giving reasons for my answers.</p>

Hindu Celebration: Divali

A simple version of the story of Rama and Sita

Long ago King Dasratha ruled the kingdom of Ayodhya. He had three wives, and four sons. His eldest son, Rama, was heir to the throne. Rama was the god Vishnu in human form. His special power was to destroy evil. The main evil troublemaker was a terrifying ten-headed demon called Ravana, living on the island of Lanka. Rama was married to the beautiful Sita.

Queen Kaikeyi, the king's favourite wife, was jealous that Rama was to become king. She wanted her son Bharat to reign! She told lies about Rama, and the king banished Rama for 14 years. He was exiled to the forest. Beautiful Sita and Rama's brother Lakshman refused to leave him, they went with Rama into exile.

Brother Bharat became king, but he was angry with his mother because of the lies she had told. He took a pair of Rama's golden slippers and placed them on the throne. The slippers were a symbol that Rama was the real king. Bharat said 'I will look after Rama's kingdom until he returns.' He kept this promise.

One day whilst Rama and Lakshman were out hunting in the forest, they left Sita in an enchanted circle, to keep her safe. But the evil demon Ravana, with ten terrifying heads, came to kidnap her. He changed himself into the form of a wandering holy man and pretended to be needy. He tricked Sita into leaving her protected place in the forest. Then he grabbed her and bundled her into his mighty chariot and sped off across the skies to the island of Lanka. He was sure that if he kidnapped and married Sita he would rule the world.

The brothers were shocked and upset to find Sita missing and determined to find and rescue her. Hanuman, the monkey king, who was devoted to Rama, helped them. Hanuman got together all the monkeys in the forest and together they built a bridge of their own bodies across the sea to Lanka to rescue.

After ten days of fierce fighting they defeated the demon Ravana. Sita and Rama were reunited. Excited and full of love they returned to the Kingdom of Ayodhya, as their years of exile were now over. The people of the kingdom lit little oil lamps called divas all along the way to help the couple find their way home. Rama and Sita followed the row of lights, all the way home and became king and queen. The golden slippers were removed from the throne so that they could sit in their rightful place.