

Diwali – My favourite festival

Topic

Diwali, festivals

Learning outcomes

- Identify the gist and details of a written text about Diwali
- Practise retelling a story
- Prepare and give a presentation about a festival or special day

Age and level

13-17, Adults (B1+)

Time

55-70 minutes (including some optional activities)

Materials

- Presentation OR Student Worksheet

Introduction

This lesson focuses on the topic of festivals. Learners will read a text about Diwali and then complete a series of comprehension tasks. Learners will then work to retell the legend of Diwali to their classmates. Finally, learners will have an opportunity to make notes about a festival of their choice and tell the class about it.

A student worksheet accompanies this lesson, or teachers can use a presentation for a no-printing option.

Procedure

<p>Lead-in: Introduction to festivals (10 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write the following words on the board: food – festival – parties. • In groups or as a whole class, learners talk about what they associate with these words. If they talk in groups, give a short time limit and then ask for feedback, writing any new vocabulary on the board. • Ask learners if there are any festivals celebrated in the autumn in their region or town. Learners will have the opportunity to talk about these festivals at the end of the lesson.
<p>Task 1: Before reading activity (5-10 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show slide 2 of the presentation or refer learners to Task 1 in the student worksheet. Explain that learners are going to read about the festival of Diwali, an autumn festival celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs and Jains across the world. • Tell learners to read the paragraph headings. Learners say what they know about the headings. Check that they understand where Leicester is (a city in the Midlands area of England with a large Hindu population). They can do this as a whole class or in pairs.
<p>Task 2: Reading (10 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option 1 (using the presentation): Show slide 3 of the presentation. Give learners time to read the paragraph. Ask some questions to check understanding, e.g. Who wrote the text? What is Diwali? Why does the author go to Leicester to celebrate? • Show slide 4. Give everyone time to read the paragraph then ask them to discuss in pairs which heading is best suited for gap (1). Repeat with slides 5-8. • Option 2 (using the student worksheet): Refer learners to Task 2. Ask them to read the text individually, and to match the headings with gaps 1-5. Tell them to compare and discuss their answers in pairs. • Check the answers: (1) The meaning of Diwali; (2) The legend associated with Diwali; (3) Celebrations in the temple; (4) Diwali and families; (5) Celebrations in Leicester • Ask some questions to check general understanding of the text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Who celebrates Diwali? ○ Why do people celebrate Diwali?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When do people celebrate it? ○ Why is it an important event in Leicester?
Task 3: After-reading activities (optional) (10-15 mins)	<p>Note: These activities are suited to lower-level learners. If you have higher-level learners, who seem to have understood the text well, you can skip these.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show slide 9 of the presentation or refer learners to Task 3 of the student worksheet. Refer learners to exercise A: Describe a typical Diwali day for Erisha. • This exercise can be done with the whole class, paying attention to their use of the present simple. Encourage use of linking words/phrases like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ after that ○ and then ○ next ○ before –ing; after –ing ○ finally • Refer learners to exercise B: Describe three things people do to celebrate Diwali. • Ask learners to work in pairs, then elicit some responses: people light candles and lamps in homes, shops, streets; they tell the legend of Lord Rama; they wear their best clothes; they celebrate at the temple and sing, dance and play music; they eat delicious food; they exchange presents. • Show slide 10 of the presentation or refer learners to exercise C: Tick the best answer. Learners work in pairs to answer the questions. Ask them to justify their choices. There are no correct answers.
Task 4: Re-telling the legend (5-10 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show slide 11 of the presentation or refer learners to Task 4 in the student worksheet. • Learners work in pairs to retell the legend using the words in the box. This should be a speaking activity. • Ask for a volunteer to retell the legend to the class, encouraging other learners to give information that may be missed. <p>Note: With lower-level classes, you can do this activity with the whole class together.</p>

Task 5:
Presentations
(15+ mins)

- This final activity asks learners to think about festivals or special days in their context.
- Either alone or, in pairs or small groups, ask learners to identify a special day or festival that they have enough knowledge of to talk about.
- Explain that they should prepare a short presentation about the special day / festival. They should describe:
 - What the festival / special day means
 - When and where it is celebrated
 - How I / my family celebrates the festival / special day
- If you have time, learners could prepare a poster, or a PowerPoint or online presentation with photos / pictures.
- When they are ready, learners present to the rest of the class, or to other groups if you have a larger class.
- If learners have presented about different festivals / special days, the class could vote for the festival / day they'd most like to be part of and say why. If learners have presented about the same / familiar festivals, learners can compare how they and others celebrate, and discuss the differences and similarities.
- You could also use the presentations for evaluation purposes.

Variation: Ask learners to research information about a festival or special event from a different country.

Adapted from a lesson contributed by

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