

Chapter

5

Tihar: Festival of Lights

Pre-Reading

Discuss the answers to these questions with your classmates.

1. Why do you think the animal in the picture has garlands around its neck and horns?
2. For what celebrations or holidays do we use lights and decorations?
3. What kinds of things do we do when we have holidays and celebrations?



Key Vocabulary

Do you know these words? Match the words with the meanings.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 1. holy _____ | a. pray; show respect to God or gods |
| 2. icon _____ | b. connected with religion |
| 3. mud _____ | c. wealth; richness |
| 4. please _____ | d. leave signs behind as you move along |
| 5. prosperity _____ | e. wet earth that is soft |
| 6. stray _____ | f. a figure of a holy person |
| 7. trail _____ | g. make happy |
| 8. worship _____ | h. animal with no home |



Track 5

Tihar: Festival of Lights

1 **T**ihar is one of the most important festivals for Hindus in Nepal. Nepal
is a small country between India and China. It has a population of about
23 million, most of whom are Hindu. The festival of Tihar takes place in late
autumn and lasts for five days. This festival is also called the festival of lights.
5 It is a time when all the houses light oil lamps, and the city is full of lights
and decorations. This festival is about worshipping different animals such as
the crow,¹ the dog, and the cow. During Tihar, the people also worship their
brothers and sisters and the goddess of wealth, Laxmi.

10 On the first day of the festival, people **worship** crows. Every family cooks
a delicious meal in the morning. Before they eat, each member of the family
puts some food on a plate of leaves and places it outside for the crows to eat.
People believe crows are the messenger of the Lord of Death. They worship
crows to keep sadness away.

15 The second day, people worship dogs. They decorate dogs with garlands of
flowers around their necks. They give dogs delicious food and put a red *tika*
(a special powder) on their foreheads. They even do this to **stray** dogs. It is
a day to respect all dogs. They pray for the dogs to guard their homes. Dogs
with garlands of flowers can be seen everywhere.

20 The third day is the most important day of the festival. Early in the
morning, people start to worship the cow. The cow is the symbol of wealth
and is the most **holy** animal for Hindus. They put *tika* on the cows' foreheads
and a garland of flowers around their necks. They give the cows nice things to
eat. People place the cows' manure in different parts of their houses. Later, in
the evening, they worship the goddess Laxmi. If people **please** the goddess,
25 she will give them wealth. People clean and decorate their houses. They put
oil lamps in every door and window. A female member of the family performs
a special ceremony or *puja*. She then puts a red **mud** footprint on the floor
entering the home and makes a **trail** to the room where the family worships

¹**crow:** large, shiny black bird that makes a loud sound

the goddess. In this room, there are pictures and an **icon** of the goddess.

30 There is also a money box where each year the family puts money away for the goddess. In the evening, girls go from door to door of their neighbors' homes and sing songs of the goddess. They receive gifts in return.

35 The fourth day is a little different. The things people worship on this day depend on their cultural background. Most people worship the ox. They put *tika* on the oxen and a garland around their necks. They also give them delicious food. Other people make a small hill out of cow manure, put some grass on it, and perform a special ceremony, or *puja*, on it. Yet other people worship themselves.

40 The fifth day is the day of brothers and sisters. Sisters wish their brothers long life and **prosperity**. If you do not have a brother or sister, you can make one of your relatives or friends a brother or a sister. On this day, sisters will perform a *puja* and apply a special *tika* on their brothers. Then they put garlands around their brothers and give them special gifts of food. Brothers in
45 return honor their sisters; they put garlands around their necks and give them gifts of clothes and money.

This festival finally ends after five days of cooking, decorating, eating, singing, dancing, shopping, relaxing, gift giving, and worshipping. There is no doubt that Tihar is the most popular festival in Nepal.

Vocabulary

A. Vocabulary in Context

Complete these sentences with the following words.

an icon	please	trail
holy	prosperity	worship
mud	stray	

1. During Tihar, people _____ animals, brothers and sisters, and the goddess Laxmi.
2. The cow is a _____ animal for Hindus.
3. People clean and decorate their homes to _____ the goddess.
4. On the second day, people worship dogs, even _____ dogs.
5. There is _____ of the goddess in a special room in people's homes.

6. A female member of the house puts a footprint made of red _____ at the entrance of the house.
7. She makes a _____ from the entrance to the special room for the goddess.
8. On the last day, sisters wish their brothers a long life and _____.

B. Vocabulary in New Context

Answer the questions with complete sentences.

1. In which season do you get mud?

2. What places of worship do you most often see in your country?

3. What stray animals do you see sometimes?

4. What is one thing you do to please your mother or father?

5. What item, do you think, is a sign of prosperity?

6. What is the name of a holy place or city?

C. Vocabulary Building

Complete these sentences with the words from the box.

to please (*verb*)

pleasure (*noun*)

pleased (*adj.*)

1. It was a _____ to prepare the meal.
2. Are you _____ with the results of your test?

to prosper (*verb*)

prosperity (*noun*)

prosperous (*adj.*)

3. People follow many traditions for _____ in the new year.
4. The wide streets and large homes tell us this is a _____ area.

to decorate (*verb*)

decoration (*noun*)

decorative (*adj.*)

5. He wants _____ the bathroom this year.
6. Some people use _____ lights for the holidays.

Reading Comprehension

A. Looking for the Main Ideas

Circle the letter of the best answer.

1. The festival of Tihar is about _____.
 - a. honoring the goddesses of light and wealth
 - b. worshipping animals, people, and the goddess of wealth
 - c. being kind to people and farm animals
 - d. celebrating the flowers and foods of autumn
2. On the third day of the festival, people _____.
 - a. perform ceremonies to please Laxmi
 - b. clean their houses to prepare for guests
 - c. worship cows by cleaning and washing them
 - d. put lamps in windows to show they are wealthy

3. The fourth day is _____.
- a. the only day set aside to honor relatives
 - b. only about the worship of the ox
 - c. different among various cultures
 - d. a day for cooking food and dancing

B. Looking for Details

Use complete sentences to answer the questions.

1. Who celebrates the festival of Tihar in Nepal?
2. Why do the people worship crows?
3. What do people pray for the dogs to do?
4. What is the cow the symbol of?
5. What does a female family member do on the third day of the festival?
6. What do brothers do to honor their sisters?

Discussion Questions

Discuss the answers to these questions with your classmates.

1. What are some important festivals or holidays in your country? What do people celebrate? How do they celebrate?
2. What is your favorite holiday? Why?
3. What holiday in another culture or country do you wish you celebrated in your country? Why?

Critical Thinking Questions

Discuss the answers to these questions with your classmates.

1. Why is it important for people to have festivals and holidays? What is their purpose? What do festivals and holidays do for a culture or country?
2. Why do you think that lights and candles are important to many festivals and holidays? What are lights a symbol of?

Writing Model

Now read the following paragraph written by a student. Can you guess where the student is from?

New Year in My Country

1 In my country, we call the New Year *Tet*. First, on the night the New Year begins, we go to the temple. We pray to Buddha, give thanks for the past year, and pray that the new year will be happy. Then we return home. Next, just before midnight, my father bows before an altar we have for our dead
5 relatives. He offers food to the relatives and invites them to join the family. At midnight, we have firecrackers, and children make a lot of noise. It is Tet. The New Year is here. Finally, we sit down and have a big and delicious dinner. We celebrate all night.

Writing Skills

A. Organizing: *Describing a Process*

When you want to tell about how you do something, like take a bath or wash your car, you must list the main steps. Make sure that the steps are in the correct order. Then to make the order clear to the reader, use the following words, which show time order:

First, ↓ . . . (**Second,** . . . **Third,** . . .)

Next, ↓ . . .

Then . . .

Finally/Lastly, ↓ . . .

These words come at the beginning of a sentence. Note that you use a comma (,) after each word except **then**. You do not need to use these words in each sentence of your paragraph.

Exercises

1. Underline the words that show time order in the model paragraph.
2. Put the following sentences in the correct order. Number them 1, 2, 3, 4,

1. To wash your hair, follow these steps.

_____ Put some shampoo on your hair.
_____ Wet your hair with water.
_____ Rinse off the shampoo.
_____ Lather your hair with shampoo.
_____ Dry your hair with a towel.
_____ Repeat the process.

2. Washing dishes is easy.

_____ Wash the plates in soapy water with a brush.
_____ Remove pieces of food from the plates.
_____ Dry the plates with a towel.
_____ Rinse off the soapy water.

3. Cleaning windows is not difficult.

_____ You need a bucket and a large sponge.
_____ Dry the windows with a paper towel.
_____ Wet the sponge, and wipe the windows with it.
_____ Fill the bucket with water and a little ammonia.
_____ Your windows will shine.

B. Punctuation: *Comma (,) with Items in a Series*

You use a comma to separate three or more items in a series. Do not use a comma if there are only two items.

Examples:

This festival finally ends after five days of cooking, decorating, eating, singing, dancing, shopping, relaxing, gift giving, and worshipping.

They have fun by playing games, singing, and dancing.

People clean and decorate their houses. (No comma needed.)

Nepal is between India and China. (No comma needed.)

You can make one of your friends a brother or a sister. (No comma needed.)

Exercises

3. Put commas in these sentences where necessary. Note that some sentences do not need a comma.
 1. People worship different animals such as the crow the dog and the cow.
 2. Tihar takes place in late autumn and lasts for five days.
 3. It's a time to worship animals brothers and sisters and the goddess Laxmi.
 4. The city is full of lights and decorations.
 5. They put garlands around their neck give them special food and make them gifts.
 6. Sisters wish their brothers long life and prosperity.
4. Find the mistakes. There are 10 mistakes in punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. Find and correct them.

The Chinese New Year Celebration is 15 days long. The Chinese clean their homes and decorate two. They also buy new clothes and prepare plenty of food. The big celebration start on new year's eve. First, they have a big dinner with plenty of food. There are always special foods like a whole fish chicken and long noodles for long life. After dinner, the whole family sits up for the night. They play games, or watch television. Finally there are fireworks all over the sky at midnight.

Writing Practice

A. Write a Paragraph

Choose one of the topics below:

1. Celebrating New Year
2. Celebrating Christmas or another holiday
3. Preparing a special dinner

B. Pre-Write

Work with a partner. Tell your partner how you celebrate the New Year (or celebrate another holiday or prepare a special dinner). Then write down what you do first, what you do next, what you do after that, and so on.

C. Outline

Number your sentences in the correct order. Then rewrite all the sentences in a paragraph. Use words showing time order. The paragraph outline below will help you.

Paragraph Outline

(Topic sentence) _____.

First, _____.

Next, _____.

Then _____.

Finally, _____.

D. Write a Rough Draft

Using the outline you made, write a rough draft of your paragraph.

E. Revise Your Rough Draft

Using the paragraph checklist below, check your rough draft or let your partner check it.

Paragraph Checklist

- Did you give your paragraph a title?
- Did you indent the first line?
- Did you write on every other line? (Look at pages 8 and 9 for instructions on paragraph form.)
- Does your paragraph have a topic sentence?
- Are your ideas in the correct order?
- Does your paragraph have a concluding sentence?

F. Edit Your Paragraph

Work with a partner or your teacher to edit your paragraph. Check spelling, punctuation, vocabulary, and grammar. Use the editing checklist below.

Editing Checklist

- Subject in every sentence?
- Verb in every sentence?
- Words in correct order?
- Sentences begin with a capital letter?
- Sentences end with a period directly at the end of a sentence?
- Sentences have a space between them?
- Commas in the correct place?
- Wrong words?
- Spelling?
- Missing words (use insertion mark: ^)?

G. Write Your Final Copy

When your rough draft has been edited, you can write the final copy of your paragraph.