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
Reading

Tihar: Festival of Lights

Tihar 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. 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.

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.

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.

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, 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

¹crow: large, shiny black bird that makes a loud sound
the goddess. In this room, there are pictures and an icon of the goddess. 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.

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.

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 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>to please (verb)</th>
<th>pleasure (noun)</th>
<th>pleased (adj.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to prosper (verb)</td>
<td>prosperity (noun)</td>
<td>prosperous (adj.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to decorate (verb)</td>
<td>decoration (noun)</td>
<td>decorative (adj.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. It was a ____________ to prepare the meal.
2. Are you ____________ with the results of your test?
3. People follow many traditions for ____________ in the new year.
4. The wide streets and large homes tell us this is a ____________ area.
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?
New Year in My Country

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 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 starts 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.