

# Festivals of Light – Comprehension Questions

1. **Diwali is known by what other name?**

Diwali is also known as the Festival of Light.

2. **Name one of the reasons Hindus celebrate Diwali.**

Diwali is celebrated to commemorate the return of Rama after 14 years of exile and is also a celebration in honour of Lakshmi, goddess of fortune and luck.

3. **What happens on day three of Diwali in Indian celebrations?**

On day three Lakshmi, goddess of luck and fortune, is celebrated.

4. **What happens in the Thai festival of Loy Krathong?**

Small vessels made from banana leaves (krathong) are floated on water. If the candles in them remain lit while they are still in sight of the shore, then the wish you make on them is believed to come true.

5. **Name two festivities that use lighted candles.**

Students may think of Loy Krathong, Luciadagen, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, etc. They might also mention things not in the reading comprehension such as birthdays or Christmas.

6. **When is Luciadagen celebrated?**

Luciadagen is celebrated on Lucia's Saint's Day – 13th December.

7. **Why is the nine-branched menorah used in Hannukah festivities?**

It represents the eight days that the sacred oil in the temple in Jerusalem burned after the uprising of the Maccabees. The extra branch is for the main candle from which all the others are lit.

8. **What is Kwanzaa?**

Kwanzaa is an African-American festival that remembers the trials and tribulations of the African-American people. It is a seven-day celebration which includes the use of a seven branched candelabrum with red, green and black candles.

9. **Give two facts about one of the bonfire festivities.**

Students may wish to discuss Bonfire or Guy Fawkes night or the celebration of Noruz in Iran. They might mention the penny for the Guy or the fact that the celebration commemorates the attempt to blow up parliament in England in 1605. They might mention that Noruz is celebrated at the commencement of spring and includes the fact that people jump over the small bonfire to leave their past wrongs behind.

10. **What is one reason why people use light for celebrations?**

Students might include elements from the introductory paragraph – that light is so important to us as humans or that as the light on earth fades (during the Winter season) people light fires and burn candles to remember it.

**Extension:**

**What similarities can you see between these traditions from around the world?**

The celebrations often include the use of a candelabrum with a symbolic number of branches. The lighting of a specific number of candles on each day is also important. Many of these festivities are multi-day affairs rather than a simple evening or day.

**Find the countries mentioned in the text on a map. Why do you think similarities between the festivities exist?**

Students might concentrate on the notion that many of these festivals take place around the Northern Hemisphere's Winter solstice since this is when the night sky is darkest and nights are much longer. They might also reflect on the idea that light symbolises good while dark symbolises evil and light festivals are often about good overcoming evil (Guy Fawkes, Noruz, Luciadagen, Diwali etc).

**What similarities can you see between these traditions from around the world?**

A variety of responses may be found here. An extension into a story or non-fiction piece may be interesting here.