



MAKAR SANKRATI

Makar Sankrati is a celebration of the winter solstice, harvest festival, and more! It is an important festival for many Hindus. It takes place in January and marks the beginning of the part of the year when daylight increases.

Some traditions connected with Makar Sankrati:

- A lot of people get together with relatives and friends the evening before Makar Sankrati to light huge bonfires and throw rice, sugarcane and sweets onto the fires.
- Others have a ritual bath in a special place where three rivers come together.
- Some people offer food to the poor and exchange sweets with one another. This represents the idea that there should be sweetness in all dealings between people, and that we should forgive and forget the things that others have done which annoyed or angered us.
- Lots of people fly beautiful colourful kites. Kite-flying begins at dawn and goes on until nightfall. (This is the tradition for which the festival is most famous.)
- People make designs called Rangolis on the floor of their houses. They use rice, flour, spices, seeds, sand or flowers.

Choose one of the following activities for your class to do.

Activity 1: Rangoli designs

Materials needed:

- bottle caps, coins, empty matchboxes, paperclips, or any other small objects which can be traced to make rangoli designs
- white paper or card and crayons or marker pens

Activity 2: Rangoli-making

Materials needed:

- beans/legumes/seeds of various shapes, sizes and colours (eg – green and red lentils, peas, black beans, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, etc)
- white, brown and wild (dark purple/black) rice
- non-toxic craft glue
- white or pale-coloured card

Get pupils to draw or make their own rangolis. The examples on their handout will give them some ideas, but they should not limit themselves to copying these designs. Encourage them to create their own! Tell them that these sorts of designs are commonly used for rangolis, but that some Hindus recreate scenes from nature or everyday life, and they can do the same.

CHINESE NEW YEAR

The picture at the top of the pupil's worksheet shows the dragon dance, a traditional Chinese New Year's Dance. It is supposed to scare away evil spirits. People also wear red and set off fireworks to scare away evil spirits. The home, the family and the coming of spring are the focus of Chinese New Year celebrations. People clean their houses, and decorate them with special pieces of paper which say things like HAPPINESS and GOOD HEALTH. They also make and hang beautiful lanterns in their windows. Grandparents and parents give money to children in special red envelopes.

Help pupils complete the gap-filling task. Then, before students start reading about the animals, go over any unknown vocabulary with them. Pupils can draw the animal for their year in the space at the bottom of their worksheet (page 102).

Key

- | | |
|-----------|-------------|
| 1 Dogs | 7 Dragons |
| 2 Pigs | 8 Snakes |
| 3 Rats | 9 Horses |
| 4 Oxen | 10 Rams |
| 5 Tigers | 11 Monkeys |
| 6 Rabbits | 12 Roosters |

[You might like to explain to pupils that oxen is the (irregular) plural of ox, and that a ram is a male sheep.]