

Google Arts & Culture

Lesson Plan:

# Diwali at Home

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महत्वा

This lesson plan is prepared for a global audience. You can complete this lesson independently or with fellow students, a teacher, or another adult.

The content is accessible to a wide range of ages, but it's especially geared toward students aged 13 and above.



# Concept Overview

Estimated duration: **3 sessions (90 minutes each)**

**1**

In this module, **YOU** will learn about the legends associated with Diwali and about the various deities associated with the festival.

**2**

**YOU** will become conversant with various Diwali customs and traditions such as *aipan* and *rangoli*, myriad styles of celebrations, and lamp traditions.

**3**

**YOU** will learn about arts and crafts across India and how these are intertwined with the customs and traditions of Diwali.

**Google Arts & Culture offers a plethora of pictures, exhibits, and virtual tours that you can access.  
Prepare yourself for an exciting adventure!**

# Resources

## A list of resources required for this lesson plan



Any IT device with an internet connection.



Stationery such as paper/notebook, pens, pencils, scissors, glue, etc.



Art materials such as paints, brushes, construction paper, etc.



Other miscellaneous items may be needed, such as:

- clay, plasticine, or flour dough for making *diyas*
- ingredients for traditional Diwali recipes
- Scrap or craft materials to craft puppets, if you choose to create a puppet show on the *Ramayana*.



# Vocabulary

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## Words that you may need to look up

adaptation, *asuras*, auspicious, bolster, confectioners, correlation, deity, *devas*, extravagant, foster, gaiety, *Kali puja*, herald, incarnation, Indic, integral, minutest, new moon, pomp, prosperity, refurbish, ritual, scheming, treatise



# Symbols

## A glossary of the symbols used



This is used for leading questions or important instructions.



This is used to denote a response to leading questions.



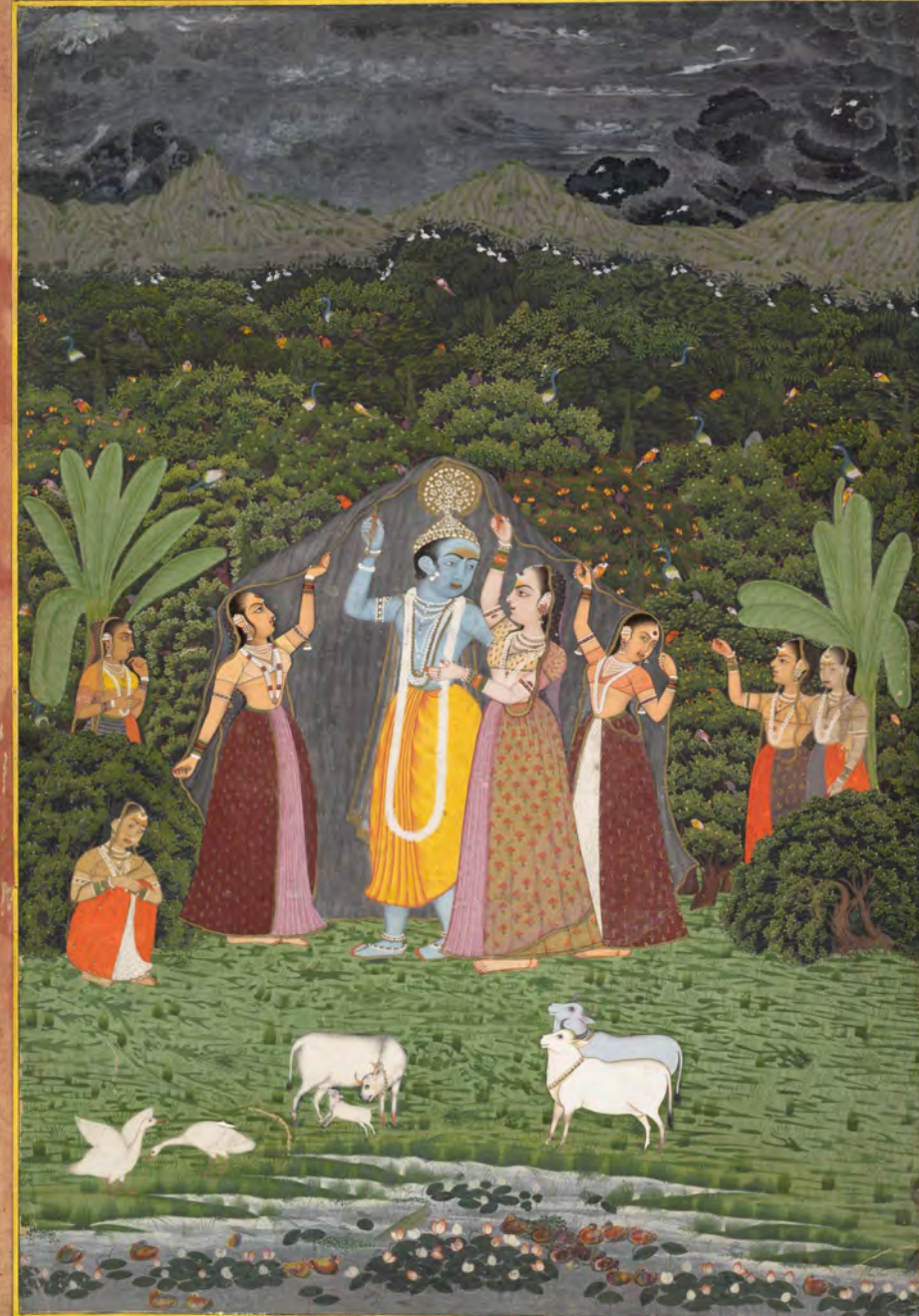
This is used to denote questions which require independent research.



This is used to denote stories where you can learn more about relevant topics.



This is used to denote stories or videos which contain audio elements.



Painting, 1760. The Metropolitan Museum of Art

# Session-1

Legends, Mythology,  
and Folklore



Estimated  
Duration:  
90 Minutes

Diwali, the annual festival of lights, starts on a new moon night in the Hindu calendar month of *Kartik* (mid October to mid November). The festival symbolizes the victory of good over evil and knowledge over ignorance.



**Diwali is an important festival for Indic religions. Read the story on the right, then try the 'Compare & Contrast' routine below:**

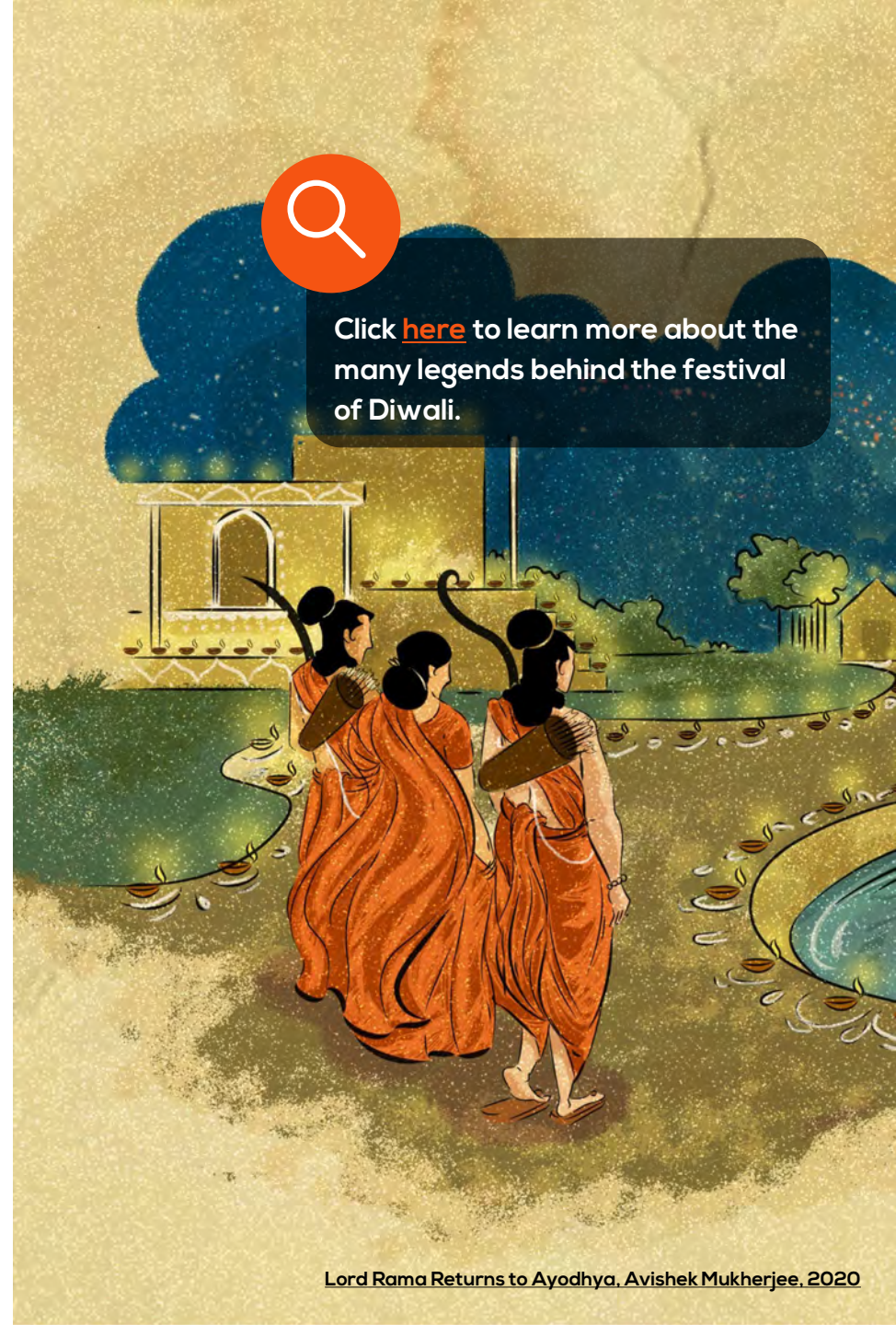
## Compare & Contrast

Highlight similarities and differences between how Diwali is celebrated in various Indic religions.

You can do some additional research online. You can put your thoughts down in a Venn diagram or a table.



Click [here](#) to learn more about the many legends behind the festival of Diwali.







Diwali is celebrated over five days with distinct rituals and myths associated with each day.



**Create a timeline for the five days of Diwali. Use what you learnt in 'The Many Legends of Diwali'. You can look at the story again and do some of your own research, to help with this exercise.**

### **Focus on the Hindu mythology**

Explain the significance of each day. Which gods or goddesses are worshiped each day? What story is associated with each day?

### **Add a short description of the rituals for each day**

You can add any details you think are relevant.

The Hindu epic *Ramayana* is a tale about the life and times of Lord Rama, whom Hindus believe to be an incarnation of God Vishnu. In the epic, when Lord Rama returned to his home, the city of Ayodhya after 14 years of exile, the inhabitants of Ayodhya decorated their homes using *diyas* (earthen lamps) to herald his return.



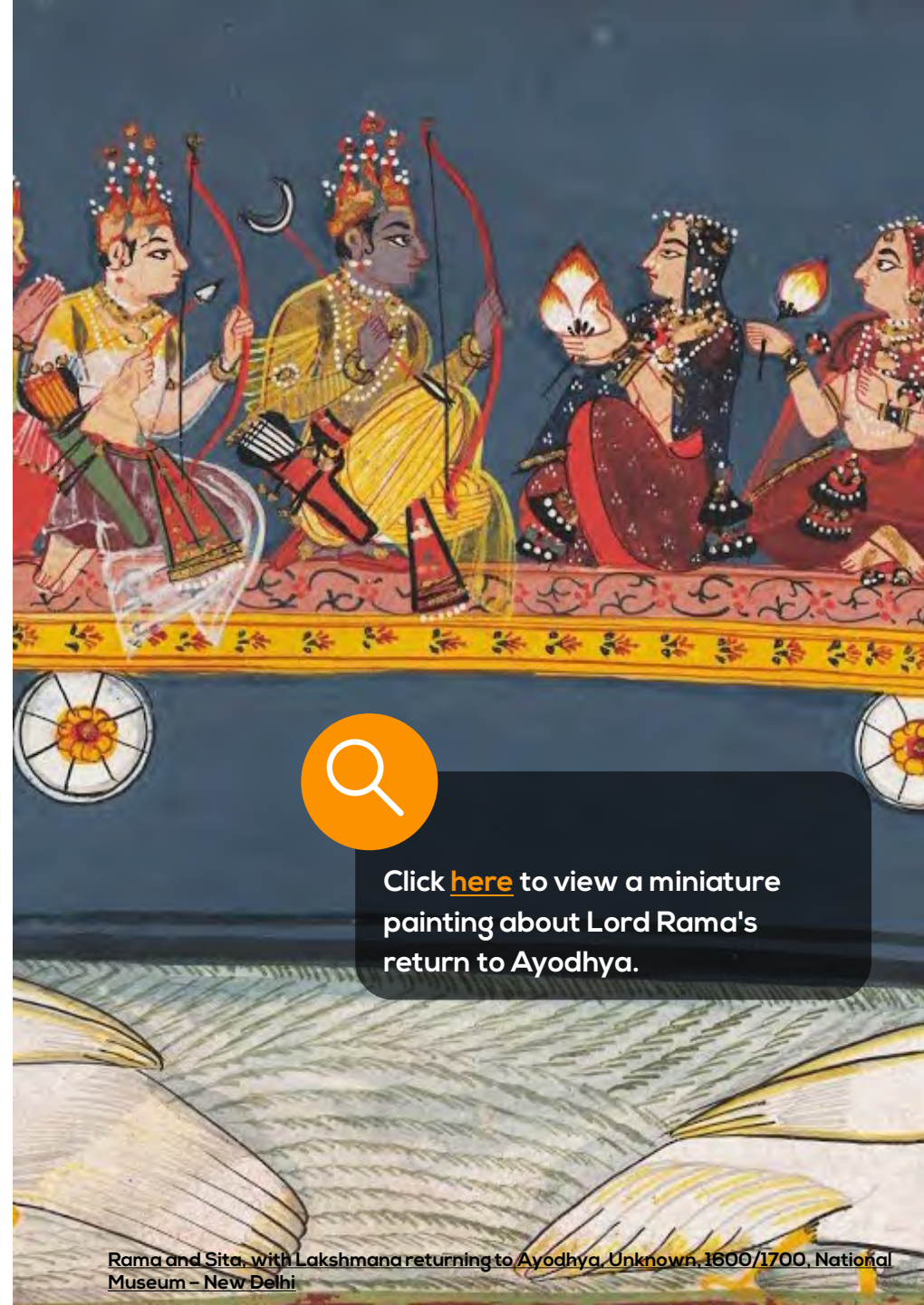
**Do some research online to find out more about the Hindu epic *Ramayana*. You could find a translation or a film adaptation of the story. Then create a story map on the *Ramayana*.**

### Creating a story map

Draw four boxes titled 'Setting', 'Characters', 'Problem', and 'Solution' to break down the main elements of the Ramayana.

### Complete each of the boxes

You can work with a classmate and share your research.



Click [here](#) to view a miniature painting about Lord Rama's return to Ayodhya.



Click [here](#) to learn more about the Pandava brothers.

The Hindu epic *Mahabharata*, narrates the tale of the Pandava brothers, who lose their kingdom in a game of dice to their scheming cousins, the Kauravas. After a long period of hardship and with the help of Lord Krishna, the Pandavas regain their kingdom. Just like in the *Ramayana*, the subjects of the Pandava's kingdom light *diyas* to mark their return home.



**Read the story on the left to learn more about the Pandava brothers. Write down a description of each of them based on what you have read.**

**Write a detailed description of each Pandava brother**

You can also do some of your own research.

**Sketch, paint, or make a model of each of the brothers**

Using only your written descriptions, depict the Pandavas in your own style.

Some celebrate Diwali to mark the marriage of Goddess Lakshmi and God Vishnu, while others observe it as the birthday of Goddess Lakshmi. As the myth goes, the Goddess of wealth and prosperity was born out of the churning of the ocean by the *asuras* and *devas*. To welcome her, the doors and windows of houses are kept open on Diwali with the hope that the Goddess will find her way inside and bless the residents with wealth and success.



**Read the story on the right. Then, analyze what you've read using the 'See, Think, Wonder' routine:**

**See.**



What was the story about? Did you learn something new about the Goddess Lakshmi?

**Think.**

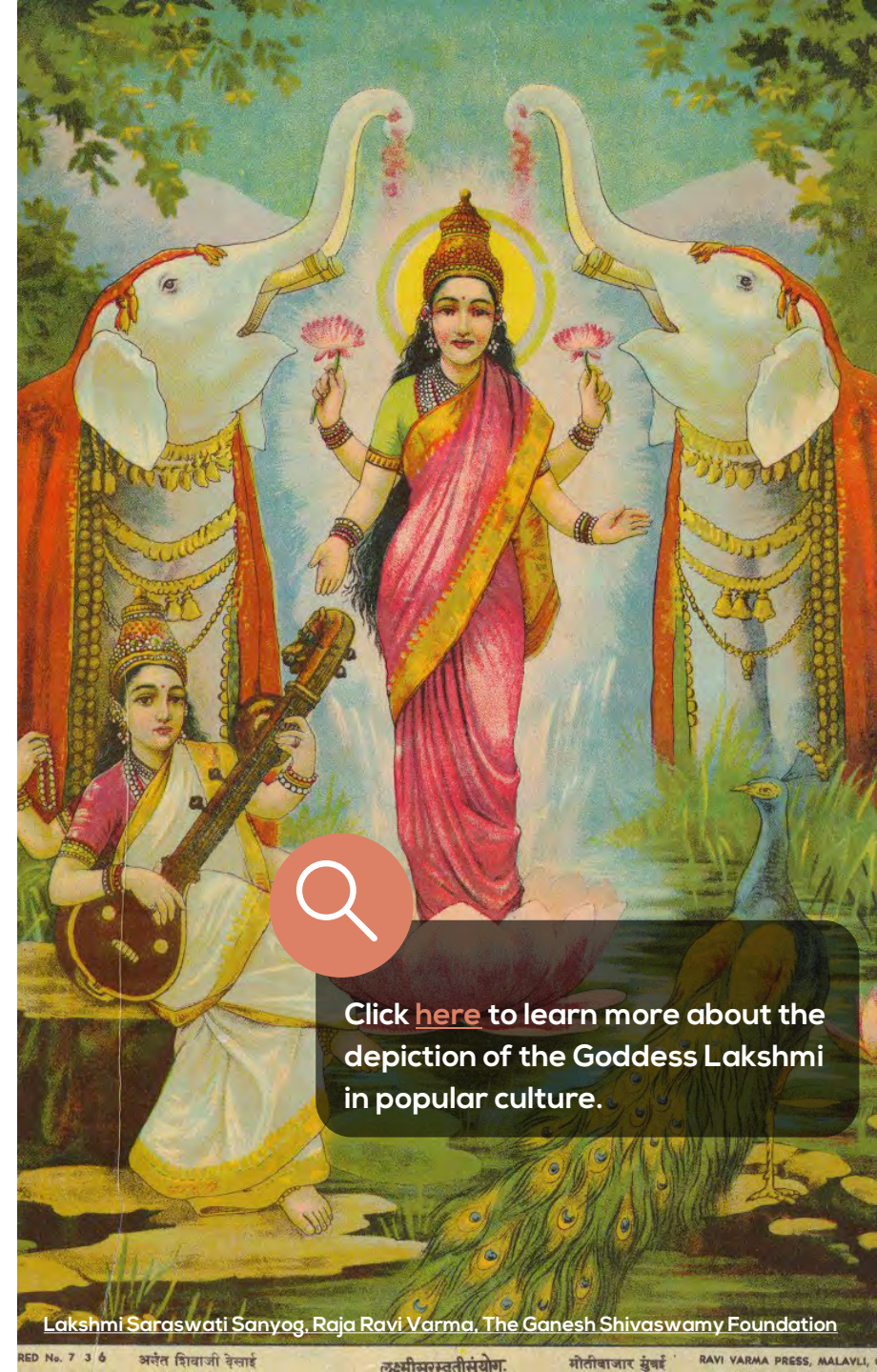


How do you think religion changed with the invention of the printing press?

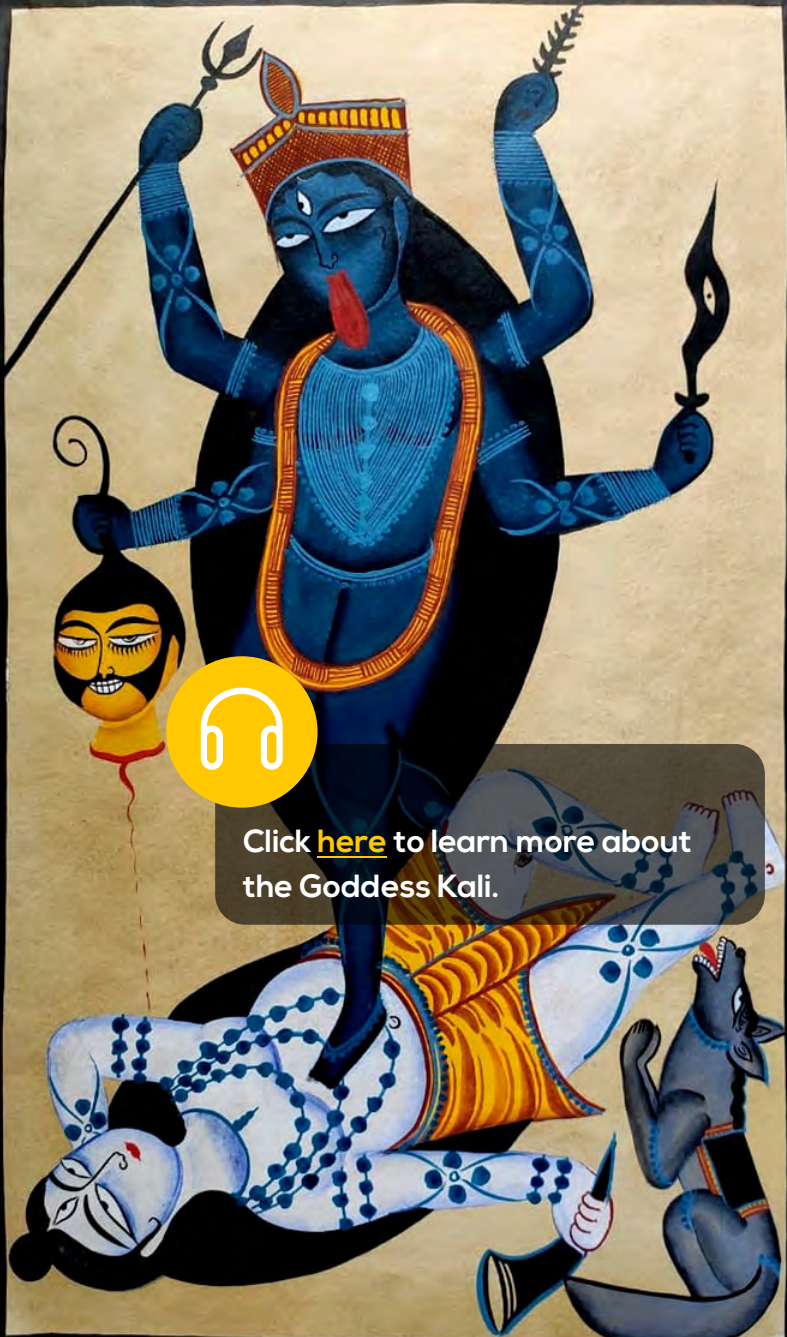
**Wonder.**



Why do you think companies started to use images of Hindu gods to promote their products in India?



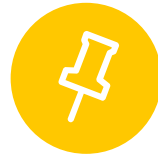
Click [here](#) to learn more about the depiction of the Goddess Lakshmi in popular culture.



Click [here](#) to learn more about the Goddess Kali.

Kalighat Style Patachitra of Kali, Rahaman Chitrakar, 2018, Banglanatak

When the *devas* and *asuras* churned the ocean, it gave birth to both Goddess Lakshmi and Goddess Kali. That is why both Goddesses are worshiped during Diwali. *Kali Puja*, however, is more common in the eastern parts of India. It is believed to be a newer practice, with the earliest records placing it in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century CE.



Read the story on the left. Then follow the 'Think, Explore, Reflect' routine given below:

Think.



Why is Goddess Kali considered to be the opposite of Goddess Lakshmi?

---

Explore.



How do devotees worship Goddess Kali?

---

Reflect.



Why do you think rural, regional, or tribal deities are incorporated into mainstream religions?

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The Hindu God Vishnu is central to the mythology around Diwali. Lord Rama and Lord Krishna are both regarded as his incarnations. He is also the consort of Goddess Lakshmi, but did you know that there are more connections between him and the festival of Diwali? Read the story on the right to learn more about him.



**Having uncovered so much about the mythology and folklore behind Diwali, you can now prepare cluster maps about Hindu deities.**

### Brainstorm your central ideas

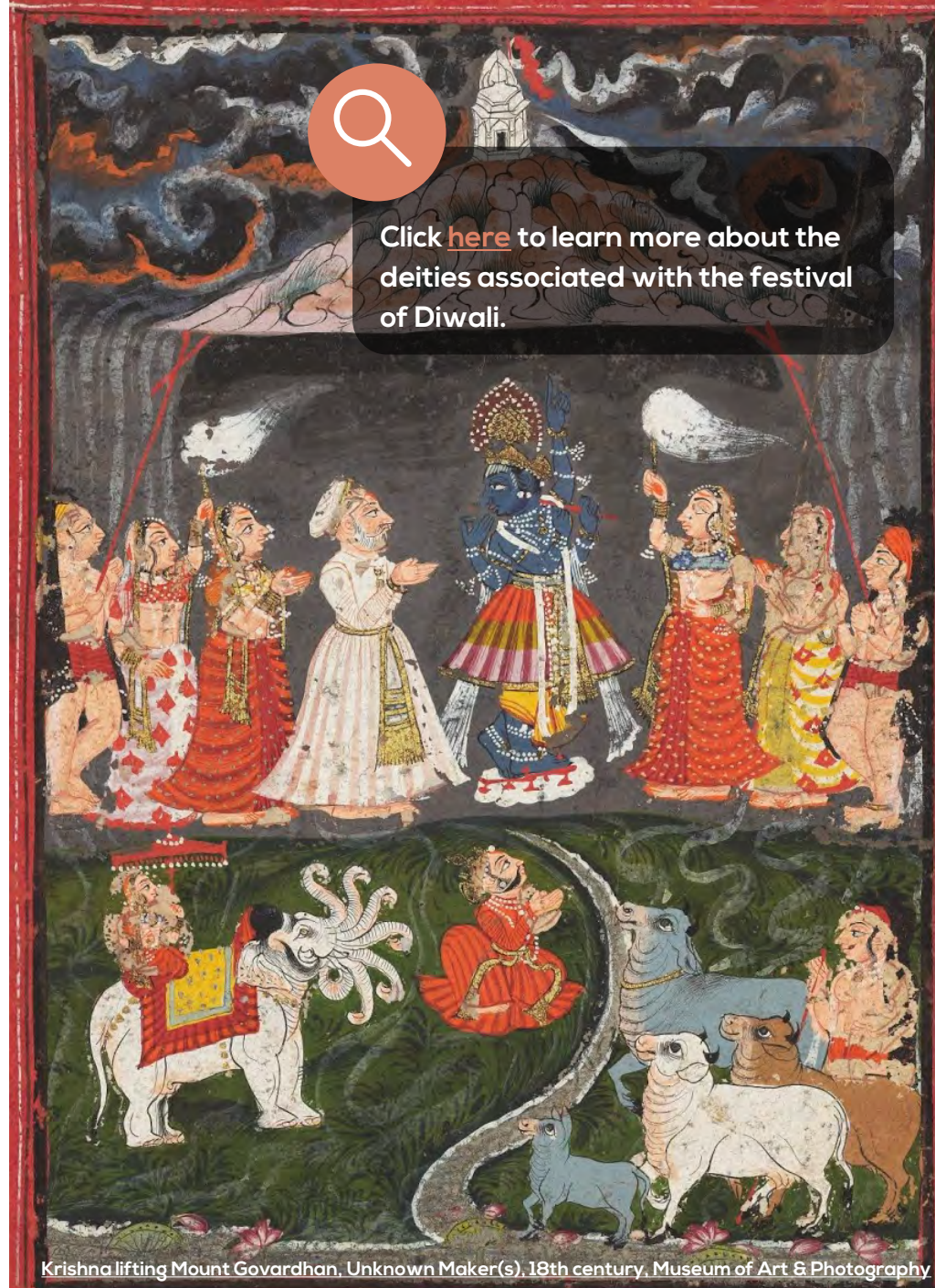
You can create a cluster map for each major Hindu deity associated with Diwali. Your map will start with the name of the deity in a bubble at the very center of the map.

### Think of the sub-topics related to the main idea

Read the story on the right, do some research online and include details that you think are relevant. Add each sub-topic in bubbles around the center.

### Add layers to the map

As additional ideas come up, they will extend outwards on the map. You can color-code each branch of thought to make your map easier to understand.



Click [here](#) to learn more about the deities associated with the festival of Diwali.

Krishna lifting Mount Govardhan, Unknown Maker(s), 18th century, Museum of Art & Photography

# Take a short quiz to ascertain your progress.



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## 1. Who is the Hindu Goddess of wealth and prosperity?



- A. Goddess Kali
- B. Goddess Parvati
- C. Goddess Saraswati
- D. Goddess Lakshmi

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## 2. How many days do the Diwali festivities last?



- A. Five
- B. Four
- C. One
- D. Thirteen

---

## 3. What is the correlation between the *Ramayana* and Diwali?



- A. The festival marks the day of Lord Rama's return home
- B. The festival is a celebration of Lord Rama's love for his mother
- C. The festival marks the day Ravana is defeated
- D. The festival is a celebration of Lord Rama's birthday

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## 4. Which one of the following Goddesses represents the opposite of Goddess Lakshmi?



- A. Goddess Saraswati
  - B. Goddess Parvati
  - C. Goddess Kali
  - D. Goddess Durga
-

# Session-2

Customs and Traditions



Estimated  
Duration:  
90 Minutes





India is a diverse country, and different communities and regions have their own way of celebrating Diwali. However, there are some common practices that you are likely to find in celebrations everywhere.

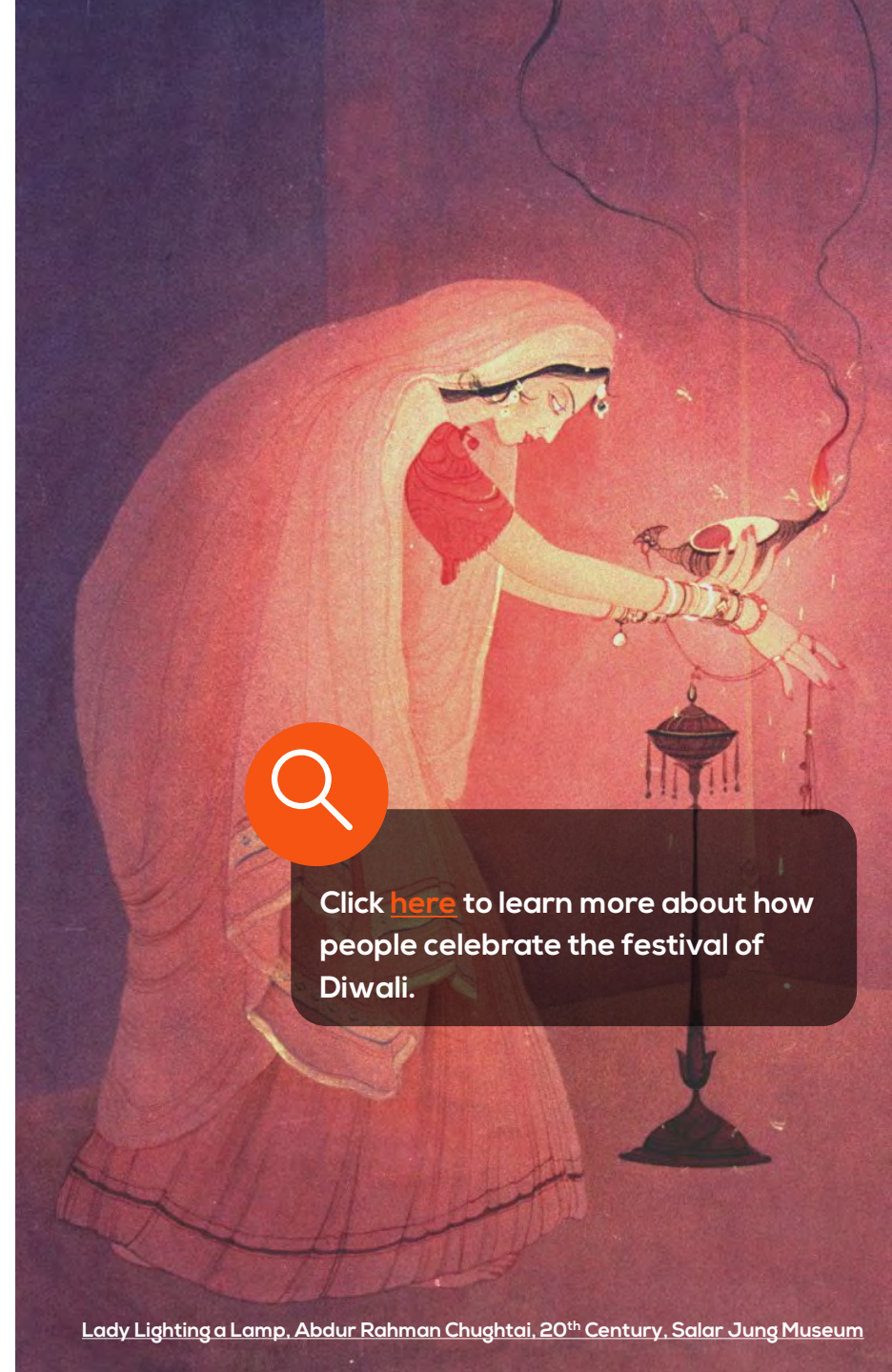


**Examine the story on the right and create a diorama using the 'Sketch to Stretch' routine to depict how Diwali is celebrated.**

After reading the story, and without referring to it, make a sketch of what you understand about Diwali celebrations.

Swap your sketch with a peer. Ask them to tell you what they see in your sketch and vice versa. Learn about Diwali celebrations from each other's perspective.

# Sketch to Stretch



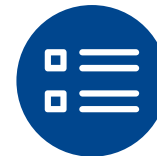
Click [here](#) to learn more about how people celebrate the festival of Diwali.



Diwali is considered auspicious for purchasing new things as people believe that doing so will bring them good luck and fortune.



### What do people commonly purchase during the festive season?



On *Dhanteras*, people buy gold and silver coins and ornaments, and brass or copper kitchenware, or utensils. Gifts for friends and family are also purchased in and around the Diwali festive period.



Can you research and discover whether people exchange gifts on *Dhanteras*?

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Can you find out which other items are commonly purchased during the Diwali festive period?

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Food is an integral part of Diwali festivities. While some people purchase traditional sweets and savories from local confectioners, many still prefer to make them fresh at home.



**In the story on the right, you will learn about traditional Diwali recipes. Select one and make it for yourself.**

### Preparation

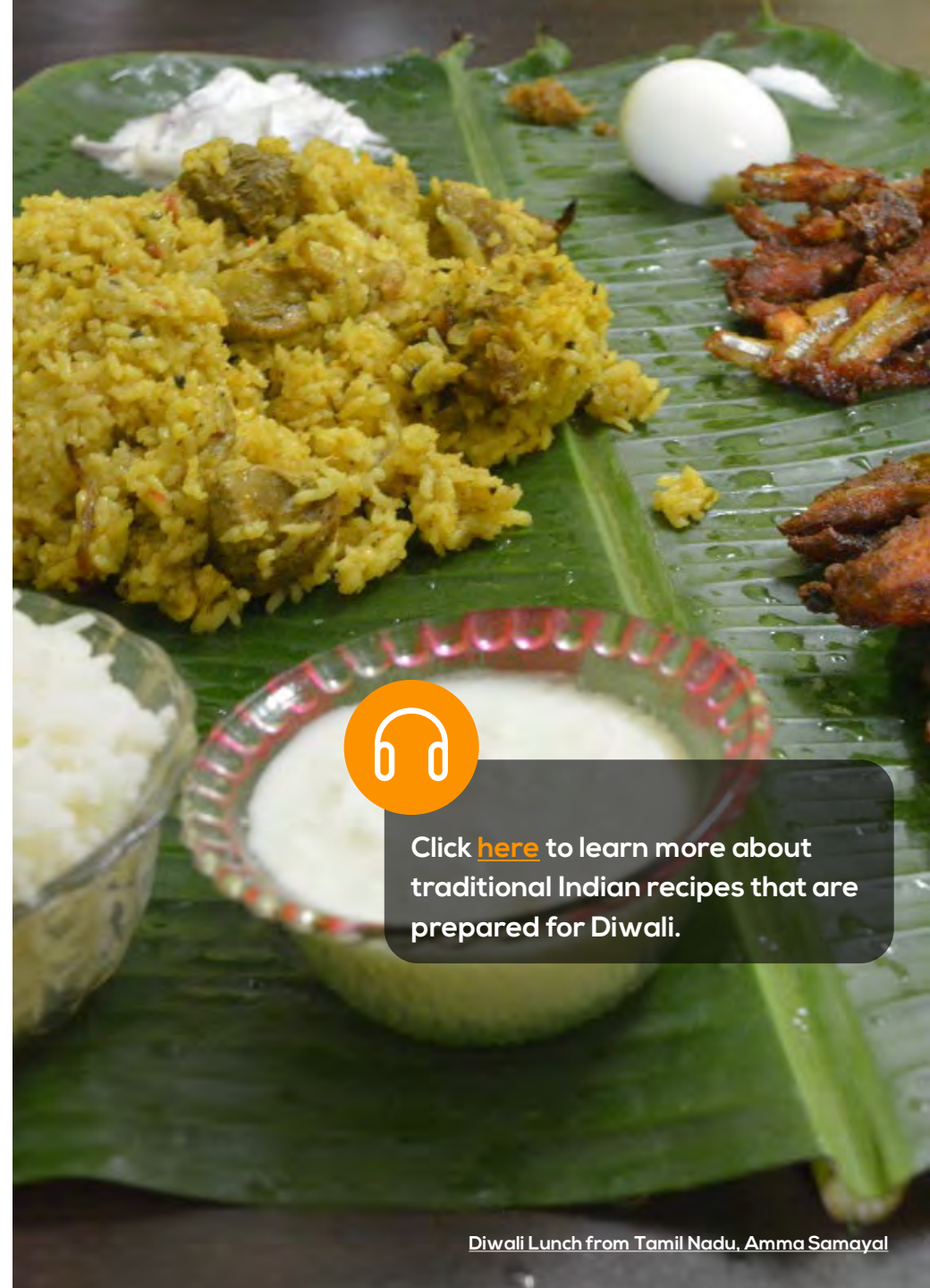
Select the recipe you want to make and write down the list of ingredients. You may have some ingredients at home, but some may need to be bought.

### Cooking

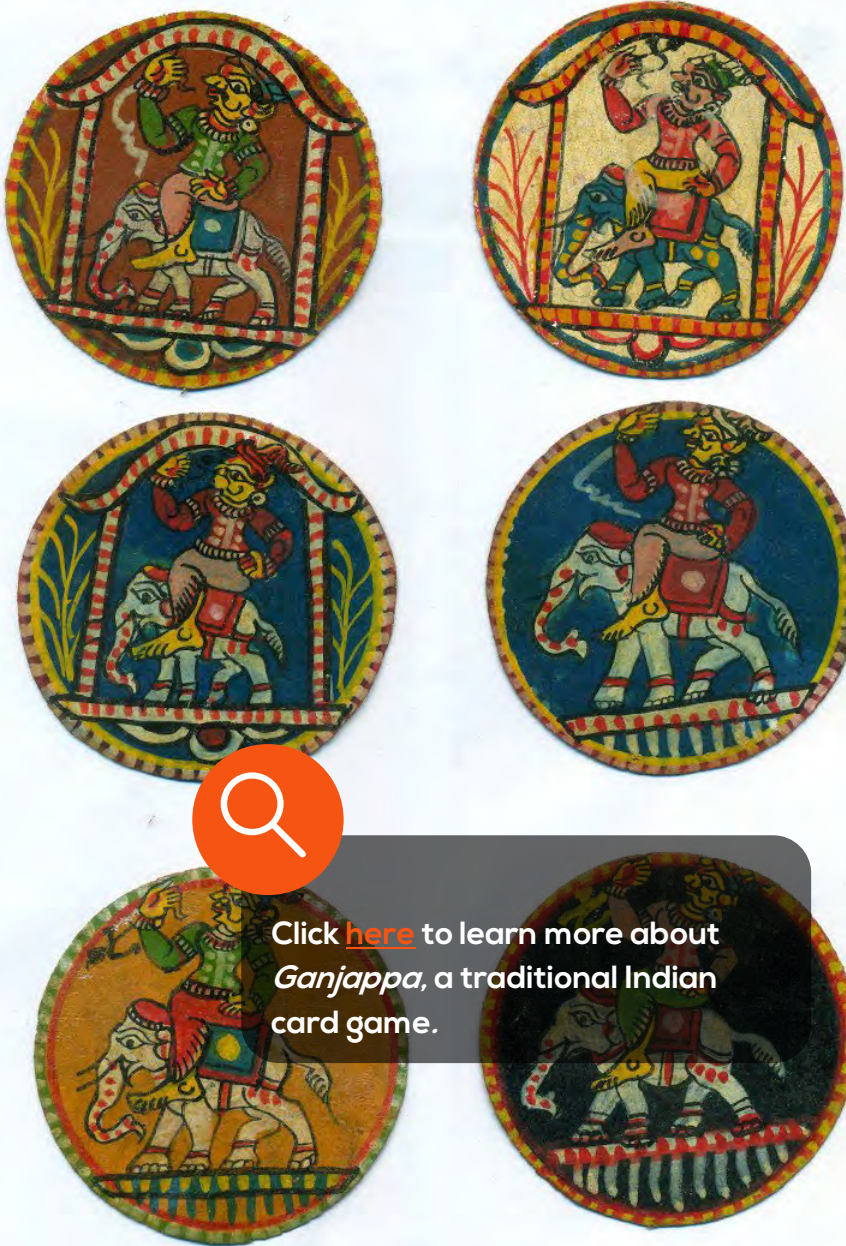
When you have all the ingredients follow the step-by-step instructions in the video.

### Taste (the best bit!)

What does it taste like? Is it what you expected? What do your friends and family think? Was it easy to prepare? Will you make it again or try another recipe?



Click [here](#) to learn more about traditional Indian recipes that are prepared for Diwali.



Click [here](#) to learn more about *Ganjappa*, a traditional Indian card game.

Diwali has a strong social aspect to it. It is traditional for people to exchange gifts such as dry fruits or sweets with friends and family. The festival is also an occasion for people to bond with their friends and family. Card games are extremely popular during the Diwali festive season.



Now use the **'Claim, Support, Question'** routine to recap what you have learned so far in this session. This routine will require you to work closely with a peer.

## Claim.

Make any claim about what you have just learned. For example, '*Ganjiffa* died out owing to the introduction of the Western 52-card deck into India by the British'.

## Support.

Make sure that you are supporting your claims with a reputable source of information. You may need to research online for this purpose.

## Question.

Your peer will then ask any question which occurs to them based on what you have claimed. Take turns to make claims and ask questions.

Another important aspect of Diwali celebrations is cleaning one's home before the festivities begin.



### Why do people clean their houses before Diwali?



It is believed that Goddess Lakshmi graces only those homes that are clean. People also make an effort to decorate their homes, inside and outside, to welcome the Goddess and the good fortune and prosperity that she brings with her.

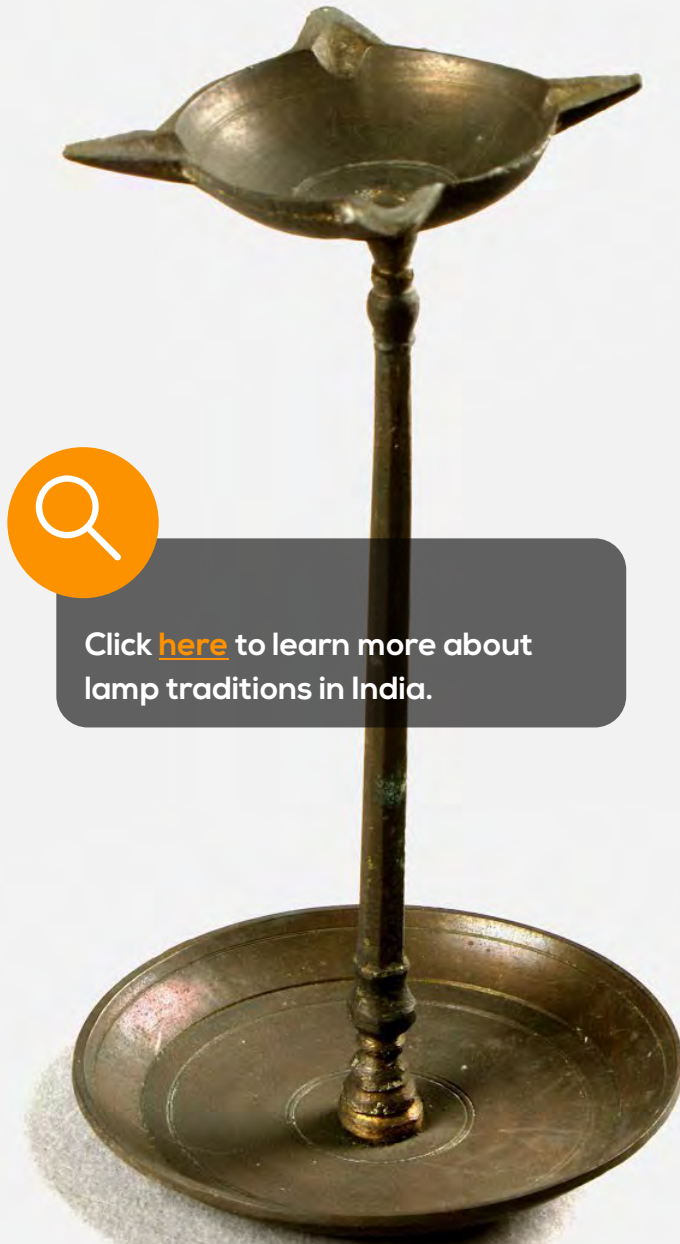


Can you research and discover how people decorate their homes during Diwali?



What do you think is the symbolism associated with cleaning one's house before such an auspicious festival?





Click [here](#) to learn more about lamp traditions in India.

Pilsuj/ Lamp stand, Indian Museum, Kolkata

Diwali is known globally as 'The Festival of Lights'. That is why people celebrate it with festive lights in their homes. Traditionally, this is done with *diyas*.



**Read the story about traditional Indian lamps to the left. Then design and make your very own *diya*.**

### Choose the design for your *diya*

You have seen various designs for *diyas* in the story on the left. You can choose to make any design that inspired you or search online for more ideas. You can use clay, plasticine, or edible flour dough to craft the *diya*.

### Decorate your creation

After your *diya* has dried, decorate it with paint, glitter, or any other decorations of your choice.

You may have heard of *rangoli*, which is an ancient ritual art form in India. The word literally means 'rows of colors' and, they are made on auspicious occasions (such as Diwali) on the floors of one's home. You can learn more about *rangoli* [here](#).



Now that you have learnt about *rangoli* and *aipan*, use the 'See, Think, Me, We' routine to analyze what you have learned about the two traditional art forms.

**See.**

What all did you notice about *aipan* and *rangoli*? Make a list of your observations.

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**Think.**

What thoughts and opinions do you have about *aipan* and *rangoli*?

---

**Me.**

Can you connect or relate to these ritual art forms? Why, or why not?

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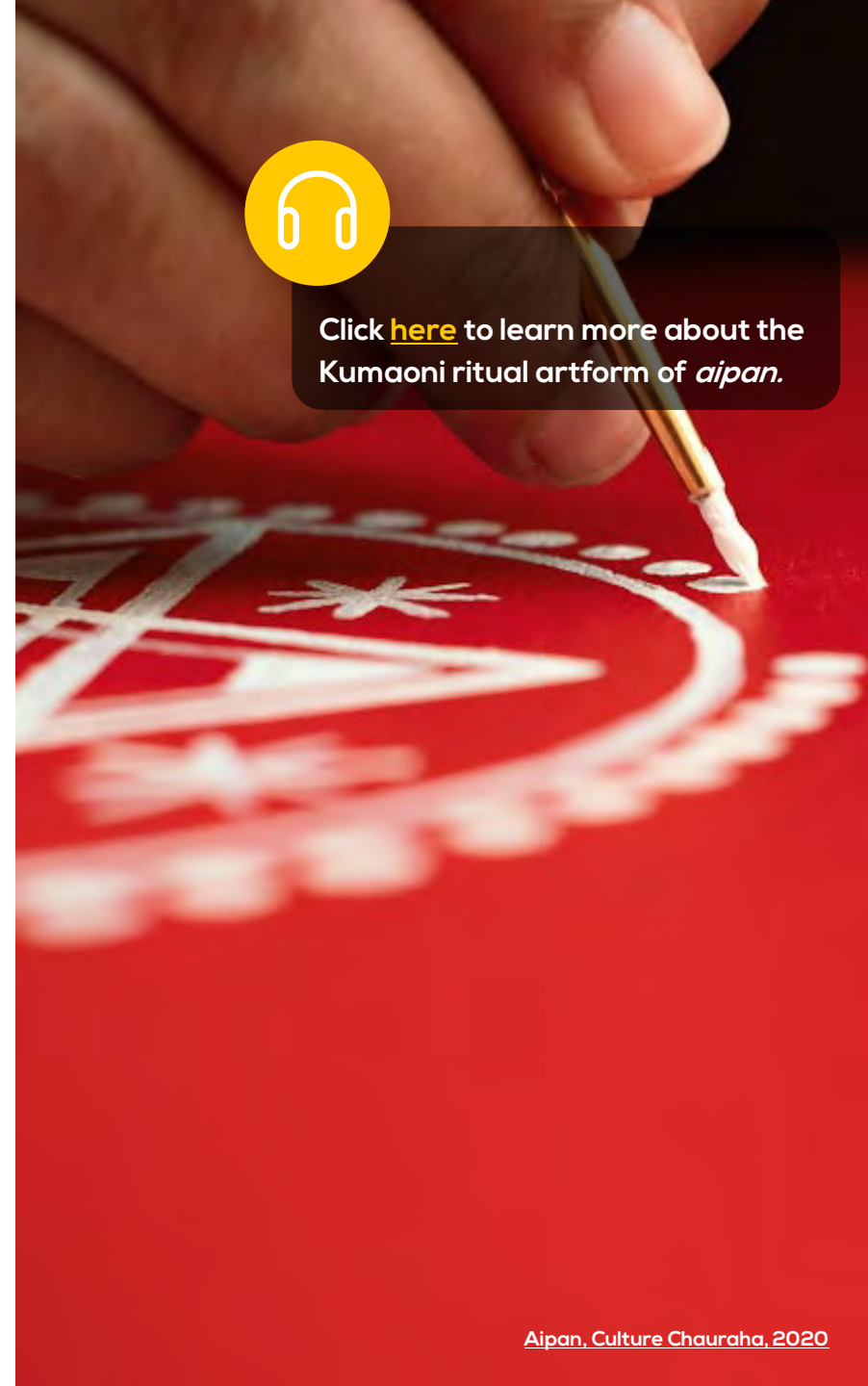
**We.**

What do you think about the significance of traditional arts to the world at large?

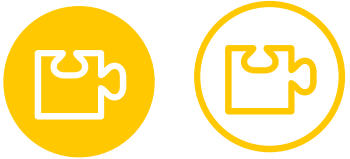
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Click [here](#) to learn more about the Kumaoni ritual artform of *aipan*.



# Take a short quiz to ascertain your progress.



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## 1. Which of the following is NOT a custom, ritual, or tradition followed during Diwali festivities?



- A. Exchanging gifts with friends and family
- B. Playing card games
- C. Cleaning one's home
- D. Religious fasting

---

## 2. Where did the traditional art of *aipan* originate?



- A. Khasi
- B. Kumaon
- C. Aravalli
- D. Garhwal

---

## 3. Why are homes illuminated with traditional lamps on Diwali?



- A. To support artisans who make traditional lamps
- B. Because it's a new moon night and it is very dark
- C. To welcome Goddess Lakshmi
- D. Because it makes one's home look attractive

---

## 4. Which of the following are considered auspicious to purchase on *Dhanteras*?



- A. Gold and silver items
  - B. New clothes
  - C. Real estate
  - D. Stationery
-





# Session-3

Arts and Crafts



Estimated  
Duration:  
90 Minutes

There are several regional arts and handicrafts which are intertwined with the festival of Diwali.



**Read the story to the right to learn about arts and handicrafts associated with Diwali. Then, use the 'See, Think, Make, Discuss' routine to analyze what you have learned.**

**See.**

Look closely at the story. What do you notice? Jot down your observations.

---

**Think.**

How might each handicraft connect to Diwali?

---

**Make.**

Explore your thoughts by creating something inspired by the handicrafts you have just seen. Use any artistic medium of your choice.

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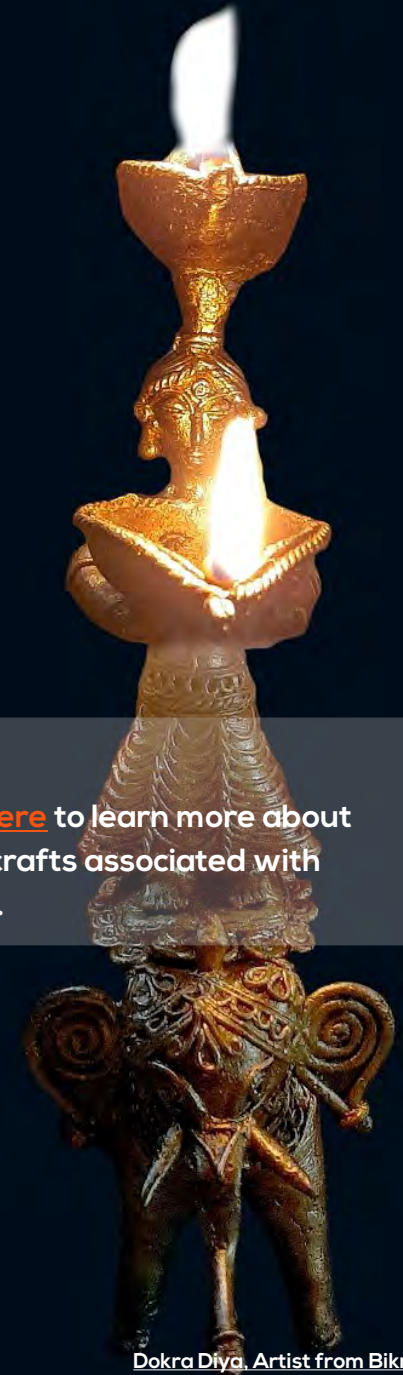
**Discuss.**

Talk about what you made and share with your peers.

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Click [here](#) to learn more about handicrafts associated with Diwali.



Dokra Diya, Artist from Bikna, 2018, Banglanatak

## Regional Arts and Handicrafts

India's size and diversity is reflected in the different arts and crafts of each region. Artists and craftspeople in different regions have developed unique artistic styles, such as *patachitra* from Odisha and West Bengal.



Examine the *patachitra* painting to the left and use the '**Slow Complexity Capture**' routine to analyze what you have learned.

**Capture.**

Examine the painting carefully and observe all the details. Capture it in your mind's eye.

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**Explain.**

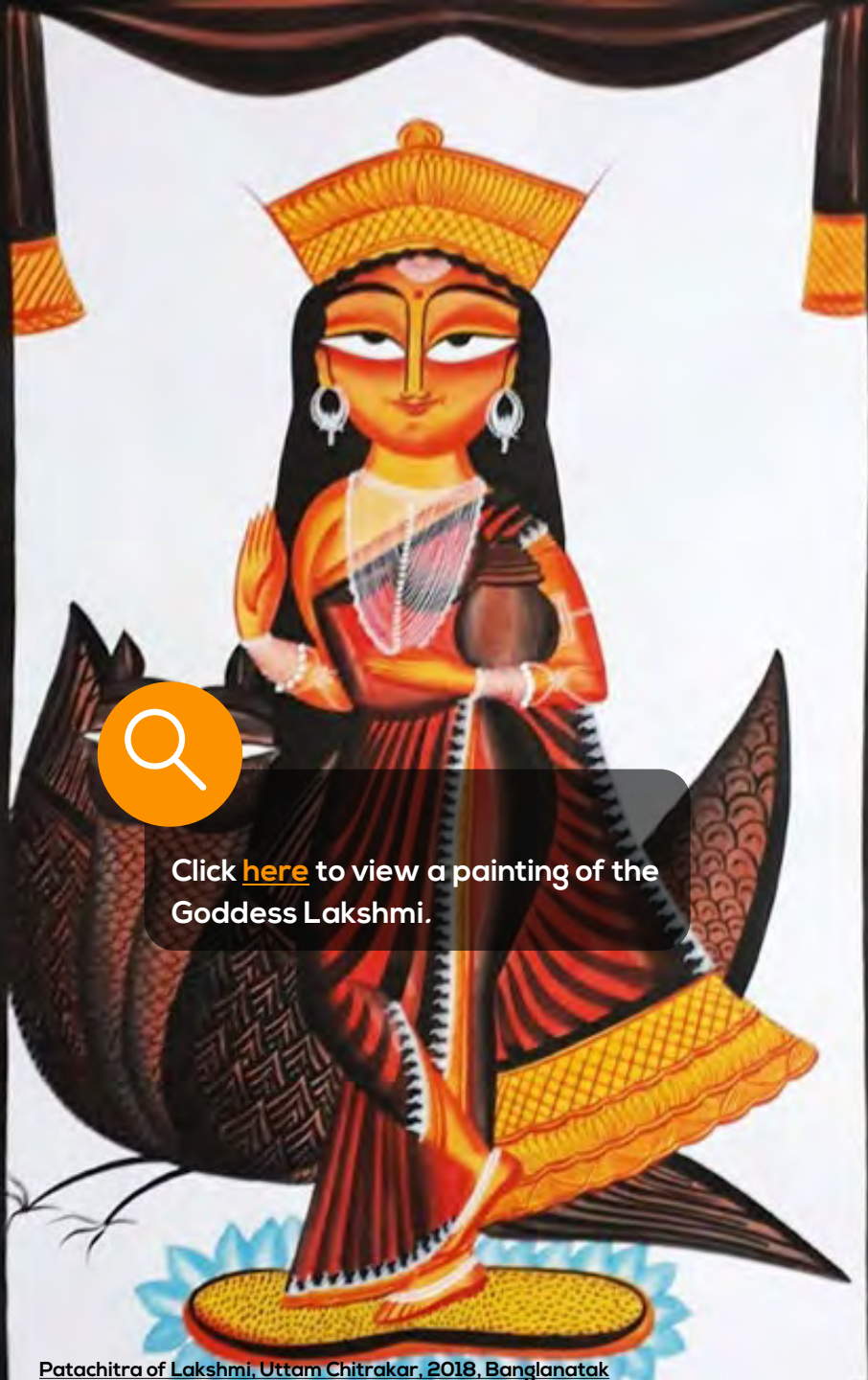
Now write a paragraph (or tell a peer) about how complex the painting is.

---

**Wonder.**

What new ideas and questions do you have about this artwork?

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Click [here](#) to view a painting of the Goddess Lakshmi.

Brass, a traditional metal in India, is considered by many to be auspicious. For this reason, the use of brassware is integral to the Diwali festivities.



Now read the story on the right and analyze what you have learned using the **'Think, Explore, Reflect'** routine:

**Think.**



What is brass made of?

**Explore.**

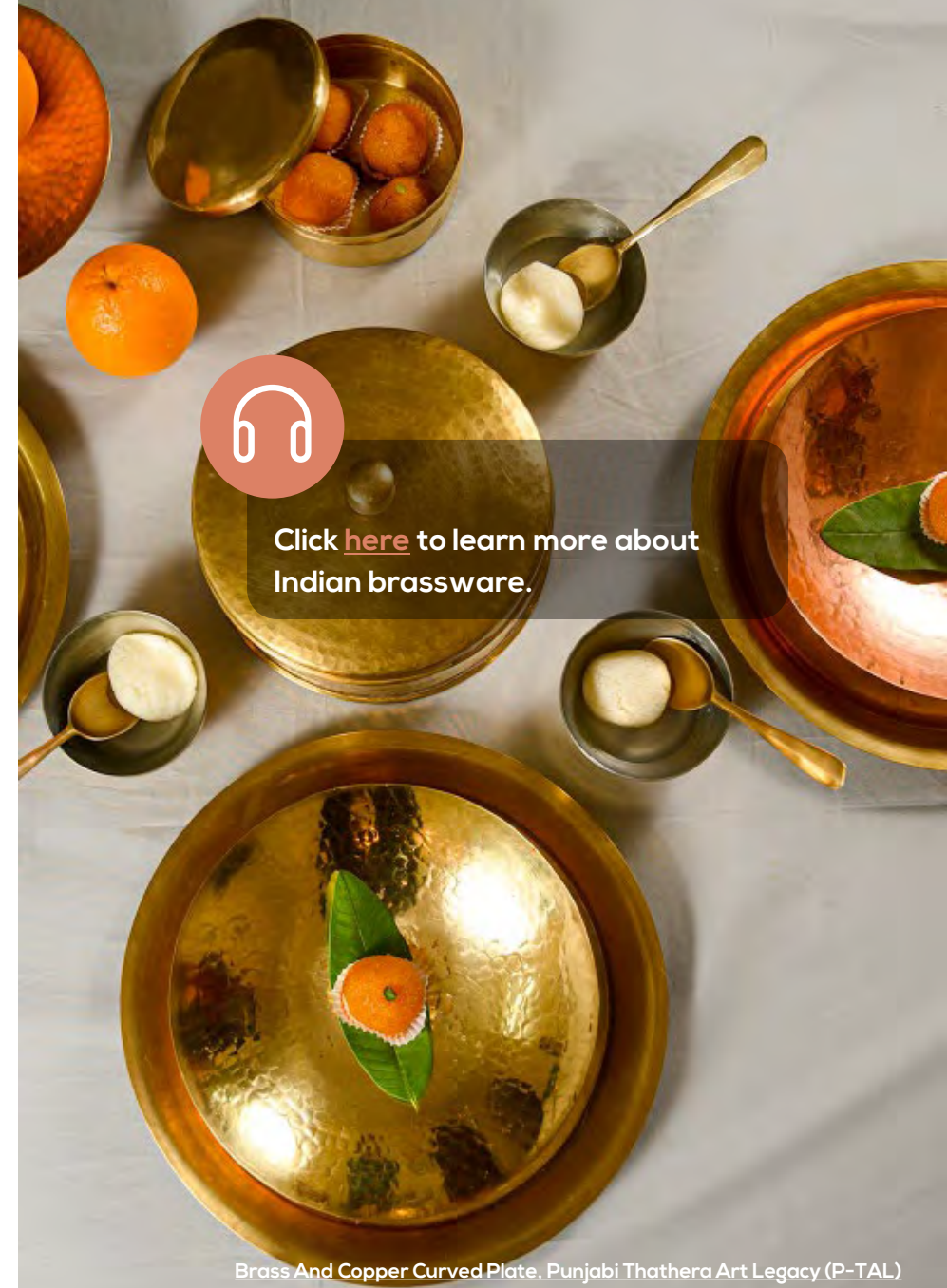


Why did artisans think of mixing metals to make alloys like brass?

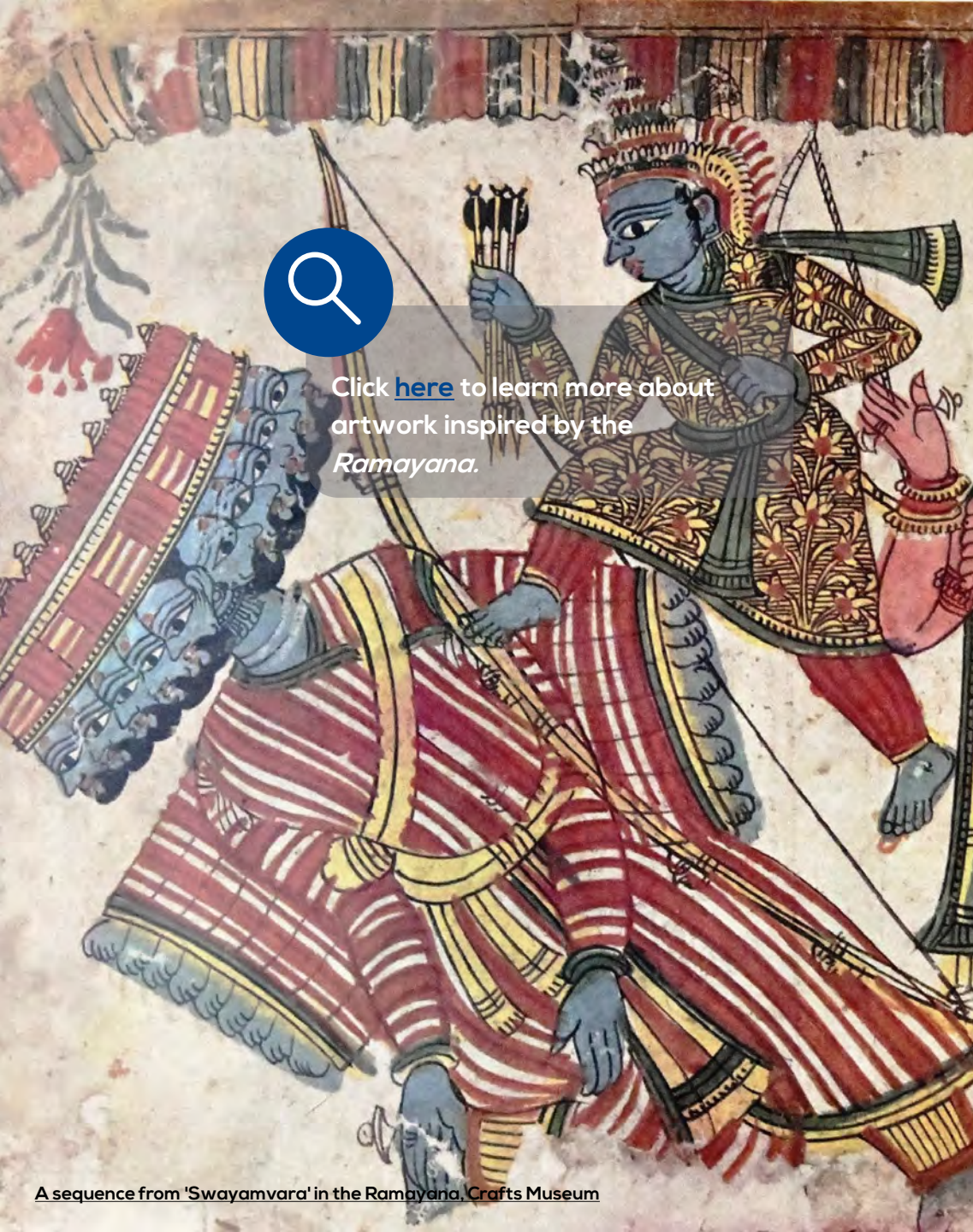
**Reflect.**



Why do things made of brass change color when kept in the open?



Click [here](#) to learn more about Indian brassware.



Click [here](#) to learn more about artwork inspired by the *Ramayana*.

The epics, such as the *Ramayana*, are not just inspiration for Diwali festivities, but also for artists across India.



Read the story on the left about *Ramayana's* influence on art and craft and use the '**Connect, Extend, Challenge**' routine to analyze what you have learned.

**Connect.**



What aspects of the story are already familiar to you?

---

**Extend.**



What new ideas did you get that extended or broadened your horizons?

---

**Challenge.**



What questions do you have after reading the story?

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Dramatic adaptations of the *Ramayana*, known as *Ramlila*, are extremely popular all over India during the festive period preceding Diwali.



**Read the story to the right to learn about a dramatic adaptation of the *Ramayana*. Create your own play based on the Hindu epic.**

### Choose your medium

You could create a puppet show or you could organize a play, based on the *Ramayana*.

### Prepare a script

You have already created a story map of the *Ramayana* in the first session. Use this as the base for creating your own script.

### Present your play

Once the script is ready, you can practice your lines with the whole cast. When you are prepared, you can present your play to an audience of your classmates, friends, or family.



Click [here](#) to learn more about a dramatic adaptation of the *Ramayana*.





Click [here](#) to learn more about the *Odissi* dance.



Indian classical dance can trace its origins to *Natya Shastra*, an ancient Hindu treatise on performing arts. These dances used to be performed in temples, and to this day, are an integral part of festivals such as Diwali and other auspicious occasions.



Read the story about the *Odissi* dance form on the left and use the **'See, Think, Wonder'** routine to analyze what you have learned.

**See.**



What was the story about? Did you learn something new about Indian classical dances?

---

**Think.**



Do the poses in Indian classical dances such as the *Odissi* have any significance?

---

**Wonder.**



Why do you think that *Odissi* dancers are adorned in extravagant silks and jewelry?

---

Diwali has been a subject of fascination for artists across India through the ages. The pomp and gaiety of the festivities lend themselves well to painting.



Now read the story on the right and analyze what you have learned using the 'Name, Describe, Act' routine:

**Name.**

Recalling from memory, make a list of all the nouns that you can recollect from the story.

**Describe.**

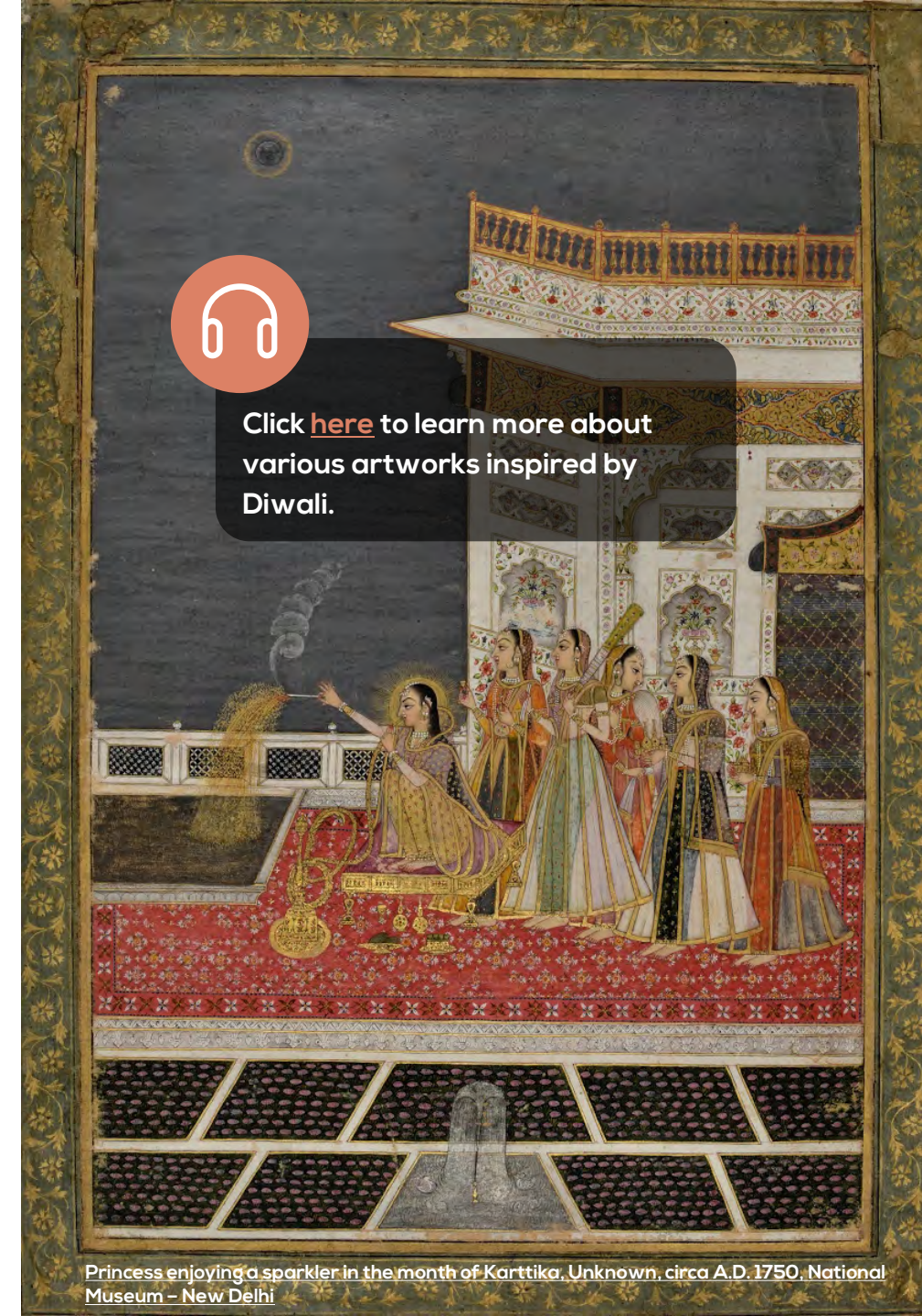
Add a description for each noun on the list. What adjectives did you use to describe these nouns?

**Act.**

Describe how each one of the nouns act. What are they doing? How do they function? How do they add or contribute to the whole?



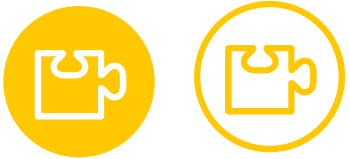
Click [here](#) to learn more about various artworks inspired by Diwali.



Princess enjoying a sparkler in the month of Karttika, Unknown, circa A.D. 1750. National Museum - New Delhi



Take a short quiz  
to ascertain your  
progress.



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**1. What are traditional dramatic adaptations of the *Ramayana* called?**



- A. *Rangoli*
- B. *Ramlila*
- C. *Odissi*
- D. *Patachitra*

---

**2. Where did the classical Indian dance *Odissi* originate?**



- A. Odisha
- B. Delhi
- C. Maharashtra
- D. Bengal

---

**3. What is the name of an Indian community that is famous for making bronzeware?**



- A. Bhils
- B. Thateras
- C. Patuas
- D. Kumaonis

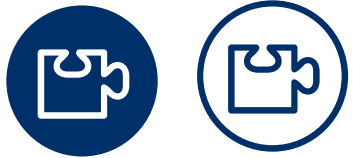
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**4. What does the word '*Chitrakar*' mean?**



- A. Dancers
  - B. Landlords
  - C. Actors
  - D. Picture-makers
-

## Answers to the questions on Quiz 1.



**1. Who is the Hindu Goddess of Wealth and Prosperity?**

D. Goddess Lakshmi

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**2. How many days do the Diwali festivities last?**

A. Five

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**3. What is the correlation between the *Ramayana* and Diwali ?**

A. The festival marks the day of Lord Rama's return home

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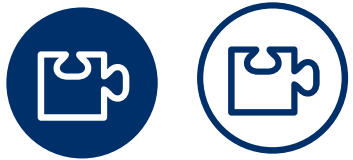


**4. Which one of the following Goddesses represents the opposite of Goddess Lakshmi?**

C. Goddess Kali

---

## Answers to the questions on Quiz 2.



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**1. Which of the following is NOT a custom, ritual, or tradition followed during Diwali festivities?**

D. Religious fasting



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**2. Where did the traditional art of *aipan* originate?**

B. Kumaon



---

**3. Why are homes illuminated with traditional lamps on Diwali?**

C. To welcome Goddess Lakshmi



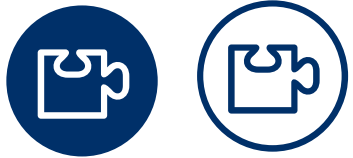
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**4. Which of the following are considered auspicious to purchase on *Dhanteras*?**

A. Gold and silver items

---

## Answers to the questions on Quiz 3.



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**1. What are traditional dramatic adaptations of the *Ramayana* called?**

B. *Ramlila*



---

**2. Where did the classical Indian dance *Odissi* originate?**

A. Odisha



---

**3. What is the name of an Indian community that is famous for making bronzeware?**

B. Thateras



---

**4. What does the word '*Chitrakar*' mean?**

D. Picture-makers

---