



## India: Holi and Painted Elephants

### Post-visit Activity: Quick Write Assessment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Pretend you attended a Holi celebration in India. In the space below, write a letter to a friend from the U.S. in which you explain the celebration. Use the word bank to help you.

Festival of Colors

Jaipur

Hinduism

spring

gulal

Ganesha

symbolic

good

evil

love

turmeric

elephants





## India: Holi Festival and Painted Elephants

### Post-visit Activity: Quick Write **Key**

Information included in the student Quick Write should include some of the following:

The people of India's more than 400 states enjoy many celebrations throughout the year. Their most important celebration, Diwali, occurs during November, while Holi is a festival that marks the arrival of **spring**. The tradition most commonly associated with Holi is the throwing of colors and water amidst loud music and drums. The colors are **symbolic** of the bright colors of springtime, but Holi also signifies a victory of good over evil based on a Hindu legend. Though Holi originated in India as a religious festival, this "**Festival of Colors**" has been adopted in many places around the world.

The festival celebrations begin on the evening of the full moon that comes between the end of February and middle of March. On the first evening, known as "Holika Dahan", people gather around a bonfire to celebrate the victory of **good** over **evil**. Prayers and religious rituals are also included. The following day is called "Holi". This is when the famous colorful powders are thrown. Historically, the **gulal** (powder) was made of **turmeric** paste and flower extracts, but today synthetic versions are used.

The four main powder colors used have different meanings. Red reflects love, blue is the color of the god Krishna, yellow is the color of turmeric and green symbolizes spring and new beginnings.

One state in India is known for a unique Holi tradition: an **elephant** festival. The Jaipur Elephant Festival began as a way to honor elephants by decorating them and then allowing them to parade in front of adoring crowds. Elephants are honored because they have always been important in India. Not only did they work hard as beasts of burden, they were also allowed to carry kings. **Ganesha**, a Hindu god, is part elephant and known as the "remover of obstacles". The tradition of honoring elephants continues to be important in India through art and ecotourism.