

**1** Read the texts. Complete the gaps with the words in the list.

• powder • strangers • spirit • flames • ashes  
• tricks • myth • aspect • straw • skin • good • faces

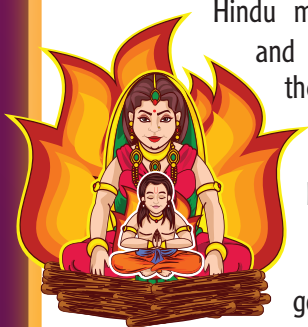


## “Festival of Symbols”

*Holi is a fun and exciting Indian festival held each year to welcome spring. Everything about Holi reminds us of an aspect of Indian culture. Let's look at the stories behind some Holi traditions.*

### The Bonfire

#### The myth of Prahlad and Holika



Hindu myths are popular throughout India and beyond. Holi is related to several of these stories, one of which is about an evil **1)** \_\_\_\_\_ called Hiranakshyap. He had a sister called Holika and a son named Prahlad. Holika was evil like her brother, but Prahlad was good and worshipped the god Vishnu. Hiranakshyap hated his son's goodness and wanted to get rid of him. Since Holika was able to walk into fire without being hurt, Hiranakshyap told her to pick up Prahlad and step into the fire with him. He believed Prahlad would be burnt up in the **2)** \_\_\_\_\_. However, Vishnu used his power to save Prahlad, and Holika was burnt up instead.

The myth of Holika and Prahlad, which symbolises the power of **3)** \_\_\_\_\_ over evil, inspires the bonfires that are lit at the beginning of Holi. Two figures are made to go on each bonfire: the figure of Holika, which is made from flammable materials like **4)** \_\_\_\_\_, and the figure of Prahlad, which is made from materials that don't burn. This means that the next day, only the figure of Prahlad remains in the pile of **5)** \_\_\_\_\_. The bonfires also represent the coming of the warmth of spring and the end of winter.

### The Importance of Colours

#### The myth of Krishna and Radha

The most famous symbol of Holi is probably the bright and colourful **6)** \_\_\_\_\_ (gulal) and water. Each colour symbolises a different **7)** \_\_\_\_\_ of life, like red for love or purple for wealth. The custom of throwing gulal and coloured water also originates from a Hindu **8)** \_\_\_\_\_. The story goes that when the god Krishna was a boy, he complained to his mother because his **9)** \_\_\_\_\_ was dark blue, but the goddess Radha had pale skin. His mother suggested that Krishna spread brightly-coloured powder on Radha's face – that way, he could make her skin any colour he liked!

Krishna was also a mischievous god. He liked to play **10)** \_\_\_\_\_ on people, and that is where the Holi tradition of playing practical jokes comes from. People don't just paint each other's **11)** \_\_\_\_\_ with gulal – they throw it at friends, family, and even **12)** \_\_\_\_\_! They jump out and surprise people with it, creep into rooms and cover people in it.

Holi is an amusing festival, and you're sure to have a good time if you join in. You'll also need a shower afterwards to wash all that colour off your skin!



**2** **ICT** Is there a myth or legend associated with a festival in your country? What is the myth or legend about? What does it symbolise in the festival? Collect information. Tell the class.