

# Classroom Guide

Written for the classroom, by Reema Bhayani

# Meet the Author



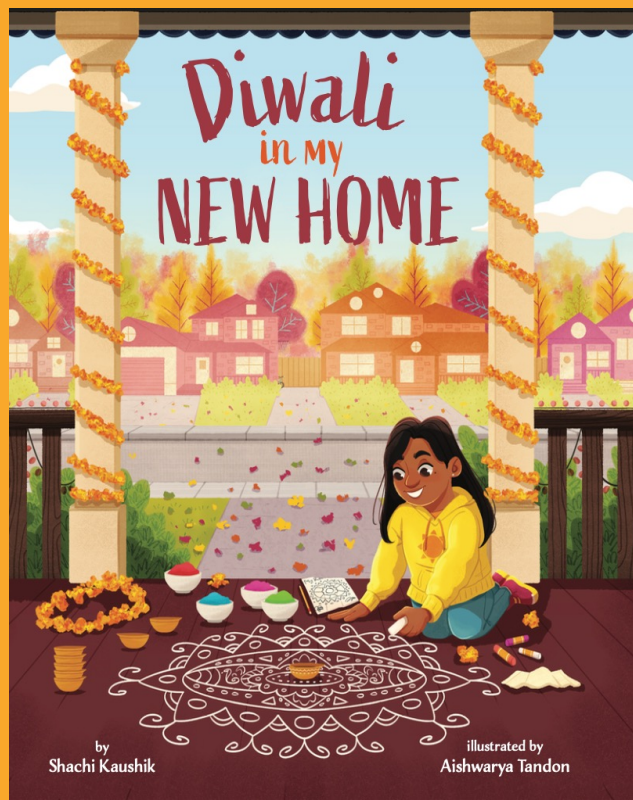
SHACHI KAUSHIK is a children's media enthusiast, writer, and storyteller. Part of the children's media industry, she creates content for children that is entertaining, enlightening, and educational. Raised in India, Shachi currently lives in Vancouver with her husband.

# Meet the Illustrator



AISHWARYA TANDON is an illustrator and cartoonist. She holds a bachelor of science and an honors degree in animation and multimedia from the Birla Institute of Technology. Aishwarya lives in India.





# A Story about Celebrating in New Places

This is a poignant story about Priya's experience of celebrating Diwali for the first time since coming to the United States. In India, Priya loved being with family and friends to watch fireworks and celebrate Diwali. But this year Priya and her parents are living in the United States, and no one seems to know about the holiday. Priya misses the traditions in India. But as she strings lights outside and creates rangoli art, Priya introduces the festival of lights to her neighbors. And even though the celebration is different this year, it's still Diwali. This is a heartwarming story of learning to find the joy of celebrating in a new place and sharing the festival of lights with others.

A decorative border made of white floral and leaf patterns on an orange background, framing the entire page.

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# Language Arts

## Reading Comprehension

(Written with depth and complexity in mind)

What was the problem in the story? Why do you think it is hard to celebrate in a new place? Have you ever had to do that?

How does Priya change from the beginning of the story to the end?

What can we learn from this story?

Why do you think the author wrote this story?

How did the friends and neighbors show respect when coming to her celebration?

How do you think her mom is feeling about celebrating in a different country?

What are you still wondering?







# Social Studies

## Geography and Writing Connections

Can you find India on the map or globe? Teachers, show students where Priya immigrated from. Use this to talk about immigration—people are always moving around the world for many reasons.

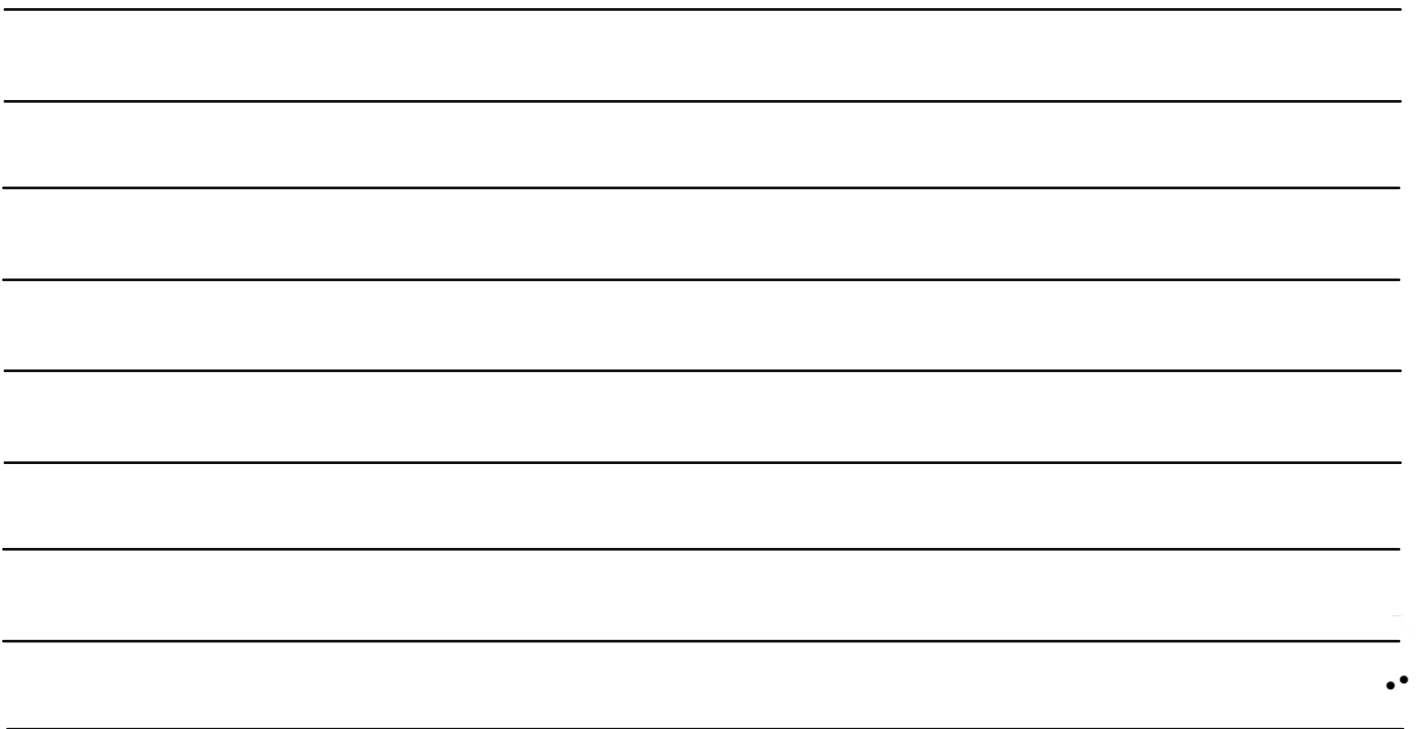
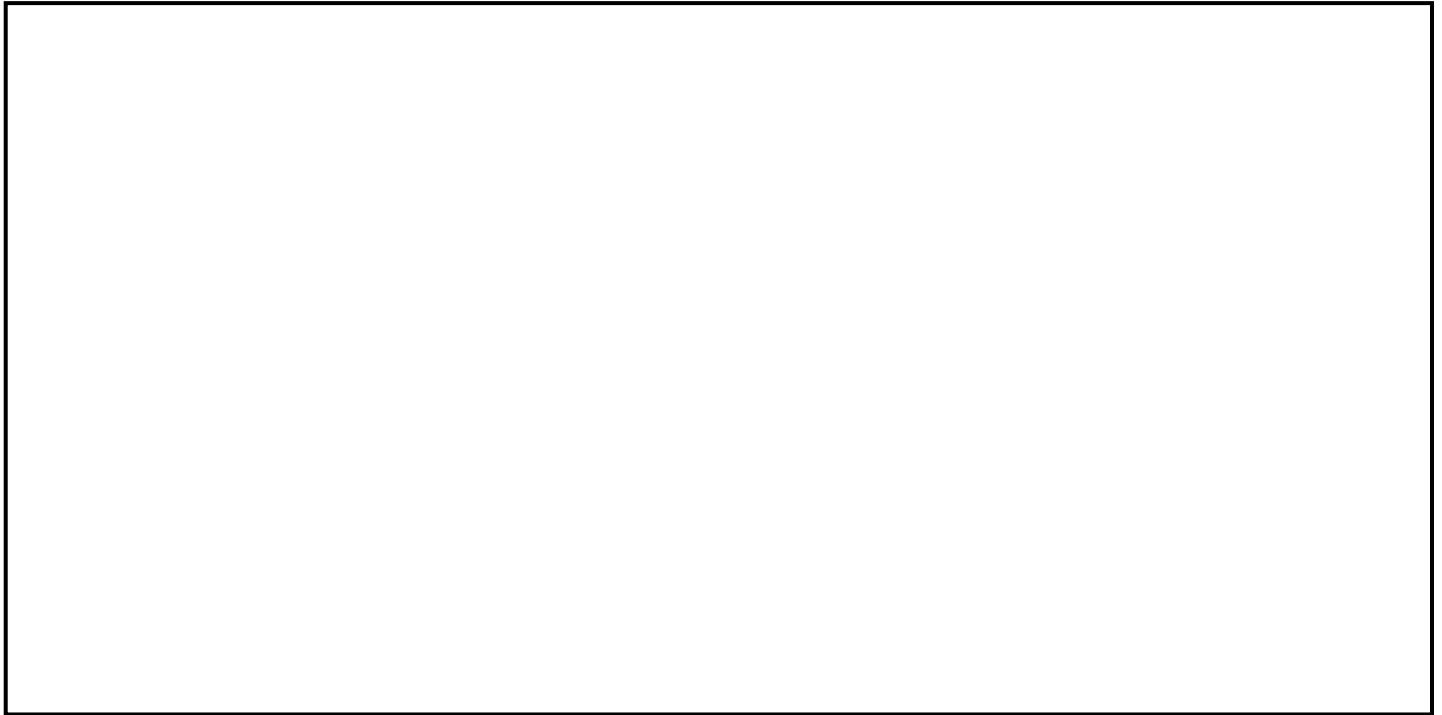
Sometimes to find a better life, for family, or for jobs. (This is different than being a refugee.) Priya immigrated from India to America. What cultural challenges did she have to face? What would you have to deal with if you suddenly moved to India?

Every family and culture have their own celebrations. Think of a holiday or time of year you celebrate. Tell us about it. What and how do you celebrate? What are the most meaningful parts for you?

We see Diwali as a festival of lights. Some people pray. There are flowers, lights, people gathering. What else did you notice? Now think about some similarities in the ways people celebrate. (For example, if you celebrate the New Year, there may be fireworks, loved ones gathering, food, etc.)

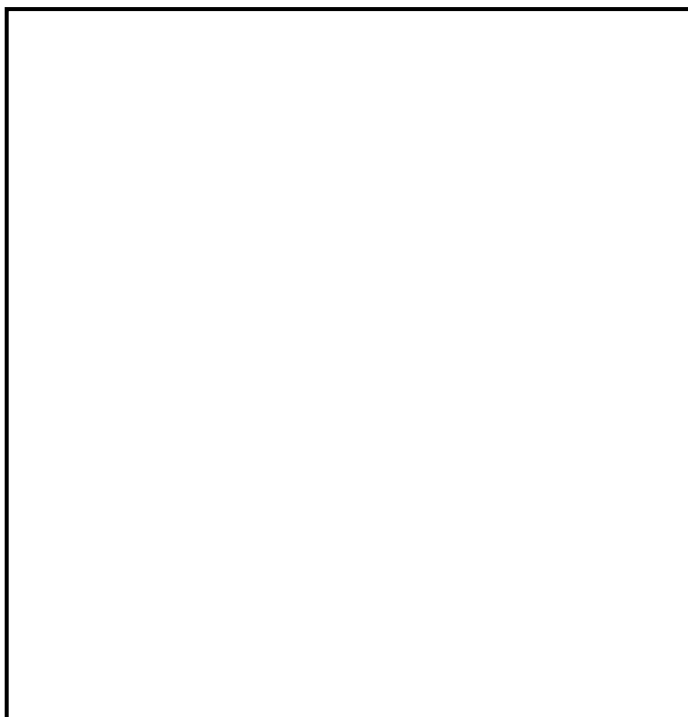
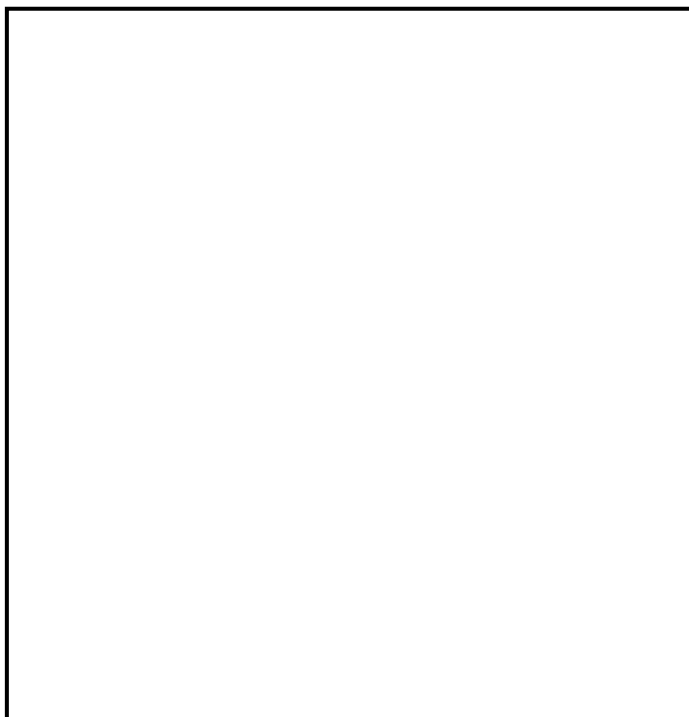
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Every family or person has their own celebrations.  
Tell about a celebration in your culture. What do  
you do? What do you wear? What parts are extra  
special to you?



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

Celebrations have a lot in common. Pick two celebrations and write about how they are similar and different.



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# Social Emotional Learning

What were some of Priya's feelings in the book? They changed from the beginning, to the middle, and the end. Feelings are like that. They are not permanent. They change! Think of a time your feelings have changed. What happened? Why did they change?

Priya was missing her home in India. She missed the way celebrations used to happen. Moving to a new place can be tough. What did she do to help herself feel better? (Shared her culture and included others in it.) When we share and include others, it can be fun. Think of a time you shared a part of yourself (or someone shared and included you). What happened? How did you feel afterward?



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

How did Priya feel in the beginning, middle, and end of the story? You can draw her face or write words to describe her feelings.

Middle

Beginning

End

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

Think of a time your feelings changed about something.  
Draw or write about how they changed over time.

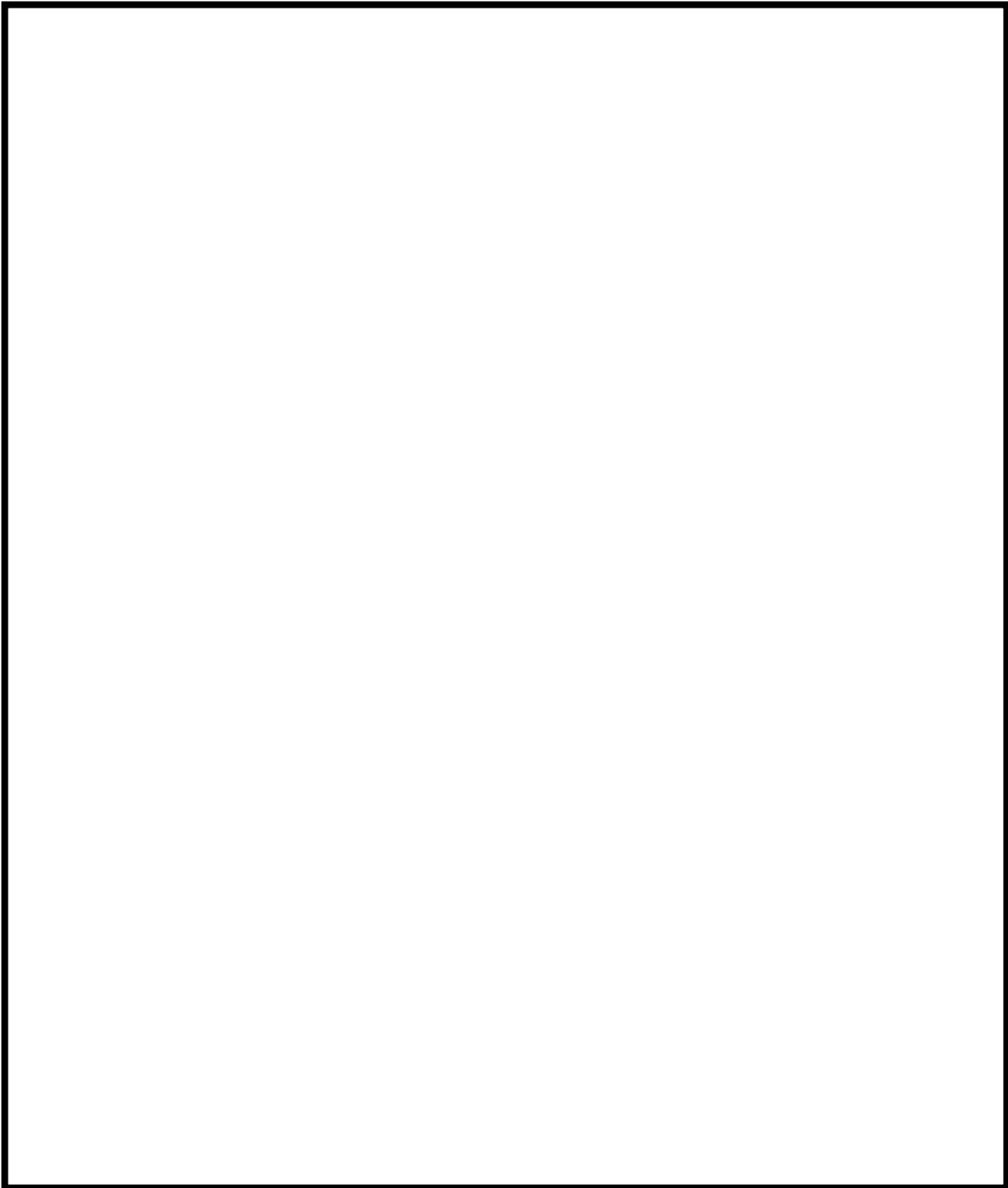
Then,

First,

Now,

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

Different things help people feel better when they are sad. Think of three things you do to feel better, like going outside, talking to a friend, or drawing.

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for a child to draw or write about the things that help them feel better when they are sad.



# Math and Art

One of the most popular ways to decorate for any occasion in India is through rangoli.

A rangoli is a geometric design that people make on the ground outside their homes. This can be done with white powder, colored powder, grains, or flowers. Let's look at some examples! You can expect to see shapes, flowers, peacocks, and more. Imagine modern-day mandalas, except with natural materials!





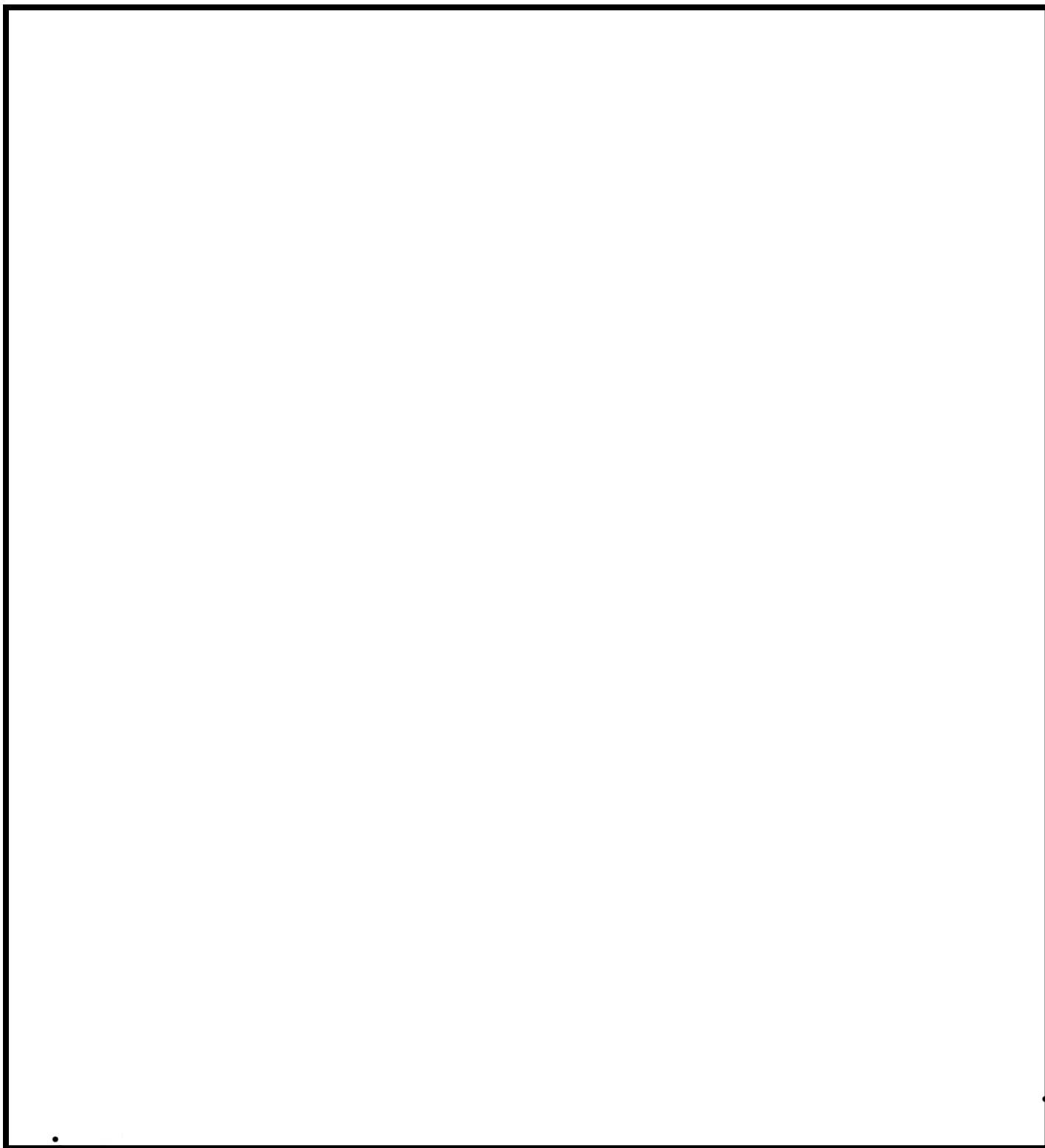
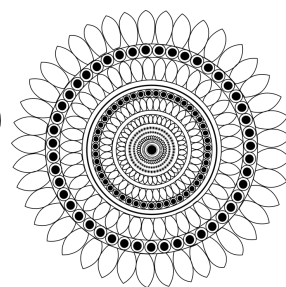
We can try drawing some on paper, and later go outside and make some with chalk. Your designs should be symmetrical and repetitive. As we are learning about other cultures, it is important to remember to show respect and not take things out of context. (This is a great time to address appropriation of other cultures with students.)

Note to educators: You can look up YouTube videos to show students how people pinch their fingers to drop the powder, making intricate designs. If you feel called to try, try it with flour! It is harder than it looks.



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

Try making your own geometric design. You can use circles, squares, triangles, lines, and more! You can practice here. When you are ready, you can color it in too!



Diwali is celebrated all over South Asia in many forms. As people have immigrated around the world, they adapt, evolve, and make new traditions. This story shares that journey, which comes with some sadness at what was left behind, as well as finding joy as we adapt and bring new friends into the fold.

As you read and explore, remember, no group is a monolith, and there are variations in what people do. Just as no two families celebrate Christmas the exact same way, no two families celebrate Diwali the same way.





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