

Read the text below and answer the questions.

India

India is a country in the continent of Asia. It is home to the Himalayan Mountains, the highest mountain range in the world. It is also home to the world's second largest population.



Food

Nobody in India eats beef because cows are seen as **sacred** animals. In fact, many people are vegetarian. People use their fingers, rather than cutlery, to eat their food. Look at these rules to find out more about eating in India.

- 1 It is considered impolite if the food reaches past the first joint of the finger when eating.
- 2 The fingers should not touch the mouth whilst food is being eaten.
- 3 Only the right hand should be used when eating.

Many people in northern India eat chapatis with their meal. These are flat pieces of bread used to soak up or scoop food. Lentils, fish and coconut milk are used in many meals all over India. Meals often use many delicious spices to add flavour to food.



Wildlife

One of the world's rarest animals lives in the Indian Himalayas. The snow leopard can be found in its mountains, in very cold conditions. Their thick fur acts like a winter coat whilst its huge paws behave like snow shoes. The most likely prey for these speedy and powerful animals comes in the form of birds, hares, goats and sheep. When they stray into farms, hunting for prey, they risk being killed by local people. This, as well as other factors, has led to dramatically reduced numbers of the big cats in the wild.



The People and Their Religions

More than a billion people live in India. The population continues to grow at a rapid rate, which makes some worry about how the country will manage to feed its people. This means that growing crops and looking after animals is very important to the future of the country.

Many people in India have religious beliefs. The two main religions in India are Hinduism and Islam, although there are other religions in the country.

Diwali – The Festival of Light

Diwali is a Hindu festival famous for light and colour. It usually happens around the end of October and symbolizes the beginning of a new year. The celebration welcomes the goddess **Lakshmi** to people's homes. Every home burns special clay lamps to light the way for the goddess to their homes. In preparation for her visit, homes are cleaned and decorated whilst many people make Indian sweets, sharing them with family and friends. Indians use jasmine flowers to decorate their homes and visit temples to worship. People dress in fine clothes made of beautiful silks, eat delicious foods and celebrate good luck. The cities and homes are decorated with lights and firework displays whilst firecrackers are used to frighten off evil spirits. Presents are exchanged and parties are held.

Land

India has a varied landscape. From deserts and jungles to coasts and cities, India can grow many different crops whilst providing ideal habitats for a range of rare animals. The country is prone to cyclones, heavy rains, floods and other types of extreme weather conditions such as monsoons. This is a big problem because so much of the country relies on farming the land, which can be destroyed in these weathers.

Fact File

Capital New Delhi

Flag



Currency Rupees

Language Hindi (most common)

Longest river Ganges

Glossary

Population – the people who live in a place

Lakshmi – Hindu goddess of good luck

Sacred – something or someone that is special to a religion

Questions:

1. In which continent can people find India?
2. What is special about the Himalayan Mountains?

3. Look at 'The People and Their Religions.' Find and copy a work that means the same as 'fast'
4. Why are animals and farming important to India?
5. How does the goddess Lakshmi know to come to people's homes?
6. Why do Hindus light firecrackers?
7. Look at the paragraph headed: *Wildlife*. Find and copy one word which shows that there are not many snow leopards.
8. Name India's longest river.
- 9.

Characteristic	How this helps the animal survive
Speedy and powerful	Catches prey quickly
Thick coat	
Big paws	

10. Draw a line to match the title with the content.

The People and Their Religions	People dress in fine clothes, eat special sweets and light their homes.
Wildlife	Indians use their fingers rather than knives and forks when eating.
Diwali – The Festival of Light	The population of India continues to grow at a rapid rate.
Food	Snow leopards' feet act like snow shoes in the wild.
Land	India experiences all sorts of extreme weather conditions.