

# Hanukkah

Hanukkah is a Jewish festival that celebrates the time when Jewish people fought back against the Greek king, Antiochus. Although the exact dates change each year, Hanukkah lasts for eight days and usually happens in November or December.

## The Story of Hanukkah



Over 2,000 years ago, a Greek king named Antiochus took over the city of Jerusalem and demanded that all Jewish people should start worshipping Greek gods. Antiochus then attacked the Second Temple in Jerusalem. His army destroyed many holy objects and built a large statue of Zeus inside the temple. One of the holy items that was destroyed was a sacred lamp, which was kept burning using a special oil. To make sure that it wasn't lit again, Antiochus destroyed all of the bottles of special oil.

Antiochus banned the practice of Judaism and stopped Jewish people from studying their holy texts. Angry and sad, a small group of people began to stand up to Antiochus and the Greek army. Led by Judah Maccabee, the group became known as the Maccabees. Although they were outnumbered, the group were brave and continued to fight. After several years, they were successful and the Greek army left the city. Immediately, Judah started cleaning up the city and repairing the Second Temple.



## The Hanukkah Menorah



Judah wanted to begin burning the sacred lamp again but no special oil had been left by the Greek army. People began searching the city and looking for any bottles that might have been missed. Eventually, one small bottle was found and taken back to the temple. However, Judah was worried because it would take eight days to make more oil and this bottle only contained enough oil to allow the lamp to burn for one day.

To everyone's surprise, the small bottle of oil kept the lamp lit for eight days and nights. To celebrate this amazing event, many Jewish people light a set of nine candles known as the 'Hanukkah menorah'. A candle is lit each night of Hanukkah to remember the oil that burnt for so long. The ninth candle is in the centre of the candelabrum. It is lit first and is used each night to light the other candles.



## The Dreidel

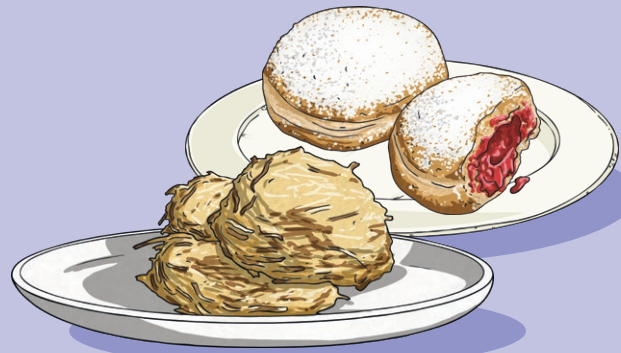
While Antiochus was in charge, many Jewish people were forced to study in secret. If they were interrupted, they would hide their books and take out a small spinning top called a dreidel. This way, people would think that they were playing a game instead of studying.

Lots of people enjoy playing a game with the dreidel during Hanukkah. The game is usually played with lots of small items, such as raisins or chocolate drops. People take it in turns to spin the dreidel in the hope that they will win all of the items.

## Traditional Food



To celebrate the festival of Hanukkah, many families enjoy eating traditional food. In memory of the lamp that continued burning for eight days, these foods are cooked in oil. Foods include a type of potato pancake called latkes and sweet doughnut-like treats called sufganiyot.



# Questions

1. How long does the festival of Hanukkah last for? Tick one.

- six days
- seven days
- eight days
- nine days

2. Look at **The Story of Hanukkah**.

Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- A statue of Zeus was built inside the temple.
- The Greek army left the city.
- Antiochus took over the city of Jerusalem.
- The Maccabees began to stand up to Antiochus.

3. According to the text, what food are sufganiyot similar to?

---

4. Which section of the text explains why a candle is lit on each night of Hanukkah?

---

5. Look at the paragraph beginning **Over 2,000 years ago...**

Find and copy one word that means the same as ordered.

---

6. How do you think people felt when the lamp continued to burn for eight days? Explain your answer.

---

---

---

7. Explain how the layout of the text helps you to understand the information.

---

---

---

8. How has the author made it clear that the Jewish people were mistreated by Antiochus?

---

---

---

# Answers

1. How long does the festival of Hanukkah last for? Tick one.

- six days  
 seven days  
 **eight days**  
 nine days

2. Look at The Story of Hanukkah.

Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

**2** A statue of Zeus was built inside the temple.

**4** The Greek army left the city.

**1** Antiochus took over the city of Jerusalem.

**3** The Maccabees began to stand up to Antiochus.

3. According to the text, what food are sufganiyot similar to?

**Sufganiyot are similar to doughnuts.**

4. Which section of the text explains why a candle is lit on each night of Hanukkah?

**The Hanukkah Menorah**

5. Look at the paragraph beginning Over 2,000 years ago...

**Find and copy one word that means the same as ordered.**

**demanded**

6. How do you think people felt when the lamp continued to burn for eight days? Explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that people felt really happy because the lamp was burning in the temple after being destroyed by Antiochus. They would have also been relieved to have enough time to make more oil.**

7. Explain how the layout of the text helps you to understand the information.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: The layout helps me to understand the information because it is split into sections that tell you different parts of the Hanukkah stories. The illustrations help me to understand what the different objects that are used during the festival look like.**

8. How has the author made it clear that the Jewish people were mistreated by Antiochus?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: The author has made it clear that the Jewish people were mistreated by Antiochus by using words, such as 'destroyed', 'attacked' and 'banned' to describe the way that the king acted towards the Jewish people.**



# Hanukkah

Hanukkah is a Jewish celebration that marks the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem over 2,000 years ago. Although the exact dates on which it is celebrated change each year, Hanukkah is celebrated for eight days that usually fall between late November and the end of December.

## The Story of Hanukkah



Over 2,000 years ago, a Greek king named Antiochus stormed the city of Jerusalem. With the help of his large army, Antiochus took over the city and demanded that all Jewish people should start worshipping Greek gods. Antiochus then attacked the Second Temple in Jerusalem, destroying and removing holy objects and putting a large statue of a Zeus in their place. One of the items that was destroyed was a sacred lamp which was kept burning using a special oil. To ensure that it wasn't lit again, every bottle of the special oil was destroyed.

Antiochus banned the practice of Judaism and Jewish people were prevented from studying the Torah. Angry and saddened by the new regime, a small group of people began to stand up to Antiochus and the Greek army. Led by Judah Maccabee, the group became known as the Maccabees. Despite being outnumbered by Antiochus's army, the group continued to fight for their freedom. After several years, the group was successful and the Greek army was forced to leave the city. Immediately, Judah Maccabee set to cleaning up the city and repairing the Second Temple.

## The Hanukkah Menorah



As part of the repairs to the Second Temple, Judah wanted to begin burning the sacred lamp again. However, no trace of the special oil remained in the temple. Judah and his people began searching the entire city, looking for any bottles that might have been missed by the Greek army. Eventually, one small bottle was found and taken back to the temple. However, Judah was disappointed; it would take eight days to make more oil and this bottle only contained enough oil to allow the lamp to burn for one day.

Miraculously, the small amount of oil kept the lamp lit for eight days and eight nights. To celebrate this amazing feat, many Jewish people light a candelabrum — known as the 'Hanukkah menorah' — during Hanukkah that holds nine candles. A candle is lit each night of Hanukkah to remember the oil that burnt for so long. The ninth candle, in the centre of the candelabrum, is known as the shamash. This candle is lit first and is used each night to light the other candles.

## The Dreidel



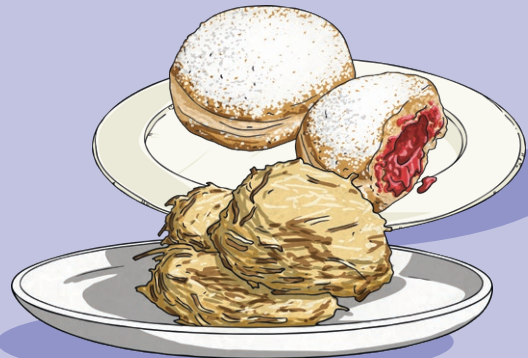
While Antiochus was in charge, many Jewish people were forced to study the Torah in secret. If they were interrupted, they would hide the Torah and take out a small, engraved spinning top known as a dreidel. To an outsider, it would look as though they were playing a game rather than studying.

During Hanukkah, people of all ages enjoy playing a game with a spinning dreidel. The game is usually played using small items, such as pennies, raisins or chocolates. In most games, each player takes it in turn to spin the dreidel. Then, dependent on the symbol that the dreidel shows, they'll either take from or add to the collective pot of items. The winner is often the person who ends up with all of the items.

## Traditional Food



To celebrate the festival of Hanukkah, many families enjoy eating traditional food. In memory of the lamp that continued burning for eight days, these foods are cooked in oil. Foods include potato latkes (a type of pancake that is made from grated potato) and sufganiyot (fried sweet dough that is filled with red jelly and similar to jam doughnuts).



# Questions

1. Why does the text not mention the dates that Hanukkah is celebrated on? Tick one.

- the author forgot to include them  
 the dates change every year  
 the dates are kept a secret  
 the author assumed that the reader would know

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- The Maccabees fought for their freedom.  
 The lamp continued to burn for eight days.  
 Antiochus stormed the city of Jerusalem.  
 Judah began repairing the Second Temple.

3. Over 2,000 years ago, a Greek king named Antiochus stormed the city of Jerusalem.

What does the word stormed mean?

---

4. Fill in the missing words.

\_\_\_\_\_ destroyed and removed holy objects  
and put a large statue of \_\_\_\_\_ in their place.

5. According to the text, who enjoys playing a game with a spinning dreidel?

---

6. Do you think that Antiochus was a good king? Fully explain your answer.

---



---



---



7. Look at the paragraph beginning Hanukkah is a Jewish celebration...  
Explain why the author has chosen to include this paragraph.

---

---

---

8. If you could ask Judah Maccabee one question, what would it be? Fully explain your answer.

---

---

---

9. Summarise what you have learnt about Hanukkah using 20 words or fewer.

---

---

---

# Answers

1. Why does the text not mention the dates that Hanukkah is celebrated on? Tick one.
- the author forgot to include them
- the dates change every year**
- the dates are kept a secret
- the author assumed that the reader would know

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

**2** The Maccabees fought for their freedom.

**4** The lamp continued to burn for eight days.

**1** Antiochus stormed the city of Jerusalem.

**3** Judah began repairing the Second Temple.

3. Over 2,000 years ago, a Greek king named Antiochus stormed the city of Jerusalem.

**What does the word stormed mean?**

**The word 'stormed' means attacked.**

4. Fill in the missing words.

**Antiochus** destroyed and removed holy objects  
and put a large statue of **Zeus** in their place.

5. According to the text, who enjoys playing a game with a spinning dreidel?

**According to the text, people of all ages enjoy playing a game with a spinning dreidel.**

6. Do you think that Antiochus was a good king? Fully explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I do not think that Antiochus was a good king because he used his power to make a lot of people unhappy and he destroyed objects and a temple that didn't belong to him.**

7. Look at the paragraph beginning Hanukkah is a Jewish celebration...

Explain why the author has chosen to include this paragraph.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: The author has chosen to include this paragraph to briefly explain what Hanukkah is. It helps you to understand the rest of the information in the text.**

8. If you could ask Judah Maccabee one question, what would it be? Fully explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I would ask Judah 'How did you defeat the Greek army?' because, in the text, it says that they were outnumbered and that it took them several years so I would like to know how they managed to win.**

9. Summarise what you have learnt about Hanukkah using 20 words or fewer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: It's a Jewish festival that lasts for eight days. It is celebrated by lighting eight candles and eating oily food.**

# Hanukkah

Hanukkah — also known as Chanukah and the Festival of Lights — is a Jewish celebration that marks the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem over 2,000 years ago. Although the exact dates on which Hanukkah is celebrated change each year in accordance with the Hebrew calendar, Hanukkah is usually celebrated for eight days between late November and the end of December.

## The Story of Hanukkah



Over 2,000 years ago, a Greek king named Antiochus stormed the city of Jerusalem, which was home to many Jewish people. With the help of his substantial army, Antiochus took rule of the land and its inhabitants and demanded that all Jewish people should start worshipping Greek gods. As part of his plan, Antiochus attacked the Second Temple in Jerusalem, desecrating the inside by destroying and removing holy objects and erecting a large statue of a Zeus in their place. One of the items which was destroyed was a sacred lamp that was kept burning in the temple using a special oil. To ensure that it wasn't lit again, the Greek army destroyed every bottle of the special oil.

Antiochus outlawed the practice of Judaism and Jewish people were prevented from studying the Torah. With Jewish people being persecuted by the new regime, a small group began to stand up to Antiochus and the Greek army. Led by Judah Maccabee, whose surname meant 'the hammer', the group became known as the Maccabees. Despite being vastly outnumbered, the group continued to fight for their freedom and for the right of their people to worship their own God. After several years, the group was successful and the Greek army was forced to retreat. Immediately, Judah Maccabee set to cleaning up the city and repairing and rededicating the Second Temple.



## The Hanukkah Menorah



As part of the repairs to the Second Temple, Judah aimed to reinstate the sacred lamp and to set it burning once more. However, Antiochus had been thorough and no trace of the special oil remained in the temple. Judah and his people began combing the entire city, looking for any bottles that had evaded the Greek army. Eventually, one small bottle was found and taken back to the temple. Judah was disappointed in the find; it would take eight days to make more oil and this bottle only contained enough oil to allow the lamp to burn for one day.

Miraculously, the small amount of oil kept the lamp lit for eight days and eight nights. To celebrate this amazing feat, many Jewish people light a candelabrum — known as the ‘Hanukkah menorah’, ‘chanukiah’ or ‘hanukkiah’ — during Hanukkah that holds nine candles. Throughout the eight days of Hanukkah, a candle is lit each night to remember the oil that burnt for so long. The ninth candle, in the centre of the candelabrum, is known as the shamash. The shamash is the first candle to be lit and is used each night to light the others.

## The Dreidel



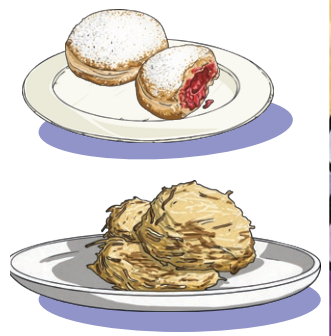
As Antiochus had outlawed the study of the Torah, many Jewish people were forced to study in secret. If they were interrupted by members of the Greek army, they would hide the Torah and take out a small, four-sided spinning top that was engraved with Hebrew letters — known as a dreidel. To the intruder, it would look as though they were playing a game rather than studying.

During Hanukkah, people of all ages enjoy playing a game with a spinning dreidel. Typically, the game is played using small items, such as pennies, raisins or chocolates. Usually, each player takes it in turn to spin the dreidel. Then, dependent on the symbol that the dreidel lands on, they’ll either take or contribute to the collective pot of items. Play will often continue until only one person is left with all of the items.

## Traditional Food



To celebrate the festival of Hanukkah, many families enjoy eating traditional food. In commemoration of the lamp that was kept burning for eight days, these foods are typically ones that are cooked in oil. Foods include potato latkes (a type of pancake that is made from grated potato) and sufganiyot (fried sweet dough that is filled with red jelly and similar to jam doughnuts).





# Questions

1. With the help of his substantial army...

The word substantial means that Antiochus's army was... Tick one.

- loud.
- powerful.
- large.
- non-existent.

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- The lamp burned for a miraculously long time.
- Each bottle of special oil was destroyed by the Greek army.
- Antiochus demanded that all Jewish people should worship Greek gods.
- The Maccabees forced the Greek army to retreat.

3. What is a 'chanukiah' also known as?

---

4. Judah and his people began combing the entire city...

What does the word combing mean in this sentence?

---

5. Fill in the missing words.

During Hanukkah, many people eat foods that are cooked in

\_\_\_\_\_, including potato latkes and \_\_\_\_\_.

6. If you could ask Judah Maccabee one question, what would it be?

Fully explain your answer.

---

---

---

7. What impression do you get of Antiochus from the text? Explain your answer fully.

---

---

---

8. Compare Judah and Antiochus. How are the two similar?

---

---

---

9. Summarise the story of Hanukkah using 25 words or fewer.

---

---

---

10. Imagine that you are a person living in Jerusalem over 2,000 years ago.  
Explain how you feel when the Greek army leaves using the text to support your answer.

---

---

---

---

# Answers

1. With the help of his substantial army...

The word substantial means that Antiochus's army was... Tick one.

- loud.
- powerful.
- large.**
- non-existent.

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- 4** The lamp burned for a miraculously long time.
- 2** Each bottle of special oil was destroyed by the Greek army.
- 1** Antiochus demanded that all Jewish people should worship Greek gods.
- 3** The Maccabees forced the Greek army to retreat.

3. What is a 'chanukiah' also known as?

**Accept one of the following: the 'Hanukkah menorah'; the 'hanukkiah'.**

4. **Judah and his people began combing the entire city...**

What does the word **combing** mean in this sentence?

**In this sentence, the word 'combing' means searching.**

5. Fill in the missing words.

During Hanukkah, many people eat foods that are cooked in **oil**, including potato latkes and **sufganiyot**.

6. If you could ask Judah Maccabee one question, what would it be?

Fully explain your answer.

**I would ask Judah 'How did you defeat the Greek army?' because, in the text, it says that they were outnumbered and that it took them several years so I would like to know how they managed to win.**

7. What impression do you get of Antiochus from the text? Explain your answer fully.  
**Pupils' own responses, such as: I get the impression that Antiochus is not a kind leader because he demanded that all Jewish people should start worshipping Greek gods, which is not fair. He also destroys lots of holy objects that do not belong to him which gives the impression that he has little remorse for his actions.**
8. Compare Judah and Antiochus. How are the two similar?  
**Pupils' own responses, such as: Both of the men fight to get what they want. Antiochus fights to outlaw Judaism and Judah fights to get it reinstated. They are also both leaders who have people following them and helping them to fight.**
9. Summarise the story of Hanukkah using 25 words or fewer.  
**Pupils' own responses, such as: Antiochus took over Jerusalem and outlawed Judaism. The Maccabees fought for the rights of Jewish people. When they won, they rededicated the Second Temple.**
10. Imagine that you are a person living in Jerusalem over 2,000 years ago.  
**Explain how you feel when the Greek army leaves using the text to support your answer. Pupils' own responses, such as: I feel incredibly relieved. There has been fighting for several years and now we are free again. People won't be being told which religion to follow and the temple will finally be repaired.**