
Thanksgiving

WORKSHEET A

Thanksgiving, held on the fourth Thursday in November, is one of the most important annual celebrations in the United States. It is a day when family members come together to share a large meal – usually roast turkey with accompaniments such as mashed potatoes and cranberry sauce, and often pumpkin pie for dessert.

Good food is not the only reason Americans generally look forward to Thanksgiving. For many, it is also the beginning of four days off work: the Thursday, Thanksgiving Day, is a public holiday, and it is common to take the Friday off as well, making a long weekend.

It is generally said that Thanksgiving began in the seventeenth century, with the arrival in North America of settlers from England. One of the first groups of settlers arrived in November 1620 on the ship the *Mayflower*, but many of them died from hunger or disease during the cold winter that followed. In the spring, Native Americans in the area helped the surviving settlers by showing them how to fish and grow corn. In November 1621, on the first anniversary of their arrival, the settlers had a feast to thank God for their survival, and invited some of the Native Americans. This was the event many people think of as the very first “thanks-giving” meal.

For more than 200 years, different parts of the United States held Thanksgiving at different times: it was only in 1863 that President Abraham Lincoln said it should take place on the last Thursday in November. In 1941, Congress decided that Thanksgiving should be on the *fourth* Thursday in November (usually still the last Thursday, except for in those years when there are five Thursdays in the month).

A peculiar event connected with Thanksgiving has been taking place since the 1980s. It is a public ceremony, shown on TV, in which the President of the United States “pardons” a turkey. This means the turkey will not be killed for Thanksgiving, or at any other time, but will instead live comfortably on a farm, zoo, etc. For Thanksgiving in 2009, his first as President, Barack Obama pardoned a turkey named Courage and told it that it would be going to live in Disneyland in California. He made people laugh by saying there were moments in his job that made him realize why he had wanted it so much – but talking to a bird probably wasn’t one of them.

Thanksgiving

WORKSHEET B

Exercise 1

Team A

Here are the answers to some questions about the text on Worksheet A, but what are the questions? When you have prepared the questions, Team B will have to answer them as part of a quiz.

1. The fourth Thursday in November.
2. In the seventeenth century.
3. It is a dessert.
4. Native Americans helped them.
5. (The United States) Congress.
6. Mashed potatoes / Cranberry sauce.
7. In (November) 1620.
8. Disneyland.

Team B

Here are the answers to some questions about the text on Worksheet A, but what are the questions? When you have prepared the questions, Team A will have to answer them as part of a quiz.

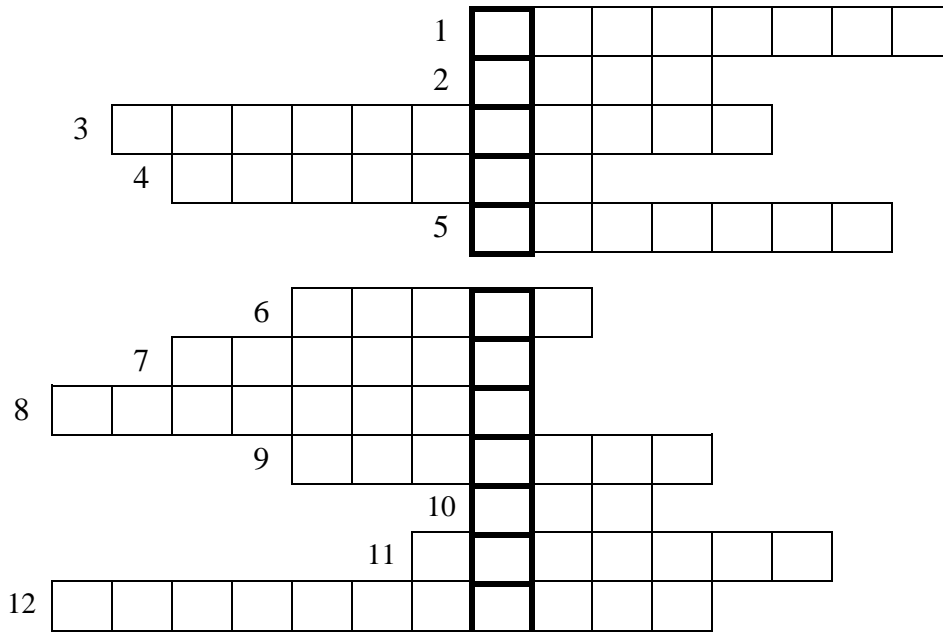
1. (Roast) turkey.
2. The President. / President Abraham Lincoln.
3. In November 1621. / One year after they arrived in North America.
4. Some Native Americans.
5. By showing them how to fish / grow corn.
6. In 2009.
7. Courage.
8. From hunger or disease.

Thanksgiving

WORKSHEET C

Exercise 2

Complete the crossword below. If all the words are correct, the names of the two Thanksgiving turkeys that President George W. Bush “pardoned” in 2003 will read from top to bottom. (Clue: both names have something to do with the flag of the United States.)



1. _____ from England arrived in North America in the seventeenth century.
2. Many Americans _____ the day after Thanksgiving Day off work.
3. Thanksgiving is a _____ that takes place every year.
4. Americans generally look _____ to Thanksgiving.
5. Many of the people on the *Mayflower* did not _____ their first winter in North America.
6. Courage was the _____ turkey that President Obama pardoned.
7. Talking to a turkey has probably not been the most important _____ in President Obama’s time as President.
8. There are usually four Thursdays in _____.
9. One year after they _____ in North America, the settlers from the *Mayflower* wanted to thank God for their survival.
10. Americans often eat pumpkin _____ on Thanksgiving Day.
11. Thanksgiving is the beginning of a long _____ for many Americans.
12. The feast held in November 1621 was on the first _____ of the *Mayflower*’s arrival from England.