

*Good wishes for Thanksgiving Day.
May your joys be as countless as the golden grains!*

Happy Thanksgiving!



*May all the good things in life abound,
not only at Thanksgiving but all year round!*



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Thanksgiving Day Classroom Activities

When all the leaves are off the boughs,
And nuts and apples gathered in,
And cornstalks waiting for the cows,
And pumpkins safe in barn and bin,
Then Mother says, "My children dear,
The fields are brown, and autumn flies;
Thanksgiving Day is very near,
And we must make thanksgiving pies!"

I. Vocabulary revision

1. Write the word "THANKSGIVING" vertically on the blackboard.
2. Have students write words related to the holiday for each of the letters. Students can either work alone, in pairs or in slightly larger groups. If working in groups, designate one person as the "writer."
3. Students can call out the words and you write them on the blackboard next to the appropriate word. Or you can call on different students to write them on the board.

Below are some examples of words students might come up with. The actual words will depend on the material already used for Thanksgiving, as well as the level of the class. You can prompt for additional words.

T – Thanksgiving, thankful, tradition, turkey

H – holiday, harvest

A – ancestor, ate, autumn

N – native, national (as in holiday)

K – knife (to carve the turkey)

S – settlers, serve, soup, squash

G – goose, grateful

I – Indian, invitation

V – venison, visit, vacation

I – indigenous, ice cream, indigestion

N – newcomers

G – God, good



II. Reading and Use of English exercises

Thanksgiving Day



Thanksgiving is a very American holiday. It is also called Thanksgiving Day. It is celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November every year. It used to be a religious holiday to give thanks to God. There are two versions of the origins of this holiday. One is thanks for the early settlers arriving in America safely. On December the 4th, 1619, a group of English pioneers arrived at a place called Berkeley Hundred, in Virginia. The group made a promise that the day of their arrival should be a "day of thanksgiving" to God. The second version is the thanks given to Native Americans for teaching the pilgrims how to catch eels and grow corn in Plymouth, Massachusetts. In 1941, President Roosevelt made Thanksgiving a federal holiday.

The main event of any Thanksgiving is the Thanksgiving dinner. It is traditional to have baked or roasted turkey. This is usually accompanied with mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, fall vegetables, cranberry sauce, and gravy. Pumpkin pie is the most commonly eaten dessert. The Thanksgiving holiday weekend is one of the busiest times of the year for traveling. It is a four-day or five-day weekend vacation for most schools and colleges, and many businesses and government workers get three or four days off. Thanksgiving is also the unofficial signal for Christmas preparations to begin. Once Thanksgiving finishes, stores fill their shelves with Christmas goods. It is also a bad time to be a turkey.

1. Match the following phrases.

Paragraph 1

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------|
| 1. a very American | a. promise |
| 2. the fourth Thursday | b. to God |
| 3. to give thanks | c. holiday |
| 4. made a | d. corn |
| 5. how to | e. in November |
| 6. grow | f. catch eels |

Paragraph 2

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. The main | a. eaten dessert |
| 2. accompanied with | b. days off |
| 3. the most commonly | c. times |
| 4. one of the busiest | d. event |
| 5. get three or four | e. shelves |
| 6. stores fill their | f. mashed potatoes |

2. Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Thanksgiving is a very American holiday. It is also _____ Thanksgiving Day. It is celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November every year. It _____ to be a religious holiday to give thanks to God. There are two _____ of the origins of this holiday. One is thanks for the _____ settlers arriving in America _____. On December the 4th, 1619, a group of English pioneers arrived at a place called Berkeley Hundred, in Virginia. The group made a _____ that the day of their arrival should be a "day of thanksgiving" to God. The second version is the thanks given to Native Americans for teaching the pilgrims how to _____ eels and grow _____ in Plymouth, Massachusetts. In 1941, President Roosevelt made Thanksgiving a federal holiday.

*promise
early
called
corn
safely
used
catch
versions*

The main _____ of any Thanksgiving is the Thanksgiving dinner. It is traditional to have baked or roasted turkey. This is _____ accompanied with mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, fall vegetables, cranberry sauce, and gravy. Pumpkin pie is the most _____ eaten dessert. The Thanksgiving holiday weekend is one of the _____ times of the year for traveling. It is a four-day or five-day weekend _____ for most schools and colleges, and many businesses and government workers get three or four days off. Thanksgiving is also the unofficial _____ for Christmas preparations to begin. Once Thanksgiving _____, stores fill their _____ with Christmas goods. It is also a bad time to be a turkey.

commonly
signal
busiest
event
shelves
vacation
usually
finishes

3. Put the correct words from this table into the article.

Thanksgiving is a very American holiday. It is also (1) _____ Thanksgiving Day. It is celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November every year. It used to be a (2) _____ holiday to give thanks to God. There are two versions of the origins of this holiday. One is thanks for the early (3) _____ arriving in America safely. On December the 4th, 1619, a group of English pioneers arrived at a place called Berkeley Hundred, in Virginia. The group made a promise that the day of their (4) _____ should be a "day of thanksgiving" to God. The second version is the thanks given to Native Americans for teaching the pilgrims how to (5) _____ eels and grow corn in Plymouth, Massachusetts. In 1941, President Roosevelt (6) _____ Thanksgiving a federal holiday.



The (7) _____ event of any Thanksgiving is the Thanksgiving dinner. It is traditional to have baked or roasted turkey. This is usually accompanied with mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, (8) _____ vegetables, cranberry sauce, and gravy. Pumpkin pie is the most commonly (9) _____ dessert. The Thanksgiving holiday weekend is one of the busiest times of the year for traveling. It is a four-day or five-day weekend vacation for most schools and colleges, and (10) _____ businesses and government workers get three or four days off. Thanksgiving is also the unofficial signal for Christmas preparations to (11) _____. Once Thanksgiving finishes, stores fill their (12) _____ with Christmas goods. It is also a bad time to be a turkey.

- | | | | | |
|-----|---------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. | (a) called | (b) calling | (c) calls | (d) call |
| 2. | (a) religion | (b) religious | (c) religiously | (d) religions |
| 3. | (a) settlers | (b) settles | (c) settled | (d) settlement |
| 4. | (a) arrives | (b) arrived | (c) arrival | (d) arrival |
| 5. | (a) caught | (b) catches | (c) catch | (d) catching |
| 6. | (a) took | (b) made | (c) did | (d) had |
| 7. | (a) main | (b) mainly | (c) mainline | (d) mains |
| 8. | (a) fell | (b) falling | (c) fall | (d) fallen |
| 9. | (a) eating | (b) eats | (c) ate | (d) eaten |
| 10. | (a) most | (b) many | (c) much | (d) more |
| 11. | (a) beginning | (b) begins | (c) begin | (d) began |
| 12. | (a) elves | (b) delves | (c) halves | (d) shelves |

Thanksgiving quiz



1. **What year was the first Thanksgiving held?**

- a) 1540 b) 1621 c) 1710 d) 1921

2. **Where did the pilgrims first land?**

- a) Plymouth b) New York c) Manchester d) Chicago

3. **Which president made the first Thanksgiving Day proclamation?**

- a) *George Washington* b) *Abraham Lincoln* c) *Benjamin Franklin*
d) *George Bush*

4. **In 1941, congress declared Thanksgiving Day to be held on what Thursday in November?**

- a) *the first Thursday* b) *the second Thursday* c) *the third Thursday*
d) *the fourth Thursday*

5. **Which ship did the Pilgrims sail on to Plymouth Rock?**

- a) *The Flying Dutchman* b) *The Mayflower* c) *The Tulip*
d) *The Titanic*

6. **Which President set the official celebration day for Thanksgiving as the last Thursday?**

- a) *George Washington* b) *Abraham Lincoln* c) *Benjamin Franklin*
d) *George Bush*

7. **How many turkeys are cooked in the US for Thanksgiving each year?**

- a) *2 million* b) *10 million* c) *20 million* d) *45 million*

8. **During which month is Thanksgiving celebrated in Canada?**

- a) *September* b) *October* c) *November* d) *December*

III. Using Idioms Connected to Thanksgiving in an ESL Classroom

Write the letter of the definition in the blank next to the sentence. Note that there are two extra definitions.

- ____ 1. That meal was delicious, but I can't eat another bite. *I'm stuffed.*
- ____ 2. You have so many things going for you – a great marriage, good kids and a fantastic job. A lot of people would be really happy to be in your position. You should *count your blessings.*
- ____ 3. My new boss is such *a stuffed shirt.* All he's interested in is money and position. I bet he's never done anything spontaneous or fun in his whole life.
- ____ 4. I'm madly in love with John, but my parents don't like him. We want to get married, but I love my parents and don't feel I can get married without their *blessing.*
- ____ 5. That movie was so bad that I don't think it will last a week in the theaters. *It's a turkey.*
- ____ 6. I was so mad when my boss transferred me to another area. I didn't know anyone, the job was really difficult and I hated it, but now I like it better than my old job. So, it turned out to be *a blessing in disguise.*
- ____ 7. I know I've said I'm going to stop smoking at least ten times but this time I mean it. In fact, I'm going to stop right this minute. I'm doing it *cold turkey.*
- ____ 8. I thought I would love my new job. It's exciting and the money is great but I have so much work and I'm on the road half the time. It's turned out to be *a mixed blessing.*
- ____ 9. Okay, enough with the small talk. I don't have all day to chit chat. It's time to *talk turkey.*
- ____ 10. My friend talks all of the time and it sometimes gets on my nerves. The other day I was fed up and I told her *to stuff it.* Now she won't speak to me at all.
- ____ 11. I can't believe the new guy at work. He's been late for work three times this week and now he wants a day off. He's *a turkey.*

Definitions for Thanksgiving Day idioms exercise

- a. something that is not successful, a failure
- b. get down to business, to the main point, not waste time talking about unimportant things
- c. stop doing something completely without any help, do it all at once, not gradually
- d. discuss poultry
- e. uptight, inflexible, not able to have fun
- f. be quiet, stop talking, shut up (Note: Shut up is considered rude.)
- g. be full, can't eat any more
- h. a stupid person, someone without any common sense
- i. something that causes you problems or difficulties in the beginning but turns out to be the best thing that could have happened to you
- j. someone who has become too fat for his clothes
- k. be happy with what you have, stop asking for more
- l. something that's good and bad at the same time
- m. approval, support

Answers:

Thanksgiving quiz

- 1.b
- 2.a
- 3.a
- 4.d
- 5.b
- 6.b
- 7.d
- 8.b

The First Thanksgiving crossword

(Since there are some names in the crossword you can set this activity as a home task for your students to search for the answers in the Internet)

Across

2. pumpkin
6. Plimoth (old for Plymouth)
8. feast
9. Mayflower
12. autumn
13. Holland
14. squash
15. corn

Down

1. Bradford
2. puritan
3. Wampanoag
4. farm
5. Samoset
7. turkey
10. Atlantic
- 11.English

Thanksgiving Day Classroom Activities

II The answers to Use of English exercises are in the reading text

III Using Idioms Connected to Thanksgiving in an ESL Classroom

- 1.g
- 2.k
- 3.e
- 4.m
- 5.a
- 6.i
- 7.c
- 8.l
- 9.b
- 10.f
- 11.h