

Webquest: Thanksgiving

by Gabrielle Jones

Warmer

Thanksgiving is a national holiday celebrated in America and Canada. How much do you already know about it? Answer the questions in pairs or small groups.

1. When is Thanksgiving?
2. Why do you think people celebrate Thanksgiving?
3. What foods are associated with Thanksgiving?

Activity 1: The history of Thanksgiving

Visit www.thoughtco.com/celebrate-thanksgiving-day-1829150 and read the introduction and the first seven paragraphs. In pairs or small groups, look for the answers to the questions below.

1. When did the Pilgrims leave England for the New World?
2. Why was their first winter in the New World difficult?
3. Who helped them and how?
4. Why did the Pilgrims have a feast in autumn, 1621?
5. Who did they invite to the feast?
6. What did they eat at the feast?
7. When is Thanksgiving celebrated?

Discussion

Is harvest celebrated in your country? If so, how is it celebrated?

Activity 2: A traditional Thanksgiving meal

Visit www.organicauthority.com/sanctuary/history-of-thanksgiving-table.html. Read the descriptions of typical Thanksgiving dishes and find the answers to the questions below. Discuss the answers with your partner.

1. Which dish with an exotic background got a sweet addition in the twentieth century?
2. Which sweet nut dish has ancient origins?
3. Which food helped make a brand of soup more popular?
4. Which food is made from different ingredients, depending on the origins of the people cooking it?
5. Which food is very good for you and can be stored for a long period?
6. Which food made one woman very rich?
7. Which food got its name by mistake?
8. Which food probably wasn't eaten at the first Thanksgiving meal because of lack of technology?

Discussion

Which dishes have you tried? Which would you like to try? Are there any that you wouldn't like to try? Why not?

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Activity 3: Thanksgiving traditions

You are going to read about some typical traditions in North America at Thanksgiving. Before you read the information on the website, decide whether you think the statements below are true (T) or false (F).

1. Many people watch tennis at Thanksgiving every year.
2. Shops often sponsored Thanksgiving parades.
3. Washing neighbours' cars is the most popular way to help others in the community at Thanksgiving.
4. The White House is given three turkeys each Thanksgiving – two are dead and one is pardoned and not cooked.
5. The turkey that is kept is given a name chosen by the president's family.
6. The president announces the official date of Thanksgiving every year.

Now, visit people.howstuffworks.com/culturetraditions/holidays-other/thanksgiving5.htm and check your answers.

Discussion

Are any of these traditions similar in your country?

Activity 4: Thanksgiving in other cultures

Your teacher will assign you a student number. Complete your table using information from the website.

Student 1

Go to www.holidays.net/thanksgiving/story.htm and read the sections on **the Ancient Greeks** and **the Romans**. Make notes in the table on how they celebrated harvest time.

people	god honoured	name of festival	celebrations
Greeks			
Romans			

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Student 2

Go to www.holidays.net/thanksgiving/story.htm and read the sections on **the Ancient Chinese and the Hebrews**. Make notes in the table on how they celebrate(d) harvest time.

people	god honoured	name of festival	celebrations
Chinese			
Hebrews			

When you've finished, explain the traditions you looked at. Discuss any similarities and differences with your partner.

Activity 5: Round-up

Discuss the following questions as a whole class.

1. How much did you already know about the tradition of Thanksgiving?
2. What information surprised you?
3. What are the most important festivals and celebrations in your country or culture?
 - How are they celebrated? What do people eat and drink?
 - What are the origins of the celebrations? Have they changed over time?
 - What celebration are you most looking forward to?