

Festivals: Thanksgiving

by Frances Bates-Treloar

Activity 1

Level: Young Learners: CEF level A2 (Examination levels: Cambridge YLE Flyers/ KET)

Age: 8-10+

Time needed: 50-60 mins

Subjects included: festivals, Thanksgiving, special meals and food, giving thanks, American history, past and present simple tenses

Main skills: Listening, Speaking

Objectives: Students will:

- learn about the festival of Thanksgiving, its history and its traditions.
- practise listening for gist and for details.
- give an oral description of the festival of Thanksgiving.
- compare and practise using the present and the past simple tenses.
- learn new vocabulary related to food and festivals.

Materials: Essential

- words cut out from Worksheet 1
- questions cut out from Worksheet 1
- 1 copy of Worksheet 2 for each student (gap-fill) Desirable
- Large picture of a feast/family gathering/ thanksgiving meal/ making preparations for Thanksgiving (a copy of *Thanksgiving* by Doris E. Lee is ideal)
- realia or photos of: pumpkin, cranberries, turkey, leeks, sweet potato, seeds, corn, duck, plums
- map/atlas showing North America and England

Summary: Students hear a text giving information about the history of Thanksgiving and the traditions of the festival. They are enabled to learn and give the information orally themselves by re-constructing the information after several hearings of the text with the help of words and questions given to them on pieces of paper which they manipulate.

Note: The aspect of giving thanks to God and the religious dimension of the festival has been left out in order to avoid issues of cultural/religious sensitivity, but in appropriate teaching contexts, the idea of giving thanks to God rather than just 'giving thanks' / being thankful can be introduced.

This is material for those who know very little or nothing about Thanksgiving.

Introduction

There are two ways you could lead into this lesson.

- 1 If you have them, display the pictures of families feasting or preparing for a festival.
- 2 Draw attention to the pictures and/or write the following where the class can read them:

eat a special meal or special food
get together with all the family (aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, etc.)
have a day off school
do special activities

- 3 Students form pairs and tell each other when they do all these things each year.
- 4 Students report back to the class. Write their answers on the board, highlight the festivals and introduce/revise the notion of *festival*.
- 5 Explain that during this lesson they will learn about a festival called *Thanksgiving* which is celebrated by people from the USA and Canada (point countries out on the map if you have one).
- 6 Focus on the word *Thanksgiving*: give a very simple example of a word which is made up of two words to make one new one, e.g. *classroom*. Ask them what the two words are. Return to the word *Thanksgiving*

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and ask which two words it is made from, (*Thanks giving*) and elicit predictions from students about what they think the festival is about.

Main Activity

- 1 Make sure students are familiar with the following lexis, ideally with the use of maps and pictures or the real thing:

North America, Canada, England, Native Americans, give thanks, seeds, turkey, pumpkin, pie, leek, plum, sweet potato, cranberries, corn, harvest

- 2 Students form groups of three or four.

- 3 Each group is given a cut out and mixed up set of the words on Worksheet 1.

- 4 To familiarise students with the words in the set, ask them to find examples of food in the set of words. They should find:

turkeys, plums, meal, cranberries, sweet potatoes, pumpkin pie, ducks, fish, leeks, bread

- 5 Ask them to find the following:

Seasons: *spring, summer, autumn, winter*

Days, months, years: *November, October, Thursday, Monday, 1620* (check they say this as "16-20")

Past tense verbs: *died, had a party, sailed, planted seeds, ate*

Present tense verbs: *catch fish, give thanks, remember, eat*

- 6 Give out the set of cut out and mixed up (whole) questions from Worksheet 1. Explain where necessary. Discuss which refer to the past and which the present.

- 7 Explain that students will listen to a text about Thanksgiving several times, and then will be able to talk about Thanksgiving. The first time, they will listen and order the questions in the order that they hear the answers to the questions.

- 8 Read the text for the first time. Students order the questions.

Listening text

In 1620, a group of people left England and sailed across the Atlantic Ocean to go and live in North America. They arrived in North America in a very hard winter. It was a difficult time, and many of them died because of the cold and because they were hungry. In spring, they planted seeds that they brought from England, and the Native Americans showed them how to grow corn and catch fish and other animals. At the end of the first summer, the people had enough food for the second winter, and they

had a party together with the Native Americans to give thanks for the harvest of corn, fruit and vegetables. At the party, they ate ducks, turkeys and fish, plums, leeks, and bread.

Today, people in the USA and Canada celebrate Thanksgiving every year in autumn. In the USA, Thanksgiving is usually on the fourth Thursday of November, and in Canada, it is usually on the second Monday of October. Families get together at home or meet in a restaurant and they eat a special meal. They remember the brave people who came from England to live in North America, and they give thanks for all the good things that they have. The main part of the special meal is usually turkey, and they often also eat cranberries, sweet potatoes and pumpkin pie.

Answers:

Why did the first Thanksgiving happen?

What did the people do at the first Thanksgiving?

When does Thanksgiving usually happen?

How do people usually celebrate Thanksgiving?

What do people usually eat at Thanksgiving?

- 9 Allocate each group one of the questions.
- 10 Explain the task: they must listen for the answer to only the question they were allocated. To answer it, they will select the correct words from the set of words given out originally.
- 11 Read the text again.
- 12 Re-allocate questions and re-read the text until all the groups have found words to answer all the questions.
- 13 By now they should know the text quite well! So in their groups, they try to reconstruct the whole text about Thanksgiving using the questions and words that they have as prompts.
- 14 Ask groups to tell you about Thanksgiving, asking for a section of text from each group.

Follow up activity

In class or for homework, give out a copy of Worksheet 2 to each student and they use the set of words (from Worksheet 2) individually or in groups to complete the text.

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Activity 2

Level: Young Learners: CEF level A2
(Examination levels: Cambridge YLE Flyers/KET)

Age: 8-9

Time needed: 40-50 mins

Subjects included: festivals, Thanksgiving, special meals and food, giving thanks, families

Main skills: Reading, Speaking

Objectives: Students will:

- learn more about the traditions of the festival of Thanksgiving.
- practise reading skills: skimming and scanning and guessing meaning from context.
- take part in a speaking game.
- practise using the structure adjective + preposition + verb-*ing*. (*I'm thankful for ...ing ...*)
- revise vocabulary related to families.

Materials: Essential:

- 1 copy of Worksheet 1 for each student

Desirable: Large picture of a feast/family gathering/thanksgiving meal

Summary: Students read short texts about one girl's Thanksgiving with her family, and what family members were thankful for. Students then discuss what they are thankful for.

Introduction

- 1 If you have them, display the pictures of families feasting and ask students to say what is going on.
- 2 Revise what they know about the festival of Thanksgiving.
- 3 Focus on families: brainstorm all the words for family members that they know.
- 4 Ask six students to come to a place where the whole class can see them, to be members of an imaginary family.
- 5 Ask two students to stand up and tell them that they're the grandfather and grandmother. Ask two to sit on chairs in front of them - they're the mother and father. Ask two to sit on the floor - they're the children. Prompt words for family relationships by saying two names of the students who are in the imaginary family e.g. *Hans and Debbie* and the class has to say what their relationship is in the imaginary family.

- 6 Extend the imaginary family by adding students to the group to be aunts, uncles, cousins. Students can say their own relationships to the rest of the students in the family group and/or they can be prompted for specific words.

Main Activity

- 1 Return to the topic of Thanksgiving and discuss with the class what the compound word, *thanks giving*, means.
- 2 Explain that the class is going to think about what they would like to give thanks for.
- 3 Hand out Worksheet 3 to each student and ask them to keep the sheets face down.
- 4 Before they read, explain that this is one American girl's account of her most recent Thanksgiving.
- 5 Tell them that they are going to answer just the first section of questions from the longest speech at the top of the page, and to encourage them to try to understand the whole text rather than sticking to single words, you will time them.
- 6 They turn over the sheets and they have three minutes to answer the Section 1 questions. They don't need to write answers to the questions, just find them in the text.
- 7 Students form pairs and compare their answers.
- 8 Check their answers with the whole class.
- 9 Students read and answer Section 2's question in pairs. Ask them to explain how they know what it means.
- 10 Students do Section 3 individually or in pairs.
- 11 Discuss with the whole class the different things that the family members were thankful for and which things they, too, are thankful for. Make sure they have understood the concept of being thankful for something.
- 12 Explain that they are going to tell their partners what they feel thankful for in their own lives, and give them the structures to use. Encourage them to come up with one of each type of structure:

*I'm thankful for my
the*

*I'm thankful for being....
having....
living.... etc.*
- 13 Students form pairs and tell each other what they are thankful for.
- 14 The class sits together in a circle.
- 15 Go round the circle with each student saying what

TEACHER'S NOTES

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YOUNG LEARNERS TEACHER'S NOTES

they are thankful for. Warn students that they need to listen to what everyone says.

16 Start at the beginning of the circle and say from memory what each member of the class said they were thankful for.

17 Students do the same.

18 This could also be done in the same way as the game 'I went on holiday and I took a':

Student 1: I'm thankful for my iPod.

Student 2: He's thankful for his iPod and I'm thankful for having a nice home.

Student 3: He's thankful for his iPod, she's thankful for having a nice home and I'm thankful for my new jacket.
etc.

Follow up activity

Make a Thanksgiving tree: see Extra Activity

Extra Activity

Level: Young Learners: CEF level A2
(Examination levels: Cambridge YLE Flyers/KET)

Age: 8-10

Time needed: 20 -30 mins in class, some preparation

Subjects included: festivals, Thanksgiving, giving thanks

Main skills: Writing

Suitable class size: Any:any number of trees can be produced

Objectives: Students will:

- make a 'Thanksgiving tree'
- learn more about the traditions of the festival of Thanksgiving.
- practise writing skills
- practise using the structure adjective + preposition + verb-ing. (*I'm thankful for ...ing ...*)

Materials: 1 large sheet of white card 'a pencil' paint, crayons, coloured pencils or felt tips, coloured paper, marker pens, glue or tape, glitter glue (optional), scissors

Summary: Students write what they are thankful on their own handprints which form leaves which they then stick on a picture of a tree.

Before class

- 1 Prepare the tree by drawing a basic outline of a tree on the white card with a branch/twig for each member of your class.
- 2 At the top of the card, write:
Class 's Thanksgiving Tree.
- 3 Colour in the tree trunk with the paints/pencils/pens.

In class

- 1 Bring the prepared tree into the classroom.
- 2 Give each child a piece of coloured paper and ask them to draw around their hand on the paper.
- 3 Students cut out their hand outline.
- 4 Students write one thing that they are thankful for on the hand that they have cut out, starting with the phrase *I'm thankful for ...*
- 5 Students stick their hands onto the tree.
- 6 Pin up the tree where everyone can see it.

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Sheet 1

(1 set of words/phrases cut up per group of students, 1 set of questions cut out per group of students)

winter	autumn	died	summer	catch fish
give thanks	families	turkeys	November	plums
spring	sailed	had a party	1620	planted seeds
October	remember	meal	cranberries	sweet potatoes
pumpkin pie	ducks	fish	Thursday	Monday
leeks	bread	eat	ate	

Why did the first Thanksgiving happen?

What did the people do at the first Thanksgiving?

How do people usually celebrate Thanksgiving?

When does Thanksgiving usually happen?

What do people usually eat at Thanksgiving?

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Thanksgiving

In _____, a group of people left England and _____ across the Atlantic Ocean to go and live in North America. They arrived in North America in a very hard _____. It was a difficult time, and many of them _____ because of the cold and because they were hungry.

In _____, they _____ that they brought from England, and the Native Americans showed them how to grow corn and _____ and other animals. At the end of the first _____, the people had enough food for the second winter, and they _____ together with the Native Americans to give thanks for the harvest of corn, fruit and vegetables. At the party, they _____, _____ and _____, _____, _____, and _____.

Today, people in the USA and Canada celebrate Thanksgiving every year in _____. In the USA, Thanksgiving is usually on the fourth _____ in _____, and in Canada, it is usually on the second _____ in _____. Families get together at home or meet in a restaurant and they eat a special meal. They _____ the brave people who came from England to live in North America, and they _____ for all the good things that they have. For the main part of the special meal they usually _____ turkey, and they often also have _____.

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I'm Amy. At Thanksgiving, my mom's mom and dad came to eat with us. They always do. My grandma looked really well. She was ill in the summer, but she's better now. My grandpa told us lots of Thanksgiving jokes. My dad's brother and his children came this year, too. They don't come every year. My uncle Richard loves driving, and he's got one son and one daughter, David and Fiona. David is animal-mad. He has five pets! Fiona's a really good artist. We ate lots of turkey and apple pie, and then we all sat around the table and told each other what we were thankful for this year.

I'm thankful for my rabbit and my hamster.

I'm thankful for having my health and my beautiful grandchildren.

I'm thankful for my wife, and for my daughter who gives us a delicious meal every Thanksgiving!

I'm thankful for my new car.

I'm thankful for being good at drawing and painting.

What key has legs and can't open doors?
A turkey!

Section 1

- 1 How many people visited Amy's house for Thanksgiving?
- 2 What did they eat?
- 3 Who comes to Amy's house every Thanksgiving?
- 4 What did they do after the meal?

Section 2

Do you think 'David is animal-mad' means that he loves animals or he hates animals?

Section 3

Who said what? Write *Uncle Richard, Fiona, Grandpa, Grandma, Amy or David* next to each speech. One person said two of them.