

THE HISTORY OF *Thanksgiving*

Close Reading

History &
Literacy
Activities



MIKEY D TEACH 

RI.1:
Explicit and Inferential Details

RI.2:
Main Idea

RI.3:
Analyze Ideas and Events

RI.4:
Domain-Specific Vocabulary

RI.10:
Text Complexity

Critical Thinking Prompts

Common Core Skills Covered

THE HISTORY OF THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving is a national, federal holiday held on the 4th Thursday in November to celebrate the harvest and the blessings of the year. Generally, it is modeled after the 1600s account of the Plymouth Rock gathering of English settlers and the Native Americans of the Wampanoag tribe. Thanksgiving is known as the busiest holiday of the year because many people travel to "break bread" with their families.

The History

Long before settlers arrived in America, Native American tribes lived on the land known today as Massachusetts and Rhode Island. In the year 1620, a ship called the Mayflower carried colonists, better known as Pilgrims, for 66 days on the water to Cape Cod, Massachusetts all the way from England. The first year in their new land was hard for them. Winter was long and cold and they were unsure how to survive in their new land. The Native Americans helped them succeed. To celebrate, they had a feast to commemorate their good fortunes.

While the current teachings of Thanksgiving tell us that Pilgrims and Indians feasted together happily, there is more to the story. The Pilgrims met a specific tribe called the Wampanoag. While there was a feast and a celebration, it was also a time of suffering, death, and cruelty, as disease had spread throughout England and the military was seeking weapons. The leader of the Wampanoag tribe who went by Squanto was able to speak English and helped settlers grow and harvest their crops. Eventually, the settlers and the tribe formed an alliance to work together to protect each other from other tribes and groups. The initial feast was organized by Governor William Bradford and was held two years after the settlers arrived in celebration of rain that ended a drought. The meal consisted of deer, corn, shellfish, pumpkins, squash and roasted meat. They celebrated by singing, dancing, and playing ball games.

National Holiday

President Abraham Lincoln declared Thanksgiving a day to be celebrated on the last Thursday in November every year. In 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared it a federal holiday and moved it to the 4th Thursday of November. In the United States, Thanksgiving is celebrated on the 4th of November, while in Canada, it is celebrated on the 2nd of October.

The meal that was served to the settlers on that day, it has become the traditional meal of the holiday. It started out as a religious holiday to allow people to give thanks for the harvest and blessings, but now Thanksgiving is more of a family and friends centered around sharing a bountiful meal. Items besides turkey include potatoes or sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, stuffing, vegetables, and of course, pumpkin pie!

American Rituals and Traditions

Traditions focused around Thanksgiving include volunteering at a shelter, free dinners for those who are less fortunate, allowing us to be grateful for what we do have. Another tradition of Thanksgiving is to be with family and friends, share a meal, and enjoy football and parades held in New York City, Philadelphia, and Chicago among others.

The largest parades and celebrations in the United States are Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Presented by Macy's, it is held in New York City that launched in 1924, the parade is the largest and most famous Thanksgiving Day Parade in the world, drawing about 2 to 3 million spectators along a 25 mile long route. It is watched by all of us who watch it on TV too! Elaborate floats and musical performances by theater groups and celebrities are part of the festivities drawing in the crowds.

THE WAMPANOAG TRIBE

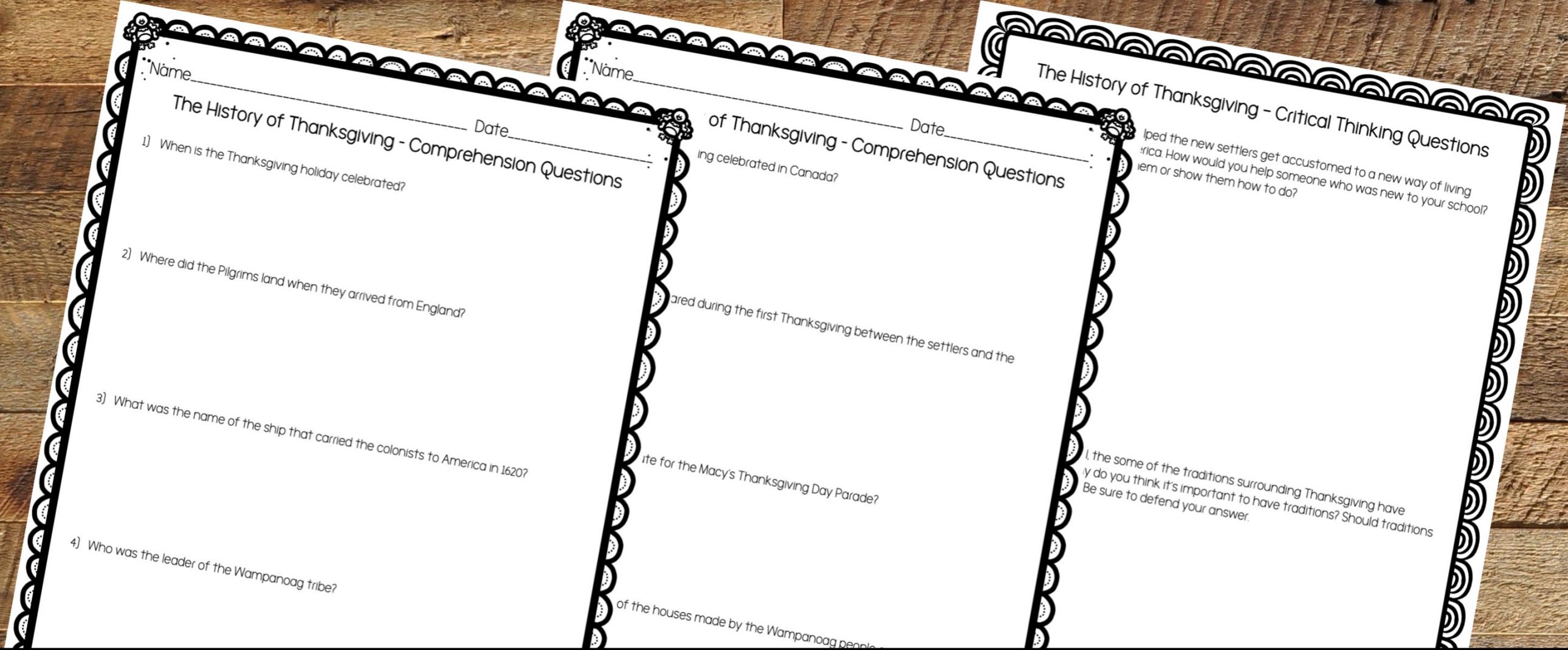


The Wampanoag are native to Cape Cod, Plymouth Rock, and Pokanoket. They made houses out of sticks, grass, and straw which they covered with animal skins that wrapped through their roofs. The clothing was made of animal skins that wrapped through their roofs. Each tribe had a leader, and the Wampanoag leader was called a sachem. Each tribe was categorized as a "clan" and the sachem, who was to guide the tribe and give wise and trusted advice to the people. The sachem was also the head of the family of the tribe by preparing food, cooking, and cleaning. Women were responsible for the family by preparing food, cooking, and cleaning. Men were hunters and often went to war to protect their land.

The diet of the Wampanoag tribe included corn, bear, deer, fruit, fish, and turkey. They also hunted for beaver, muskrat, rabbit, racoon and fish. They would cut holes in the bark of trees to collect sap which they used to make maple syrup. The Wampanoag traditionally spoke English (and still do) but they also spoke their own language. "Wuneekeesuq" is a greeting in their language.

ADOBE STOCK

Three-Page Close Reading Passage



Comprehension & Critical Thinking Questions

Name _____ Date _____

The History of Thanksgiving - PASSAGE VOCABULARY

Using the text and your knowledge of context clues, define the following words from the passage. Highlight the context clues you find to help you define the words!

commemorate	
cruelty	
alliance	
harvest	
bountiful	
clan	
resources	

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THANKSGIVING OPINION WRITING



QUESTIONS FOR THIS ACTIVITY

How do people celebrate Thanksgiving with a turkey in the east? The turkey is usually at the center of that meal even though at the first Thanksgiving, they did not eat turkey. Do you think that turkey be the main dish at Thanksgiving? Or should we eat something else? Why or why not? Write an opinion piece about this question and be sure to defend your reasoning!

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Vocabulary and Writing Activities

THANKSGIVING MYSTERY PICTURES



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Name _____ Date _____

Directions: Use the color code to correctly color the mystery picture below.

ge		noun = yellow			adjective = brown		
ck	child	ship	turkey	deer	child	turkey	deer
ade	deer		corn	house	parade	ship	corn
rn				child	rock	child	woman
				ship	small	colorful	house
in	eat	run	wash	grow	sing	tough	child
ash	hunt	grow	hunt	eat	wash	colorful	turkey
unt	dig	sing	run	dig	grow	smooth	corn
orful	tough	small	smooth	tall	big	small	deer
key	corn	child	house	rock	ship	woman	

Fun Activities

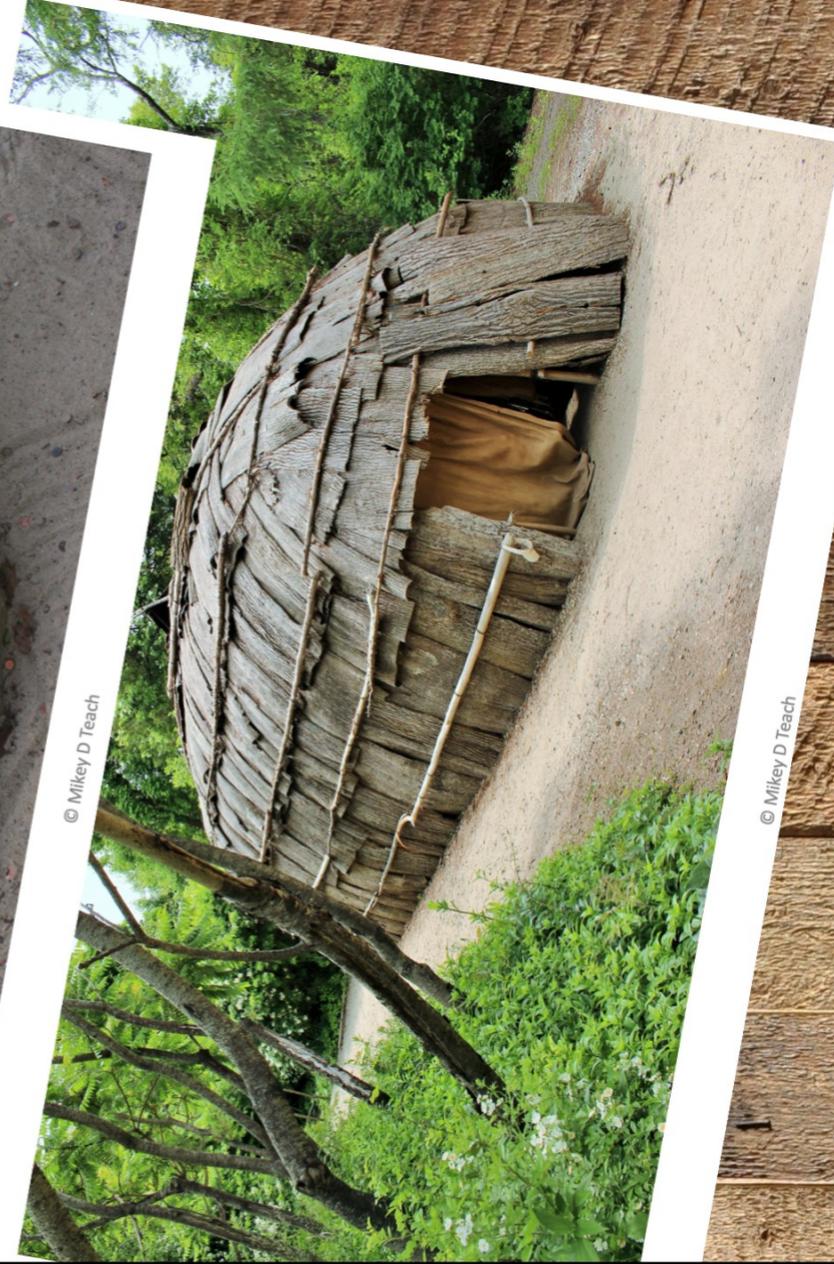
SETTLERS' HOME



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Colorful Posters

Name _____ Date _____

The History of Thanksgiving - Comprehension Questions

1) When is the Thanksgiving holiday celebrated?
Thanksgiving is celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November.

2) Where did the Pilgrims land when they arrived from England?
They landed in Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

3) What was the name of the ship that carried the colonists to America in 1620?
The ship was called the Mayflower.

4) Who was the leader of the Wampanoag tribe?
The leader of the Wampanoag tribe was Squanto.

Name _____ Date _____

Use the color code to correctly color the mystery picture below.

ge noun = yellow adjective = brown

ck	child	ship	turkey	deer	child	turkey	deer
ade	deer		corn	house	parade	ship	corn
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unt	dig	sing	run	dig	grow	smooth	corn
rful	tough	small	smooth	tall	big	small	deer
key	corn	child	house	rock	ship	woman	

Name _____ Date _____

of Thanksgiving - PASSAGE VOCABULARY

Use your knowledge of context clues, define the words from the passage. Highlight the context clues you used to define the words!

remember or celebrate

passiveness

group of people with common goals or interests: partnership

fruits and produce

generous and plenty

family

supplies

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Answer Keys Included