

THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving is a very important American festivity and it is celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November. However, schools, many factories and offices are closed for four days: Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. So it is a very important holiday for American people.



Thanksgiving is a special day for families to be together and to thank God for everything they have. Americans travel great distances to be with their families, so it has become one of the busiest weekend for transport by train or even plane.

Why is Thanksgiving such an important day ?

The tradition started with the Pilgrims, the founders of America. The Pilgrims left Great Britain in 1620 to escape religious persecution. They wanted to start a new life in America and practise their religion freely.

About one hundred men, women and children left Britain on a small ship called the Mayflower. Their trip on sea was very difficult and some of them died. They arrived on the north-east coast of North America in December 1620 and founded Plymouth. The area was a wilderness, moreover it was almost winter and they had neither home nor food. They immediately built small wooden houses called "cabins".

Yet it was too late to cultivate crops. To make things worse, that winter was particularly harsh and cold. Almost half of the Pilgrims died because their living conditions were very bad.

Happily, they were not the only people living there. Indeed when they arrived the Native Americans had been living in this country for a very long time, especially the tribe called the "Wampanoags".

Not yet knowing that these new white people would massacre them later, they helped them survive during that long winter. In the spring these Indians helped them, teaching them how to grow corn and other plants, how to breed animals, hunt and live in the wilderness.

Soon the Native Americans and the Pilgrims became friends. The Pilgrims worked hard and the summer harvest was excellent. By November 1621 every one had food and a home. There was hope for the future.

Governor William Bradford, the Pilgrim leader, decided to celebrate with a dinner for the Pilgrims and the Native Americans together. He wanted to give thanks to God. This was the first Thanksgiving dinner and it lasted for three days!

Today the traditional Thanksgiving meal is similar to the first. People eat roast turkey, sweet potatoes (yams), corn, cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie. Most families start the meal with a prayer. Norman Rockwell, a famous American painter used this feast as an inspiration for one of his most famous paintings. The long Thanksgiving weekend is the perfect time to start Christmas shopping! Big stores and shops are open on Friday, (Black Friday) Saturday and Sunday for the Christmas shoppers.



UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT



1 Are the following sentences true (T) or False (F)? Correct the false ones.

- | | T | F |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Thanksgiving is celebrated on the third Thursday of November | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Americans travel long distances to be with their families then | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) The tradition started in Great Britain | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) The Pilgrims were the founders of America | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Their first winter was very cold but they had lots of food | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f) The Indians helped the Pilgrims to build the first houses | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g) The first Thanksgiving dinner was in November 1620 | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h) During the long Thanksgiving weekend, many people start shopping for Christmas | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2 Unscramble the anagrams and then match them with their meanings on the right

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| a) REAFMOYWL ----- | 1. Land that is not cultivated, where wild animals lives |
| b) LESWRIDENS ----- | 2. Very unpleasant |
| c) MSIPLGIR ----- | 3. The name of the Pilgrims 'ship. |
| d) ARHSH ----- | 4. Fruit, vegetables and corn. |
| e) MPAOAAWGNS ----- | 5. The founders of America |
| f) OSRPC----- | 6. The natives Americans who helped them |
| g) OLHPTUYM----- | 7. The colony founded by the Pilgrims |

3 Answer the following questions.

a) When did some British people decide to flee from Britain and why?

b) Where did they arrive, what did they do , how were the conditions at the beginning?

c) Who helped them? And How?

d) What did the founders do to thank their new friends?

e) What do American people do nowadays to celebrate?

