

A Letter to Parents

When I was little, my family used to sit around the table and read about the Thanksgiving feast celebrated by the Plymouth settlers. My school books backed up the historic tale with classic paintings of rosy-faced women setting a long table with dishes overflowing with roasted meats and the vegetable bounty of the first harvest. I read excerpts from Governor William Bradford's autobiographical account Of Plymouth Plantation.

When my friends and I gathered to play in the park, we were either pioneers traveling to an unexplored land, or Native Americans finding a new place to settle. The first stories of American exploration sparkled and came alive in our young minds.

I haven't been in school for a long time. All my friends from the park are grown like me with young kids of our own.

It's my turn to read the Thanksgiving story around the dinner table.

Wherever my kids and yours go to school—public, private, or at home—someone will teach them about the first few handfuls of settlers that washed onto America's young shores.

What will they learn?

To some today, all that's worth telling is that white men came and disturbed a perfectly good country. There's no doubt that America's history is scarred by the treachery and unkindness of men of all colors

and heritages. Settler double crossed Native American. They returned the sentiment. Between the incredible triumphs of our republic are heartbreaking moments of inhumanity, ironically the mark that all humans tend to leave on civilizations.

But I think there's more to the story than that limited narrative. I think it was complicated. I think that some settlers were better than others, just as some of the natives who welcomed or opposed them were better than others. Some lived together peacefully for a time, as in Plymouth. Some fought, immediately yielding to suspicion.

Humanity isn't simple, and so our history isn't either. I choose to see the bad and the good together... and America has stood out in history as a land that tries to right its own wrongs.

But at that first Plymouth harvest celebration, none of these future highs and lows existed yet. Needy settler met kind native, and they came together in celebration of harvest and joy.

What we call "The First Thanksgiving" isn't a moment of shame. It is a pivotal moment of the American dream, illustrating what she was meant to be, what could be.

So we teach Thanksgiving, both for what it was and what it means.

Pilgrims and Natives gather around a table, acting out our future nation's motto: *E pluribus unim*.

Out of many, one.



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How to Use This Thanksgiving Learning Packet



This packet is designed to give your family rich and fun ways to learn about what makes this national celebration special.

Here are a couple of ways you can use this learning guide:



Use it as a homeschool curriculum in the week leading up to Thanksgiving. (Just look for your kids' grade levels, and you're all set!)

If your children attend a public or private school, use it as an after-school supplement to make sure they learn the whole story.



Let your children pick an activity or resource below that they can learn about and share with extended family (or friends!) at Thanksgiving get-togethers you attend.

Short on time? No sweat. Pick one fun craft, game, book, or video to investigate as a family.





Calling all overachievers! If you enjoy going above and beyond with your kids, start at the beginning of the packet now to work through as many of the activities as you can before Thanksgiving arrives.

Fun For The Whole Family!

Art Museum

We crafted this virtual art museum just for you! Sit down and absorb the message of Thanksgiving across the centuries: NWEF's

Virtual Art Museum.



Feed Your Curioity

What was life like for the Pilgrims on the Mayflower? Watch this documentary about the Pilgrim's experience from Absolute History.

Out-of-the-box fun!

Need an idea for family time this week? Sit down for some unique fun and make crafts together: 3 Turkey Craft Ideas for Thanksgiving



Learner's Guide by Grade:

Grades

K-2

Crafts:

 Make these easy paper roll turkeys and have your littles giggling: <u>Instructions here!</u>

 What's more fun than leaves that look like miniature people?
 Absolutely nothing. <u>Instructions</u>



Video:

Follow Isaac Allerton and his family for a day in the life of a pilgrim family: Check it out!

Audience Questions

Q: What did Isaac's family use the cornmeal to make? (A: corn porridge)

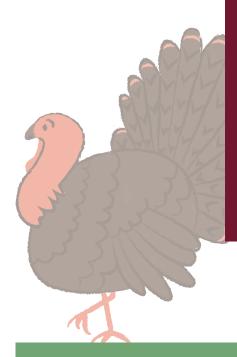
Q: Where did most of Isaac's food come from?

(A: the garden, the woods, the farm animals)

Q: What games do Sarah and Isaac play? (A: "I call" and "9 pin.")

Q: Do you see any similarities between the games they played and games we play today? (A: Answers vary, but "bowling" is what we're looking for. See "games" section below.)

Games:



Make a homemade 9-pin game like Isaac and Sarah!

<u>Easy DIY bowling game</u>

<u>craft</u>.

Turkey Calling Contest (from <u>kidactivities.net</u>)
"Host a turkey calling contest, complete with lots of squawking, flapping, wattle shaking, and pecking. Give participants a prize with fun distinctions: 'Loudest turkey,' 'Most authentic,' 'Most likely to be spared,' 'Cutest turkey,' etc. This activity can also be turned into a relay race with the group split into two teams. Loud, but fun! (Ages 4-Adult.)" Turkeys do more than gobble! Check out this educational variety of <u>Turkey Sounds</u>

Books:

No time to order a book? No library access? No worries! We've got you covered. We found these fun and educational Thanksgiving readalouds on YouTube:

- Pete the Cat The First Thanksgiving by Kimberly & James Dean
- The Very Last Leaf by Stef Wade



Find these online or check your local library:

- Around the Table That Grandad Built by Melanie Heuiser Hill
- Giving Thanks: More than 100 ways to say
 thank you by Ellen Surrey
- Thanks a Million by Nikki Grimes



Recipes:

- Wow your kids with this Whole Pumpkin <u>Pie Soup Recipe</u>
- Make these fun Oreo turkey cookies and take them to your friends to show how thankful you are for them! <u>Oreo Cookie</u> <u>Turkeys</u>

Grades

3-5

Crafts:

- Show your kids how to cultivate a habit of thankfulness by building a thankfulness tree: <u>How to Make</u> <u>a Thankful Tree for Thanksgiving</u>
- Make these fun <u>Balloon Pumpkins</u>
 using everyday materials around
 the house and enjoy making your
 home festive.

Games:



Stretch your brain and exercise your this Thanksgiving word scramble

"Pray thee tarry and join our merriment!"

Enhance vocabulary with this fun <u>"Talk</u> Like a Pilgrim" exercise. Turn it into a trivia game where

students are awarded points for answering questions with the correct 17th century vocabulary. (BONUS riddles included)



Videos:

Watch this short, thoughtful video:

The Winds of Change

Audience questions:

Q: How does this video tell a story without using words? (A: By using pictures, sounds, music, and people doing things.)

Q: What story is this video telling? (A: How America was populated by Native Americans, and then the Pilgrims traveled to America and met them. The Natives helped the Pilgrims.)

Questions continue on next page:

Q: What are some of the contrasts between how these groups of people lived? (A: They have different music, different houses, different styles of clothes, etc. Encourage students to describe the details.)



Watch this short movie to learn about the life of William Bradford, the man who became one of Plymouth's most famous leaders.

Books:

Want something educational and fun? Check out these readalouds on YouTube:

- On The Mayflower by Kate Waters, Photographs by Russ Kendall
- <u>Squanto's Journey- Story of</u> the First Thanksgiving by Joseph Bruchac & Greg Shed

Find these online or check your library:

- The Boy Who Fell Off the Mayflower, or John Howland's Good Fortune by P.J. Lynch
- The Mayflower Adventure by Colleen L.
 Reece
- William Bradford: Pilgrim Boy by Bradford
 Smith





Recipes:

Visit <u>Historic Cooking</u> and learn to cook the food that the Pilgrims and Wompanoag Indians would have eaten, like

- Nasaump
- Stewed Pompion
- Curd Fritters





Grades

6-8

Crafts:

- Make these salt crystal feathers and view their crystalized colorfulness under a microscope! How to Make Salt Crystal Feathers Fast (less than 1 hour!)
- Decorate your house with <u>origami maple</u> <u>leaves</u>

Games:

- Exercise your brain with this <u>Thanksgiving</u>
 <u>Word Scramble</u>
- Fun for just your family or a play-date with friends: <u>Thanksgiving Scavenger Hunt for</u> <u>Kids</u>

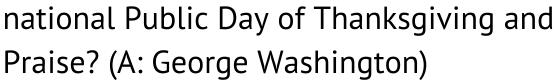


Videos:

The origins of our
Thanksgiving holiday
Audience Questions:

O: Who was the first

Q: Who was the first president to declare a



Q: Which president declared a day of Thanksgiving during wartime, stating that America had much to be thankful for? (A: Abraham Lincoln)

Q: Who influenced Lincoln's Thanksgiving Proclamation? (A: Mary Josepha Hale)

Q: In what year did President Roosevelt sign legislation making Thanksgiving a national holiday? (A: 1941)

Q: How are you going to practice giving thanks this year? (A: Answers vary, but guide students towards meaningful, thoughtful answers.)



- Watch this <u>short movie</u> and learn about the life of William Bradford, the man who became one of Plymouth's leaders.
- Watch this story of John Howland, a boy who <u>fell off the Mayflower!</u>
 - Essay or short story writing prompt: Write a short story putting yourself in John's shoes. What was it like to leave your home country and never say goodbye to your family? What was it like to almost be lost at sea? How did it feel to be rescued? What remarkable things came from your life as a result of coming to the New World?



Books:

Audio book:

- Buy <u>The Legend of Squanto CD set</u> from Focus on the Family Radio Theatre.
 - Or you can find the digital download on Amazon: The Legend of Squanto

Check out some new reads! You can find them online or perhaps at your local library:

- The Boy Who Fell Off the Mayflower, or John Howland's Good Fortune by P.J. Lynch
- The Mayflower Adventure by Colleen L.
 Reece
- William Bradford: Pilgrim Boy by Bradford Smith





Recipes:

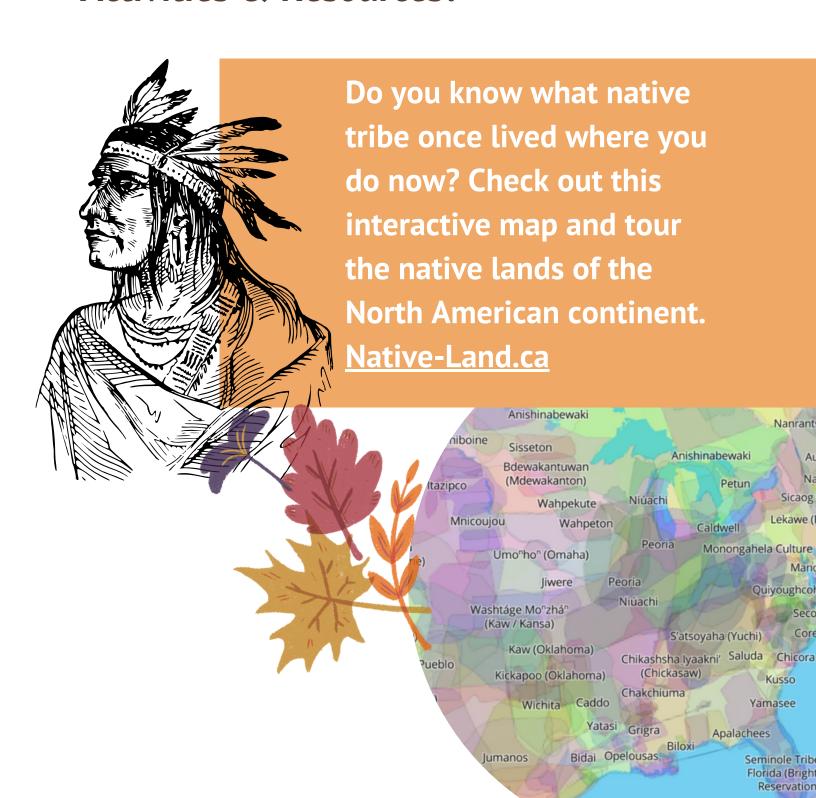
- AND .
- Bake outside the box with a non-traditional pizza. The Pilgrims and Native Americans alike often ate root vegetables during this time of year! <u>Roasted Root-Vegetable</u> <u>Pizza</u>.
- Thanksgiving isn't the same without pumpkin something. Enjoy making and eating these pumpkin-flavored, pumpkinshaped rolls! <u>Pumpkin Dinner Rolls</u>



Grades

9-12

Activities & Resources:



This season of Thanksgiving is a perfect time to serve others—just as much as it's a great time for feasting with your family. Give back to your community this Thanksgiving through volunteering. Want to give your time? Check These 20 Websites for Volunteer Opportunities.



Ask your parents to let you host a "Friendsgiving" (from moneyprodigy.com). Invite a few friends over for the holiday and serve them a meal, letting them know how much you appreciate them.

Note to parents: don't forget you can exercise/enhance your teens knowledge of grocery shopping, meal planning, and meal prep through this opportunity! Or, if your teen is younger, take advantage of this opportunity to teach those concepts now!

Test your knowledge and learn some fun facts with 50 Thanksgiving Trivia Questions and Answers



Make a Turkey Cake. It might be a disaster, it might not—either way it will be memorable and delicious. This could be a contest between parents and kids, between siblings, or between teens and their friends.

Videos:

<u>Do You Have Mayflower Ancestry? Here is</u>
 <u>How to Prove It</u>

Have you heard of
 <u>Sarah Josepha Hale</u>? She
 was one of the most
 influential voices that
 crafted our national
 Thanksgiving holiday.



- Watch this short video about the Mayflower Compact.
 - Essay question: How is the signing of the <u>Mayflower Compact</u> significant to America today?



Tour a real-life replica of the Mayflower

Audience Questions:

Q: How was the size of the Mayflower described in the 17th century? (A: A vessel of 180 tons.)

Q: Was the Mayflower a passenger ship or a merchant ship by design? (A: A merchant ship.) Q: Which deck did the Mayflower's 102 passengers live on? (A: The mid-deck)

Q: How long was the Mayflower docked in Provincetown before the Pilgrims found a place to disembark at Plymouth? (A: About a month) Q: What is one key difference between the Plymouth and Jamestown settlements? (Plymouth was meant to be permanent; Jamestown was only meant as a resourcegathering enterprise.)

Q: Which device was used to raise the anchor?(A: A windlass)

Q: What tree was used for the Mayflower II's main mast? And how tall is it? (A: Douglas fir, 55 feet).

Q: About how many crew members were on the Mayflower? (A: 25-30)

Q: What was the name of the room where most of the navigation took place? (A: The Roundhouse)

Books:



Check out this captivating dramatized audio book:

- Buy <u>The Legend of Squanto CD set</u> from Focus on the Family Radio Theatre.
 - Or find the digital download on Amazon: <u>The Legend of Squanto</u>

Find these online or in your library:

 The Last Pilgrim by Noelle A. Granger

Bradford's History of 'Plimoth Plantation' by William Bradford (free ebook)

A Voyage Long and Strange by Tony Horwitz



Recipes:

- Look through this selection of Native American recipes and try some! <u>25 Native American Recipes</u>
- Algonquin Nut Soup
- Trout with Fiddlehead Ferns
- Poyha Chicken & Cornmeal Loaf



Thanks for learning with Noah Webster Educational Foundation!

Share your fun with us! Tag us on Facebook (@nwef.org) or Instagram (@nwef_org) with photos of the fun ways your family chose to learn about Thanksgiving! Don't forget to use the hashtag #NWEFThanksgiving!

Thanks for using this Thanksgiving Learner's Guide!

If you enjoyed it or have suggestions about how we can improve our learning guides in the future, please let us know! You can talk to a friendly member of the Noah Webster Educational Foundation team at info@nwef.org.



- iStockphoto.com
- Unsplash.com
- Seeplymouth.com
- YouTube.com
- Google.com
- Canva.com
- Nativ-land.ca
- Archive.org
- Vimeo.com
- Pexels.com
- Fineartamerica.com

