

THANKSGIVING: COMPARING THEN AND NOW

Learning Objectives: Students will

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the origins of the celebration of Thanksgiving.
2. Explain the significance of Thanksgiving.
3. Compare Thanksgiving celebrations of the past and present.
4. Apply critical thinking skills by obtaining information about Thanksgiving from electronic media.
5. Communicate in oral and visual forms by expressing their ideas and experiences and by creating and interpreting visual material.

TEKS: K.1, K.14B, K.15, 1.1, 1.17B, 1.18, 2.1A, 2.18B, 2.19

Materials Needed: The animated movie "The Mayflowers Voyagers," which is a bonus episode on the DVD, *A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving* (The episode may also be found on *YouTube* under the title "Charlie Brown: Origins of Thanksgiving." The web address is: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRobYUSZ4do> for Part 1 and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yeAtelXK9P4> for Part II); appropriate audio/visual equipment and/or a computer with Internet access; chart paper or bulletin board paper (optional); a transparency or visual of the "Thanksgiving Venn Diagram" attachment (Kindergarten & First Grade Only); copies of the "Thanksgiving Venn Diagram" attachment for each pair of students (Second Grade Only); 2 copies of the "Then & Now" attachment for each pair of students (Second Grade Only)

Vocabulary: Feast, holiday, Indians, mace, Mayflower, Miles Standish, Pilgrims, Samoset, Squanto, Thanksgiving, traditions, voyage

Teaching Strategies:

1. Before presenting the lesson, write the words "Thanksgiving is..." on the board or chart paper. Begin the lesson by having students complete the stem sentence and record their responses on the board or paper. Students may suggest a single word or a phrase to complete the stem sentence. (Older students may write their personal responses on a large sheet of bulletin board paper or butcher paper in graffiti style.)
2. Briefly discuss students' responses and then introduce the animated movie students are about to view. Explain that the Peanuts gang including Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Woodstock, Lucy,

Linus etc... join the Pilgrims on their voyage on the Mayflower as they sail from England to the New World. The characters experience how difficult life was for the Pilgrims and take part in the first Thanksgiving celebration. (Clarify that the historical facts of the movie are accurate, but that the Peanuts characters, of course, did not actually participate in the events.)

3. Show students the movie. After students have viewed the movie, direct their attention to the “Thanksgiving is...” chart/graffiti that they completed at the beginning of the lesson. Ask students if any words/phrases need to be added as a result of new information they learned from the movie and add their additional responses.
4. Have students discuss the following questions:
 - What do you think would be the most difficult thing about making the trip to the New World on the Mayflower? Explain.
 - If you could ask one of the children who sailed on the Mayflower a question, what would you ask him/her? Why?
 - Describe the importance of the Indians to the Pilgrims.
 - Why did the Pilgrims celebrate Thanksgiving?
 - Why do you think we still celebrate Thanksgiving today?
5. Kindergarten & First Grade Strategy: Project the attached “Thanksgiving Venn Diagram” on the wall or a screen. Have students brainstorm details concerning how the first Thanksgiving is like and/or different from Thanksgiving now. List ideas in the appropriate locations on the diagram.

Give students a piece of drawing paper and have them draw a picture of what they are most thankful for this Thanksgiving season. The pictures should be labeled “I am thankful for ___ because ___.” Assist students by recording their descriptive sentence, if needed.

Provide time for class members to share their pictures and descriptive sentences with each other.

6. Second Grade Strategy: Divide students into pairs. Give each group a copy of the “Thanksgiving Venn Diagram.” Have students brainstorm details concerning how the first Thanksgiving is like and/or different from Thanksgiving now. They should list their ideas in the appropriate location on the diagram.

Have groups share their brainstormed ideas with the class.

Give each pair of students a copy of the “Then and Now” attachment. Review the format with students and discuss how students will use the format to compare the first Thanksgiving to the Thanksgiving celebrations of today. (Students may compare such things as dress, food, environment, and activities/traditions.) As students pre-write, they may use the “Thanksgiving Venn Diagram” sheet for ideas. After the prewriting has been proofread and edited, the final composition should be copied on another “Then and Now” form.

After groups have completed their final copies, have them share their writings with the class. Compositions should be mounted on fall-colored construction paper and be displayed in the classroom.

Extension for Gifted/Talented: Have students design a seating chart for the Thanksgiving dinner for their family gathering. They should label where each person will sit and then defend, in writing, why each person should be seated at each specified location. Tell students that one famous person from the past may also be seated at their table. Students must defend why they want the historic figure at their Thanksgiving celebration. (Optional: If students could only ask their historic person three questions, what would they be?)

THANKSGIVING VENN DIAGRAM



FIRST THANKSGIVING
(1621)

THANKSGIVING NOW
(2011)

BOTH

THEN AND NOW



In 1621, on the first Thanksgiving, the Pilgrims and Indians _____.

Long ago they _____, but now we _____.

They also _____, but now we _____.

The Pilgrims _____, but now we _____.

Yet, there are many things about Thanksgiving that have not changed.

The Pilgrims _____, and we _____.

They _____, and we still _____.

At Thanksgiving we will always _____.