



THANKSGIVING

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Think about how stories about holidays are created, repeated, and sometimes challenged.

A. Read two short descriptions

Description 1: The familiar schoolbook picture

A group of English colonists and Wampanoag people shared a harvest gathering in 1621. In many popular retellings, this event is presented as the beginning of Thanksgiving and as a simple story of friendship.

Description 2: A wider historical view

The 1621 gathering is one event, not the whole history of Thanksgiving. Written evidence is limited. Indigenous peoples had long-established cultures and harvest traditions before colonization. Later European settlement involved land seizure, conflict, and disease that devastated Native communities. For some Indigenous people, Thanksgiving is also a day to remember this history and its continuing effects.

B. Critical-thinking questions

1. What does Description 1 include? What does it leave out?
2. Why is it important to say Indigenous peoples had their own traditions before 1621?
3. How can a story change when it is told from only one point of view?
4. What is the difference between describing a historical event and saying it explains an entire holiday?
5. What questions would you ask before trusting a simplified historical account?

C. Source-checking challenge

Imagine you find a social media post that says, “Thanksgiving began with one peaceful meal, and everyone was happy.”

Write three questions you would ask to check this claim.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

D. Homework

Choose one holiday or public celebration from any country. Find two reliable sources about its history and how people experience it today. Write 150–180 words comparing the sources. Include one point they agree on and one detail that needs context.

Research reminder

Look for museums, archives, universities, or Indigenous community sources where relevant. Separate confirmed facts from later stories, and avoid treating any community as if everyone shares one opinion.