READING - GRADES 2 AND 3

Thanksgiving Reading Comprehension

12 passages with questions



Six short Thanksgiving stories and six true passages:
the harvest of 1621, Squanto, turkeys, pumpkins,
the big parade and how Thanksgiving became a holiday.

Three tick-the-box questions and one written answer each.
Answers at the back for the grown-up.

US Letter - black ink only - grades 2 and 3, ages 7-9

Name _____ Date _____

Grandma's Pumpkin Pie

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Every year Lily helps Grandma bake a pumpkin pie the night before Thanksgiving. This year Grandma let Lily measure the sugar and the spice. Lily stirred the filling until it was smooth and orange. Then she poured it into the crust very slowly so it would not spill. The pie baked for almost an hour, and the whole house smelled of cinnamon. Grandma said the pie needed to cool all night. Lily could hardly wait for the next day.

1. **What do Lily and Grandma bake?**

   - [ ] an apple pie
   - [ ] a pumpkin pie
   - [ ] a cake

2. **What did Lily measure?**

   - [ ] the flour and milk
   - [ ] the sugar and the spice
   - [ ] the eggs

3. **What did the house smell of?**

   - [ ] cinnamon
   - [ ] smoke
   - [ ] flowers

4. **Why did Lily have to wait for the next day?**

Draw a picture of your favorite part.

 Name _____ Date _____

The Harvest Feast of 1621

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

In 1620 a ship called the Mayflower brought the Pilgrims to a place they named Plymouth. Their first winter was very hard, and many of them died. In the fall of 1621 they gathered their first good harvest. To celebrate, they shared a feast with about 90 Wampanoag men and their leader, Massasoit. The feast lasted three days. A Pilgrim named Edward Winslow wrote that the Wampanoag men brought five deer. Today many people think of this feast when they think of the first Thanksgiving.

1. **What was the name of the Pilgrims' ship?**

   - [ ] the Mayflower
   - [ ] the Santa Maria
   - [ ] the Plymouth

2. **Who was the leader of the Wampanoag?**

   - [ ] Edward Winslow
   - [ ] Massasoit
   - [ ] Squanto

3. **How many days did the feast last?**

   - [ ] one
   - [ ] two
   - [ ] three

4. **What did the Wampanoag men bring to the feast?**

Draw a picture of your favorite part.

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Name _____ Date _____

The Thankful Tree

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

On the first day of November, Mr. Diaz drew a big bare tree on the classroom wall. He gave each child a paper leaf. Every morning the class wrote one thing they were thankful for on a leaf and taped it to a branch. Omar wrote about his new baby sister. Ruby wrote about her dog, Biscuit. By Thanksgiving the tree was covered in red, orange and yellow leaves. Mr. Diaz read every leaf out loud, and the class clapped.

1. **Who drew the tree on the wall?**

   - [ ] Mr. Diaz
   - [ ] Omar
   - [ ] Ruby

2. **What did the class write on each leaf?**

   - [ ] a spelling word
   - [ ] a thing they were thankful for
   - [ ] their name

3. **What is the name of Ruby's dog?**

   - [ ] Biscuit
   - [ ] Buddy
   - [ ] Max

4. **What did Omar write about?**

Draw a picture of your favorite part.

 Name _____ Date _____

Squanto Helps the Pilgrims

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

A man named Squanto was a great help to the Pilgrims. Years before they came, he had been taken to Europe, where he learned to speak English. When he came home, his village was gone. In the spring of 1621 he showed the Pilgrims how to plant corn. He put small fish in the ground with the seeds to help the corn grow. He also showed them where to catch eels and fish. Without his help, the Pilgrims might not have had a harvest at all.

1. **What language did Squanto learn?**

   ☐ Spanish ☐ English ☐ French

2. **What did Squanto show the Pilgrims how to plant?**

   ☐ corn ☐ wheat ☐ apples

3. **What did he put in the ground with the seeds?**

   ☐ rocks ☐ leaves ☐ small fish

4. **Where did Squanto learn to speak English?**

Draw a picture of your favorite part.

Name _____ Date _____

The Kids' Table

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Twelve people came to Max's house for Thanksgiving. The big table only had room for eight, so Dad set up a small table for the kids. Max was not happy about it. Then his cousins sat down with him, and they made up a game. Each person had to name a food that started with the next letter of the alphabet. Max won with yams for the letter Y. By the end of dinner, Max said the kids' table was the best table.

1. **How many people came to Max's house?**

   - [ ] eight
   - [ ] ten
   - [ ] twelve

2. **Who set up the small table?**

   - [ ] Dad
   - [ ] Mom
   - [ ] Max

3. **What food did Max name for the letter Y?**

   - [ ] yogurt
   - [ ] yams
   - [ ] yolk

4. **How did Max feel about the kids' table at the end?**

Draw a picture of your favorite part.

 Name _____ Date _____

All About Turkeys

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Wild turkeys live in forests and fields all over the United States. A male turkey is called a tom, a female is called a hen, and the babies are called poults. Only the toms gobble. Wild turkeys can run fast and can fly for short distances, and at night they sleep up in trees. Benjamin Franklin once wrote to his daughter that the turkey was a more respectable bird than the bald eagle. Turkeys raised on farms are bigger and cannot fly.

1. **What is a baby turkey called?**

   ☐ a chick ☐ a poult ☐ a hen

2. **Which turkeys gobble?**

   ☐ only the toms ☐ only the hens ☐ all of them

3. **Where do wild turkeys sleep at night?**

   ☐ in holes ☐ in trees ☐ in the grass

4. **Who wrote that the turkey was a respectable bird?**

Draw a picture of your favorite part.

Name _____ Date _____

The Food Drive

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Two weeks before Thanksgiving, Ava's school held a food drive. Every class had a big box by the door. Ava brought two cans of corn and a box of rice. Her class counted their food every Friday. On the last day they had collected 64 cans and boxes, more than any other class. A truck took all the food to the food bank, where it was shared with families who needed it.

1. **When did the food drive start?**

   - [ ] two weeks before Thanksgiving
   - [ ] on Thanksgiving
   - [ ] in December

2. **What did Ava bring?**

   - [ ] apples and milk
   - [ ] two cans of corn and a box of rice
   - [ ] bread

3. **How many cans and boxes did Ava's class collect?**

   - [ ] 46
   - [ ] 64
   - [ ] 60

4. **Where did the truck take the food?**

Name _____ Date _____

Pumpkins

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

A pumpkin is a fruit, because it grows from a flower and has seeds inside. Pumpkins grow on long vines that spread across the ground. A pumpkin starts out green and turns orange as it ripens in the fall. Illinois grows more pumpkins than any other state. Most of them are made into canned pumpkin for pies. You can also roast the seeds and eat them as a crunchy snack.

1. **Why is a pumpkin a fruit?**

- [ ] it is orange
- [ ] it grows from a flower and has seeds
- [ ] it is sweet

2. **What color is a pumpkin when it starts to grow?**

- [ ] green
- [ ] orange
- [ ] yellow

3. **Which state grows the most pumpkins?**

- [ ] Texas
- [ ] Ohio
- [ ] Illinois

4. **What can you do with pumpkin seeds?**

Draw a picture of your favorite part.

Name _____ Date _____

The Long Drive

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Sofia's family drove four hours to Grandpa's farm for Thanksgiving. To pass the time, they played I Spy and sang songs. Sofia counted cows out of the window and stopped at 37. Halfway there, they stopped for gas and hot chocolate. When they finally pulled up, Grandpa was waiting on the porch with his old dog, Pepper. Sofia ran up the steps and gave him a big hug. The long drive was worth it.

1. **How long was the drive to Grandpa's farm?**

   - [ ] two hours
   - [ ] four hours
   - [ ] six hours

2. **How many cows did Sofia count?**

   - [ ] 37
   - [ ] 73
   - [ ] 30

3. **What did they drink when they stopped?**

   - [ ] hot chocolate
   - [ ] lemonade
   - [ ] milk

4. **Who was waiting on the porch with Grandpa?**

Draw a picture of your favorite part.

 Name _____ Date _____

The Big Parade

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Every Thanksgiving morning, a huge parade marches through New York City. The Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade began in 1924. That first year it had animals from the Central Park Zoo. The giant balloons came in 1927, and the first one was Felix the Cat. Today the balloons can be taller than a house, and each one needs a team of people holding ropes to guide it. Millions of people watch the parade on TV.

1. **In which city is the parade held?**

   ☐ Chicago ☐ New York City ☐ Boston

2. **When did the parade begin?**

   ☐ 1924 ☐ 1927 ☐ 1942

3. **What was the first giant balloon?**

   ☐ a turkey ☐ Felix the Cat ☐ a dog

4. **Where did the animals in the first parade come from?**

Draw a picture of your favorite part.

Name _____ Date _____

Ben Mashes the Potatoes

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

This year Ben was old enough to help cook. Mom gave him the job of mashing the potatoes. First she boiled them until they were soft. Ben added butter and a splash of milk, then pushed the masher up and down. His arms got tired, but he kept going until there were no lumps. At dinner, Uncle Joe took a second helping and said they were the best mashed potatoes he had ever eaten.

1. **What job did Mom give Ben?**

   - [ ] setting the table
   - [ ] mashing the potatoes
   - [ ] baking a pie

2. **What did Ben add to the potatoes?**

   - [ ] butter and milk
   - [ ] salt and water
   - [ ] cheese

3. **Who took a second helping?**

   - [ ] Uncle Joe
   - [ ] Mom
   - [ ] Ben

4. **Why did Ben's arms get tired?**

Draw a picture of your favorite part.

 Name _____ Date _____

A Day to Say Thanks

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

For many years Thanksgiving was held on different days in different states. A writer named Sarah Josepha Hale wrote letters to presidents for 17 years, asking for one national day of thanks. In 1863 President Abraham Lincoln agreed and named a day in November. In 1941 Congress made it the fourth Thursday of November every year. That is why Thanksgiving moves to a different date each year, but it is always on a Thursday.

1. **Who wrote letters asking for a national day of thanks?**

   ☐ Sarah Josepha Hale ☐ Martha Washington ☐ Abraham Lincoln

2. **Which president agreed in 1863?**

   ☐ George Washington ☐ Abraham Lincoln ☐ Franklin Roosevelt

3. **On which day of the week is Thanksgiving?**

   ☐ Monday ☐ Thursday ☐ Sunday

4. **Which Thursday of November is Thanksgiving?**

Draw a picture of your favorite part.

ANSWERS

Thanksgiving Reading Comprehension

For the grown-up.

Sheet 1: a pumpkin pie the sugar and the spice
cinnamon the pie needed to cool all night

Sheet 2: the Mayflower Massasoit
three five deer

Sheet 3: Mr. Diaz a thing they were thankful for
Biscuit his new baby sister

Sheet 4: English corn
small fish Europe

Sheet 5: twelve Dad
yams the best table

Sheet 6: a poult only the toms
in trees Benjamin Franklin

Sheet 7: two weeks before Thanksgiving two cans of corn and a box of rice
64 the food bank

Sheet 8: it grows from a flower and has seeds green
Illinois roast the seeds and eat them

Sheet 9: four hours 37
hot chocolate his old dog, Pepper

Sheet 10: New York City 1924
Felix the Cat the Central Park Zoo

Sheet 11: mashing the potatoes butter and milk
Uncle Joe he pushed the masher up and down

Sheet 12: Sarah Josepha Hale Abraham Lincoln
Thursday the fourth Thursday

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