

# Thanksgiving Traditions

(November 2017)

Thanksgiving is a public holiday in the United States. It has been celebrated on and off since 1879. At Thanksgiving, we tend to have lots of good food, spend time with those we love, watch or take part in football games, and tune into parades. Everyone seems to have his or her distinct customs as well. Here are some of the more common customs related to America's Thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving is one of the most hectic travel times of the year. People who live far from their loved ones get on a plane or train or into their automobiles to travel as far as it takes to be with their clan. Lines are long and there is traffic just about everywhere you look. However, sitting down to hot food with family and pals can make travel a bit less frustrating.

Food is one of the best components of Thanksgiving! Wherever you are for Thanksgiving,

most tables will have a turkey, stuffing, and potatoes with gravy on them—probably among lots of other things. Likewise, pies are a good way to end Thanksgiving. Some all-time favorite pies include pumpkin and pecan.

Some Thanksgiving customs are shifting over time. One of them has to do with food. There are some families who host a vegetarian Thanksgiving. That means no turkey! These people could have a kind of turkey that is made out of tofu. Others pass on the tofu turkey and just dine on Thanksgiving side dishes such as stuffing and salads. Whatever Thanksgiving food you prefer, you really cannot get it wrong. It is sure to be fantastic!

After everyone consumes the turkey and all the trimmings, some families snap the turkey's wishbone as part of their Thanksgiving customs. The wishbone is located in the bird's chest. When it has had a bit of time to become dry and stiff, two people each take

one end of the bone and pull it apart while making a wish. The person who ends up with the bigger segment of bone is said to get his or her wish.

You have probably heard of this last one. Every year, the President of the United States gets a gift of a live turkey for Thanksgiving. In fact, he gets two, in case something happens to the first turkey. At a White House ceremony, the President “pardons” the National Thanksgiving Turkey and any substitute turkeys, letting them live out the rest of their lives on a farm. The turkeys are probably grateful for that.

When Thanksgiving dinner is complete and all the dishes are in the sink, a lot of families will do something else together. Some like going on walks to help work off all the food, while some nap. Still others compete with board or card games, watch a holiday film, or begin decorating for the yuletide.

Yes, every family has its own Thanksgiving customs. They can be common or distinct, and they

are all great! Perhaps the one Thanksgiving custom we all share this time of year is being thankful for what we have.

## Teacher Resources

This text passage is archived under *The Nation*.

### Text Easability Scores

If you would like to measure the text easability scores of this passage, please follow the directions below.

1. Visit the Coh-Metrix Text Easability Assessor website at <http://tea.cohmetrix.com/>. If you do not already have a login and password, create one. It is free and easy to sign up for access to the website.
2. Once you have created an account and sign in, you will be taken to a page with an empty, white text box. Copy and paste the text from this passage into the empty, white text box. Make sure you are only copying and pasting the body of the passage. Do not include the title, date, or any of the resources present in the passage.
3. When you have pasted the passage into the text box, click on the red button beneath the text box that says "Analyze." There will be a short delay and after a few seconds, you will see a bar graph appear to the right of the screen.
4. The bar graph will give you the percentages for several text characteristics including: narrativity, syntactic simplicity, word concreteness, referential cohesion, and deep cohesion.
5. Below the bar graph, the Flesch Kincaid Grade Level is also included for your benefit.
6. Lastly, a paragraph is provided that explains the meaning of the measurements of the text characteristics for your particular passage.
7. Once you have completed measuring your passage, you can click on the "Clear" button below the text box and measure another passage, if you wish.