

## THANKSGIVING MYTH-BUSTER WEB TREK: ANSWER KEY

(Updated Nov. 8th, 2010)

### A. INTRODUCTION

What do we know for sure about the first Thanksgiving? It turns out we really have only two sources, one from Edward Winslow's "Mourt's Relation" in 1621, and one about 20 years later, written by William Bradford in "Of Plymouth Plantation". We have a lot of myths about Thanksgiving however, which you will learn about with this web trek. Answer the student questions below in complete sentences, and stay with the two resources listed.

### B. ONLINE RESOURCES

Mayflower Myths:

<http://www.history.com/topics/mayflower-myths>

Thanksgiving:

<http://www.history.com/topics/thanksgiving>

Thanksgiving: Fact of Fiction?

<http://www.history.com/topics/thanksgiving-quiz>

### C. STUDENT QUESTIONS

1. Was the 1st Thanksgiving celebrated in 1621? Explain your answer.  
Since no tradition was established and the participants did not label their feast "Thanksgiving", it's a myth even to suggest that 1621 was the first Thanksgiving.
2. When did the feast we remember between the pilgrims and the natives actually take place? How long did it last?  
It's thought to have occurred sometime between Sept. 21st and November 11th, 1621. It lasted for 3 days.
3. We have a particular image of pilgrims. What is our image? How does it differ from what they actually may have worn?  
Pilgrims probably did not have buckles, as they weren't generally worn until late 17th century. Both men and women wore different colors, with black and white reserved for Sundays.
4. Who set the date for the current celebration of Thanksgiving? When is it celebrated in the United States?  
While many Thanksgiving celebrations were named, it was President Franklin Roosevelt who proclaimed the 4th Thursday of every November to be an annual Thanksgiving holiday. He issued his proclamation in 1939, and it was approved by Congress in 1941.
5. Where did the pilgrims originally hope to settle in America? Why did they change their plans?  
They were aiming for the Hudson River area, but because of high seas, they made landing in the Cape Cod area.
6. In Edward Winslow's journal from 1621, he described a feast expedition by then Governor William Bradford. How many men went, & what were they after? How many deer did the "Indians" kill and bring to the feast?  
4 men were sent by Governor Bradford on a fowl hunt to prepare for the feast. The Wampanoags brought along five deer.

7. Another Thanksgiving has sometimes been acknowledged as the first European Thanksgiving in America. Where was this? When? Describe it.  
In December, 1619, British settlers under Captain John Woodlief prayed and pledged their Thanksgiving near the Charles River by Berkeley Plantation, Virginia, for having survived the ocean voyage.
8. Did the Pilgrims eat pies at their feast with the Wampanoag in 1621? Explain.  
Supplies such as sugar were most likely not available, so pies and other sweets were not likely to have been served. Further, the Pilgrims did not have an oven at this time.
9. What kinds of spices were most likely used at the 1621 Thanksgiving feast, and why?  
Spices were most likely supplied by Native Americans, so their own traditional spices would have been used, due to the fact that by this time of year and without replenishing supplies, sugar and other spices would most likely have been exhausted from the Pilgrim supply.
10. Is it a fact, or is it fiction? Did one of America's Founding Fathers think that the turkey should be the national bird of America?  
Fact. Benjamin Franklin suggested the turkey should be the national bird.

#### **D. EXTENSION ACTIVITIES**

1. Discover more of what might have been on the pilgrims' menu in 1621:  
<http://www.history.com/content/thanksgiving/the-first-thanksgiving/the-pilgrims-menu>
2. Create a 1621 menu on a scroll. Compare it with a modern menu, created by your students of course.
3. Create a Thanksgiving cookbook, complete with recipes contributed from your students' families.
4. Use the following resources to learn more about the history, traditions, and events of Thanksgiving:

<http://www.cnn.com/EVENTS/1996/thanksgiving/food.history/>  
<http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/1127/p13s02-lign.html>  
<http://www.mayflowerhistory.com/History/thanksgiving.php>  
<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mosmd/>

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