

Guided Reading Level: L

Genre: Fiction

Text Features: illustrations

Lesson Objective: Social Studies

Students will identify celebrations and national holidays as a way of remembering and honoring the heroism and achievements of the people, events, and our nation's ethnic heritage.

Essential Question

What is Thanksgiving and why is it celebrated?

Lesson Objective: ELA

Students will identify and define multiple-meaning words.

Background Knowledge

Since the pages are not numbered, begin numbering the pages on the title page. The last page should be page 24, the copyright page. Number student pages as well so students can quickly move to pages as you refer to them in the lesson.

In a place where all can see, write the word *Thanksgiving* on the board. Ask students to read the word aloud with you after you read it once to them. Ask, *What is Thanksgiving?* Discuss student responses. Show on a calendar when Thanksgiving is held every year. Review the vocabulary words listed below, providing help with pronunciation as needed.

Vocabulary

autumn (p. 21)	prayer (p. 23)
beneath (p. 22)	reeds (p. 19)
bows (p. 11)	rejoicing (p. 21)
cattail (p. 19)	roam (p. 8)
cornfield (p. 16)	roots (p. 5)
crew (p. 14)	sandbar (p. 14)
deerskin (p. 3)	slender (p. 19)
fetching (p. 13)	sowed (p. 16)
gathering (p. 3)	spread (p. 22)
groaning (p. 22)	steaming (p. 15)
harvest (p. 22)	stew (p. 15)
linen (p. 2)	tracks (p. 11)
maize (p. 16)	turnips (p. 5)
parsnips (p. 5)	weaving (p. 19)
patch (p. 11)	
pottage pot (p. 5)	



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This First Thanksgiving Day: A Counting Story

by: Laura Krauss Melmed

Why This Text?

This text tells about the first Thanksgiving. It explores details about the Pilgrims and Wampanoag peoples who celebrated the harvest together with a feast. The text lends itself to many activities in social studies (history, holidays, culture, geography), language arts, and art.

Preparing to Read

Have students look at the cover and tell what they see. As needed, point out the autumn-themed elements in the picture (pumpkin, turkey, cornstalks, orange leaves on trees, and so forth). Explain that these tell that the picture is about a certain time of the year. Have students guess what time of year it shows. Remind students that autumn, or fall, is one of the four seasons. Write the word *autumn* in a place where all can see and ask students to help you come up with the names for the other three seasons.

Reading Fiction Text

For the first read, choral read with the students. Spend time discussing the pictures on each page before you go on. For example, on pages 2 and 3, ask, *What do you see in this picture? What is the boy doing? What are the girls doing? What do you find out about the girls by just looking at the picture? What can you predict about the boy just by looking at this picture?* Discuss some of the new vocabulary words on each page and show what those words mean by pointing to them in the picture, if possible. For example, on the same spread (pp. 2–3), the boy is wearing linen and the girls are wearing deerskin. Have students describe how the clothing is different and how the fabric it is made of is different from each other.

On the second read, have students whisper read with a partner. Circulate through the room and provide help to student pairs as needed.

Connect and Respond

1. *What are the people doing in the picture on page 4?* (They are working in their garden.)
2. *What can be concluded about the Wampanoag peoples by looking at the picture on pages 6 and 7?* Explain your answer. (I can conclude that they like to eat fish because they are out catching fish in the sea.)
3. *What does the text tell you about the activities of the people on pages 8 and 9?* Find evidence from the book to support your answer. (The text on page 8 tells me that they are looking for firewood. The text specifically states that they are “finding sticks to light the fire.”)

Multiple-Meaning Words

Write the word *bows* in a place where all can see. Have students read this word with you as you read it aloud. Look up the dictionary definitions of this word. Write them below the word. Count the number of definitions the word has. Explain that any word that has more than one meaning is a multiple-meaning word. Tell them that they can find out which meaning a word has in the text by reading the words around it. Have students turn to page 11 in the text and read the words aloud. Have them identify which definition the word has using the context as their guide. Provide other examples from the text of multiple-meaning words (*break bread* on page 22 is one example).

Language Arts Activity

Have students practice comparing and contrasting using elements from the text. Have them make a Venn diagram that has “Pilgrims,” “Wampanoag,” and “Both” written as titles. Have them use the book to figure out the similarities and differences of these groups of people. Have them repeat as necessary with other elements, such as comparing and contrasting seasons, geography, places to look for food, and so forth.

Social Studies Activity

Activity 1

Show pictures of the *Mayflower* and the Pilgrims. Explain why this group of people came to America. Tell how many weeks it took them to cross the ocean. Show a map or globe and point out where they left from and traveled to. Explain that their original destination was the Virginia colony, but they ended up landing in Massachusetts. Talk about how this group of people has impacted the founding of our country. You may want to talk about the Mayflower Compact and how it was a set of rules that everyone agreed to live by. Explain that this was one of the first examples of democracy by settlers in the Americas.

Activity 2

Have a mock Thanksgiving meal with the students. Create a meal where each element is a piece of construction paper cut out to look like a turkey leg, piece of pie, and so forth. Practice some of the handicrafts like weaving baskets out of paper and so forth, as described in the book. Explain why this first Thanksgiving was so important and talk about students’ Thanksgiving traditions at home. Make a chart and list these traditions, adding some of your own as necessary. Explain that everyone’s traditions may be different, but the overall purpose is that people get together, spend time with each other (friends and families), and think about the things they are thankful for.

Materials/Resources Needed

Venn diagrams for each student
class-size Venn diagram
picture of the *Mayflower*
map or globe
construction paper
markers or crayons
T-chart

Support English Learning

Offer realia, gestures, or photos to support the introduction of new vocabulary.

Introduce vocabulary at the start of the lesson so students can practice it throughout in both reading, listening, and speaking.