

Name _____

Date _____



Thanksgiving

Today we're going to talk about Thanksgiving...in just a minute.

When you think about Thanksgiving, what comes to mind? You might think of turkey, pumpkin pie, and parades. But the first Thanksgiving was very different.

In 1620, English colonists came to North America on their ship, the Mayflower. The colonists wanted to start new lives in a place with more freedom. But conditions were harsh that winter and almost half of the colonists died from illness and hunger. In the spring, they established the colony of Plymouth in present-day Massachusetts.

The Wampanoag were a group of Indigenous nations that had lived in the area for thousands of years, and the colonists had not asked permission to settle there. Both groups feared that the other would attack. A Patuxet Wampanoag man named Tisquantum helped them make peace. Tisquantum, sometimes called Squanto, spoke both English and Wampanoag and was able to translate conversations. He also showed the colonists how to plant food and survive off the land.

Thanks to Squanto, the colonists had a good harvest in the fall. They were eating and celebrating when some Wampanoag people came to investigate the noise. The colonists and Wampanoag people decided to celebrate together. This three-day feast of deer, mussels, duck, corn, beans, lobster, squash, and pumpkin became the first Thanksgiving.

Today, many people in the US view Thanksgiving as a celebration of gratitude and friendship. However, for some Native Americans it is a day of mourning for their ancestors who died from violence and sickness that came with the colonists.

If you were a guest at the first Thanksgiving, what questions would you ask?

