Thanksgiving Trivia

Use this key to check answers and read the explanations.

1. Which Thursday in November is the U.S. federal Thanksgiving holiday?
   - A. The fourth Thursday
   - B. The first Thursday
   - C. The second Thursday
   - D. The third Thursday

   Correct answer: A. The fourth Thursday
   The federal holiday falls on the fourth Thursday. In a November with five Thursdays, Thanksgiving comes before the last one.

2. What bird is presented for the annual Thanksgiving pardon at the White House?
   - A. A duck
   - B. A goose
   - C. A turkey
   - D. A pheasant

   Correct answer: C. A turkey
   The bird in the White House ceremony is a turkey.

3. Growers often flood cranberry beds to collect the ripe fruit. What lets the berries rise to the top of the water?
   - A. Long stems that act as floats
   - B. Air spaces inside the berries
   - C. Waterproof seed shells
   - D. Thick outer layers of ice

   Correct answer: B. Air spaces inside the berries
   Cranberries have internal air spaces that allow them to float once loosened from the vine.

4. In which month does Canada observe its Thanksgiving holiday?
   - A. December
   - B. September
   - C. November
   - D. October

   Correct answer: D. October
   Canadian Thanksgiving falls on the second Monday in October.

5. Which familiar Thanksgiving ingredient is a swollen storage root?

A. Pumpkin
B. Sweet potato
C. Cranberry
D. Acorn squash

Correct answer: B. Sweet potato
The edible part of a sweet potato is a storage root. Pumpkin and acorn squash grow as fruits on vines.

6. Which president proclaimed a national day of thanksgiving in 1863, during the Civil War?

A. Abraham Lincoln
B. Andrew Johnson
C. Ulysses S. Grant
D. James Buchanan

Correct answer: A. Abraham Lincoln
Lincoln’s 1863 proclamation called for a national day of thanksgiving on the last Thursday of that November.

7. Which magazine editor wrote to Lincoln in 1863 urging a national Thanksgiving holiday?

A. Elizabeth Cady Stanton
B. Harriet Beecher Stowe
C. Louisa May Alcott
D. Sarah Josepha Hale

Correct answer: D. Sarah Josepha Hale
Sarah Josepha Hale, the editor of Godey’s Lady’s Book, wrote to Lincoln as part of her long campaign for the holiday.

8. Which Indigenous people joined English colonists at the 1621 harvest gathering at Patuxet, where Plymouth was settled?

A. Seminole
B. Cherokee
C. Wampanoag
D. Hopi

Correct answer: C. Wampanoag
Wampanoag people joined English colonists at the gathering recorded in 1621.

9. According to Edward Winslow’s account, how long did the 1621 harvest gathering last?

A. Three days
B. One day
C. Five days
D. Seven days

Correct answer: A. Three days
Winslow’s account describes three days of gathering and feasting.

10. Which group of crops is known as the Three Sisters in a number of Indigenous farming traditions?

A. Apples, grapes, and cranberries
B. Wheat, oats, and barley
C. Potatoes, onions, and turnips
D. Corn, beans, and squash

Correct answer: D. Corn, beans, and squash
The Three Sisters are corn, beans, and squash. In this planting method, the corn can support climbing beans while the squash covers the ground.

11. Which Wampanoag leader at the 1621 gathering did English sources call Massasoit?

A. Metacom
B. Wamsutta
C. Ousamequin
D. Tisquantum

Correct answer: C. Ousamequin
Ousamequin, also known as Massasoit, was the Wampanoag leader described in the account of the gathering.

12. Which English colonist wrote the surviving eyewitness account describing the three-day gathering and the deer brought by Wampanoag participants?

A. William Bradford
B. Edward Winslow
C. John Smith
D. John Winthrop

Correct answer: B. Edward Winslow
Edward Winslow’s letter describes the harvest celebration. It records that Wampanoag participants brought five deer.

13. In what year did Franklin D. Roosevelt sign the resolution establishing the fourth Thursday of November as Thanksgiving Day?

A. 1945
B. 1933
C. 1939
D. 1941

Correct answer: D. 1941
Roosevelt signed the resolution in December 1941. It established the fourth Thursday for the following year and later years.

14. Which president explicitly granted a Thanksgiving turkey a presidential pardon at the 1989 ceremony?

A. George H. W. Bush
B. Ronald Reagan
C. Jimmy Carter
D. Bill Clinton

Correct answer: A. George H. W. Bush
George H. W. Bush announced the pardon at the 1989 ceremony. The pardon then became an annual tradition.

15. Which sequence puts these U.S. Thanksgiving milestones in order from earliest to latest?

A. The law fixing the fourth Thursday, Lincoln’s Civil War proclamation, Washington’s national proclamation
B. Lincoln’s Civil War proclamation, Washington’s national proclamation, the law fixing the fourth Thursday
C. Washington’s national proclamation, Lincoln’s Civil War proclamation, the law fixing the fourth Thursday
D. Washington’s national proclamation, the law fixing the fourth Thursday, Lincoln’s Civil War proclamation

Correct answer: C. Washington’s national proclamation, Lincoln’s Civil War proclamation, the law fixing the fourth Thursday
Washington’s proclamation was in 1789, Lincoln’s was in 1863, and the fourth-Thursday resolution was signed in 1941.