

## A Thanksgiving Story



The Pilgrims were a group of people from England who came to America to start a new life. They wanted religious freedom.

In 1620, 104 Pilgrims crossed the Atlantic Ocean on a small ship. They wanted to start their new life in northern Virginia, but bad weather pushed their ship north to land that is now the state of Massachusetts. They decided to stay there and named their new home Plymouth.



The Pilgrims arrived in America in November, 1620. The first winter was very difficult. The Pilgrims were city people. They didn't know how to farm or hunt. 50 of the colonists died of hunger, cold and sickness.



The Wampanoag were Native Americans who already lived on the land where the Pilgrims decided to make their new home.

The Wampanoag were farmers. Their name means People of the First Light. They grew corn, beans, squash and tobacco.



They also hunted and fished. In the summer they lived near the ocean and caught fish and lobsters and dug clams. Their summer homes were called longhouses. Many families lived together in the longhouses.



In the winter, the Wampanoag traveled inland, hunted animals, and lived in wigwams.

**The story of Thanksgiving says that the Indians met and helped the colonists in April, 1621. They gave the colonists food and taught them how to plant corn and catch fish. Slowly, life became better for the colonists. During the summer, they built houses and grew food to eat in the winter. They knew how to hunt and fish. The colonists were very thankful, and invited the Wampanoag to a celebration in the fall. Now, every year in the United States, many people celebrate this day as Thanksgiving.**



**Most historians agree that 50 Pilgrims came together for a 3-day harvest celebration and feast in 1621. They probably ate vegetables, seafood and maybe a duck or goose. We don't know if the Indians were actually invited to the feast.**

**The arrival of Europeans on this continent brought many hardships to Native Americans. At first, many native people welcomed the colonists. But over time, the native people suffered a lot. They lost their land, some became slaves, and millions died from European diseases.**

**For this reason, some native people don't celebrate Thanksgiving. Sharing and giving thanks are an important part of native culture and ceremonies of thanksgiving happen many times during the year. It isn't surprising that some Native Americans choose not to give thanks on a holiday that represents sadness and loss.**



**The Anishinaabeg (Ojibwe) gives thanks for the harvest of wild rice.**

### True or False

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1. The Pilgrims came to America in 1621.                                      | T | F |
| 2. They wanted religious freedom.   | T | F |
| 3. Thanksgiving Day is celebrated in November.                                | T | F |
| 4. The Pilgrims were farmers from France.                                     | T | F |
| 5. There were no native people in America when the Pilgrims arrived.          | T | F |
| 6. The Wampanoag farmed, hunted and fished.                                   | T | F |
| 7. They stayed in the same place in summer and winter.                        | T | F |
| 8. The Wampanoag helped the colonists build houses.                           | T | F |
| 9. Many native people died from diseases after Europeans arrived in America.  | T | F |
| 10. Thanksgiving ceremonies are an important part of Native American culture. | T | F |

### Vocabulary matching

Colonist	All of a farmer's crops when they are ready to eat or sell
Feast	A type of house used by the Wampanoag in winter
Harvest	A person from one country who lives in another land
Virginia	A large, delicious dinner
Celebration	A small sea animal with a shell
Wigwam	A colony of England in America
Clam	A special event or day