

EDUCATORS' GUIDE

MAGIC TREE HOUSE®

Thanksgiving on Thursday and **Pilgrims:** A Nonfiction Companion to Thanksgiving on Thursday



PB: 978-0-375-80615-5
EL: 978-0-375-89484-8
Grades: 1-4
F&P: M • Lexile: 340L

ABOUT Thanksgiving on Thursday

In *Thanksgiving on Thursday*, the Magic Tree House whisks Jack and Annie back to the eve of the first Thanksgiving. There they meet the Pilgrims as well as Squanto, a Native American who helped them. The story offers an age-appropriate, in-depth picture of what life was really like for early settlers, as well as the usual Magic Tree House adventure and excitement.



PB: 978-0-375-83219-2
EL: 978-0-307-97531-7
Grades: 2-5
F&P: N • Lexile: 550L

ABOUT Pilgrims:

A Nonfiction Companion to Thanksgiving on Thursday

What was it like to sail on the Mayflower? Why did the Pilgrims choose Plymouth? How did they survive in their new home? What did they really eat at the first Thanksgiving? Find out the answers to these questions and more as Jack and Annie track the facts.

CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

ACTIVITIES FOR Thanksgiving on a Thursday

A Thanksgiving CORNucopia

Jack and Annie learn quickly that the first year the Pilgrims spent in America was difficult and harsh. The wheat they had brought to plant would not grow well in the rocky soil. They might have starved if Squanto had not taught them how to cultivate corn. A staple in the diet of Squanto's tribe, the Wampanoag, corn was grown in different varieties-white, yellow, and red-and was eaten at every meal.

With a few simple materials and steps, your class can enjoy planting and observing tiny corn crops of their own!

MATERIALS:

- 1 clear plastic cup per student
- 4 corn kernels, of one or more varieties, per student
- Potting soil

PROCEDURES:

- Fill the cup halfway to top with soil.
- Use a pencil to poke holes near the sides of the cup.
- Place one corn kernel in each hole and cover with soil.
- Water until soil is moist.
- Place cup in full sunlight, keeping soil moist, not soggy.



Have students keep an Observation Log in which they measure growth and describe color and appearance of corn seedlings on a weekly basis for four weeks. When plants reach six inches in height, they can be transplanted.

Ground corn meal was used to make many dishes, including the delicious corn pudding Jack and Annie enjoy as part of the First Thanksgiving feast. Use the following recipe to prepare corn pudding with your students. Gather all necessary ingredients and tools for volume measurement (cups, tablespoons, teaspoons), emphasizing the importance of precise measurements. Have them predict what would happen if they used too much milk or not enough molasses.

INGREDIENTS:

- | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| • 2 tablespoons butter | • 3 cups milk | • 1/3 cup molasses |
| • 1/3 cup cornmeal | • 1 egg | • 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon |
| • 1/2 teaspoon ginger | • 1/4 teaspoon salt | |

PROCEDURES:

- Preheat oven to 300 degrees.
- Grease bottom and sides of a baking dish with 1 tablespoon of butter.
- Combine milk and molasses in saucepan. Gradually stir in cornmeal.
- Cook and stir over medium heat until mixture thickens, approximately 10 minutes.
- Remove from heat and stir in remaining tablespoon of butter.
- Beat egg together with cinnamon, ginger, and salt in a small mixing bowl.
- Gradually add egg mixture to hot cornmeal.
- Pour in greased baking dish and bake, uncovered, for 1-1/2 hours or until pudding has thickened.
- Serve while still warm . . . mmmm!

CURRICULUM: *Science • Math*

Walk Around in Someone's Moccasins

Many of our books that describe America's first Thanksgiving do so from the point of view of the Pilgrims who had left Europe to escape religious persecution and to make a new home. But what about those peoples for whom America was already home?

Discuss with students the different ways in which the-magic of the Wampanoag community-benefited the fledgling Pilgrim community in Plymouth and has continued to benefit modern America today.

Provide resources (books, Internet sites, etc.) and ask students to briefly investigate one of the following questions on the Wampanoag and to report back to the class:

How did they dress? (Men wore breechclouts or leggings, and women wore skirts made of deerskin. Deerskin moccasins were worn by all.)

What kinds of homes did they live in? (Wigwams)

What foods did they grow? (Corn, beans, squashes, pumpkin)

What animals did they hunt? (Deer, bear, beaver, rabbits, turtle, fish, crabs)

How did they show respect to the animals they hunted? (They asked the animal forgiveness before killing it and left behind some bones or meat as a spiritual offering to help other animals survive.)

What different-thanksgiving-festivals did they celebrate each year? (Maple Dance, Planting Feast, Strawberry Festival, Green Corn Festival, Harvest Festival, Mid-Winter Festival)

Have students write an essay in which they view the first Thanksgiving through the eyes of a young Wampanoag boy or girl. What are their impressions about these newcomers to their land? Are they excited? Fearful? Angry? Do they perceive the Pilgrims as friends or enemies? What differences/similarities between the Pilgrim community and their own strike them in particular? How do they feel about helping the Pilgrims survive in their new home? How do they feel about this celebration?

CURRICULUM: *History • Language Arts*

Teaching ideas by Rosemary B. Stimola, Ph.D., former professor of children's literature at City University of New York.

