

Thanksgiving in the time of Lincoln

Lesson Overview

Overview:	The lesson examines the origins of the American Thanksgiving holiday through primary sources.
Grade Range:	3-5
Objective:	After completing this lesson, students will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Appreciate the value of primary sources in enlightening events in the history of our country.2. Explain the creation of the nation-wide celebration of Thanksgiving in the United States.3. Summarize and share facts from primary source documents.4. Respond personally to the history of Thanksgiving by writing a letter to be shared with family and friends on Thanksgiving.
Time Required:	Two class periods of 50 minutes.
Discipline/Subject:	Social Studies, Reading, Writing, Technology
Topic/Subject:	Presidents
Era:	Civil War and Reconstruction, 1861-1877

Standards

Illinois Learning Standards:

Language Arts:

- 1-Read with understanding and fluency.
 - 1.A-Apply word analysis and vocabulary skills to comprehend selections.
 - 1.B-Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency.
 - 1.C-Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.
- 2-Read and understand literature representative of various societies, eras and ideas.
 - 2.A-Understand how literary elements and techniques are used to convey meaning.
 - 2.B-Read and interpret a variety of literary works.
- 3-Write to communicate for a variety of purposes.
 - 3.A-Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization and structure.
 - 3.B-Compose well-organized and coherent writing for specific purposes and audiences.
 - 3.C-Communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes.
- 4-List and speak effectively in a variety of situations.
 - 4.A-Listen effectively in formal and information situations.
 - 4.B-Speak effectively using language appropriate to the situation and audience.
- 5-Use the language arts to acquire, assess and communicate information.
 - 5.A-Locate, organize, and use information from various sources to answer questions, solve problems and communicate ideas.
 - 5.B-Analyze and evaluate information acquired from various sources.
 - 5.C-Apply acquired information, concepts and ideas to communicate in a variety of formats.

Social Studies:

- 16-Understand events, trends, individuals and movements shaping the history of Illinois, the United States and other Nations.
 - 16.A-Apply the skills of historical analysis and interpretation.
 - 16.B-Understand the development of significant political events.
 - 16.D-Understand Illinois, United States and world social history.

Materials

- Handouts:** KWL Chart
- Analysis Tools:** Photo Analysis, Letter Analysis, Written Document Analysis
- Books:** *Thank you, Sarah: The Woman who Saved Thanksgiving* by Laura Halse Anderson
Thanksgiving in the White House by Gary Hines.
- Other:** Kidspiration software, Smartboard

Library of Congress Items:

Title of Source: Sarah J. Hale to Abraham Lincoln, Monday, September 28, 1863 (original and transcripts)
 Creator of Source: Hale, Sarah J.
 Date of Creation: September 28, 1863
 URL of Source: <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mal&fileName=mal1/266/2669900/malpage.db&recNum=0>

Title of Source: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774-1875 Statutes at Large
 Creator of Source: Lincoln, Abraham
 Date of Creation: Sept 24, 1863
 URL of Source: <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&fileName=013/llsl013.db&recNum=764>

Title of Source: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774-1875 Statutes at Large
 Creator of Source: Lincoln, Abraham
 Date of Creation: Sept 24, 1863
 URL of Source: <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&fileName=013/llsl013.db&recNum=765>

Title of Source: Gardner photograph of Lincoln and Tad
 Creator of Source: Gardner, Alexander
 Date of Creation: 1865
 URL of Source: [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/scsmbib:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(scsm000777\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/scsmbib:@field(DOCID+@lit(scsm000777)))

Procedures

Procedure Step #	Resource or Material Used
Day One:	
1. Introduce the lesson by asking about how the children celebrate Thanksgiving in their home and family.	
2. Record students responses on a KWL chart on the Smartboard.	Other
3. Explain vocabulary: primary source, letter, proclamation, document, transcript, photograph, folklore, historical fiction.	
4. Analyze the Gardner photograph of Lincoln and Tad by giving each group a piece of the picture which has been divided into six pieces.	Analysis Tools LOC Items
5. Use ideas from the photo analysis forms to elicit responses from the class.	Analysis Tools
6. Show entire photo on Smartboard and discuss further.	Other
7. Introduce LOC site.	
8. Display Sarah Hale to Abraham Lincoln, Monday, September 28, 1863 letter on the Smartboard	LOC items
9. Use the first half of the Letter Analysis Form to point out parts of a letter with the whole group.	Analysis Tools
10. Distribute copies of the letter to partners to read. Complete lower half of the Written Document Analysis form. Share what students discover.	LOC items Analysis Tools
11. Distribute the transcripts of the letter and the proclamation for small groups to read. Share what students discover.	LOC items
12. Share copies of the Thanksgiving proclamation. Use the written document analysis form to discuss.	LOC items Analysis Tools

13. Add what we have learned about the creation of the Thanksgiving holiday to the KWL chart	Handouts
14. Repeat cycle if needed to address unanswered questions.	
Day Two:	
1. Read <i>Thank you, Sarah and Thanksgiving in the White House</i>	Books
2. Based on primary source documents examined in lesson one, confirm what is “true” in the books and what is folklore. Accept responses and add to KWL chart	Handouts
3. Make a Kidspiration web showing words and pictures and the most important facts about the Thanksgiving holiday.	Other
4. Write a letter about what you have learned about the Thanksgiving holiday to share with family and friends on Thanksgiving. Put the letter in an envelope and address it to the recipient.	

Evaluation

1. Kidspiration webs will be evaluated using a rubric.
2. Letter written by students will be evaluated as to elements of a letter, spelling, punctuation, grammar.
3. Observation of brainstorming, critical thinking, small group work, and individual work will be used to assess student success.

Extension

- Share photos of Sarah Josepha Hale, young and old, and a biography at <http://rfltest.dreamhosters.com/sarah-josepha-hale-award/sarah-josepha-hale/> or <http://media-2.web.britannica.com/eb-media/64/61964-004-D4CDCF03.jpg>
- Share The Ungobbled Gobbler folklore at [snopes.com](http://www.snopes.com/holidays/thanksgiving/pardon.asp) which explores the truth of the turkey pardoning folklore. <http://www.snopes.com/holidays/thanksgiving/pardon.asp>
- View other primary source documents at LOC about Thanksgiving i.e. states proclamations, changes in the 20th century, donations of turkeys to the president, photos of Thanksgiving during the Civil War, Etc.
- Visit the Teacher’s Page Thanksgiving Timeline at LOC
- Read other books about the history of Thanksgiving, Tad Lincoln, Lincoln’s other children.
- Research Sarah J. Hale, magazine editor, author, teacher, possible author of *Mary had a Little Lamb*.
- Have a music teacher play the Thanksgiving Hymn Lincoln commissioned in 1863.
- Encourage children to choose other works of historical fiction and “test” their accuracy.

Author Credits:

P. Storm
Carl Sandburg Elementary

What I KNOW	What I WANT to know	What I learned

THE MORE YOU LOOK, THE MORE YOU SEE PHOTO ANALYSIS



What I See (observe)

Describe exactly what you see in the photo.

*What people and objects are shown? How are they arranged? What is the physical setting?
What other details can you see?*

What I Infer (deduction)

Summarize what you already know about the situation and time period shown and people and objects that appear. *I see ____ and I think ____*

Interpretation

Write what you conclude from what you see.

*What is going on in the picture? Who are the people and what are they doing? What might be the function of the objects?
What can we conclude about the time period?*

Why do you believe the photo was taken?

Why do you believe this photo was saved?

What I Need to Investigate

What are three questions you have about the photo?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Where can you research the answers to your questions?

LETTER ANALYSIS



First Reading

On your copy of the letter:

Circle the date the letter was written.

Underline words you don't recognize or can't read.

Look at the letter:

Who was the letter written to?

Who wrote the letter?

From the salutation, do they appear to know each other?

Read the letter.

Go back and write in words that you think make sense for those that you underlined.

Choose one sentence from the letter and rewrite it here:

What about this sentence attracted your attention?

What do you think this letter is about?

After reading a transcript or listening to a reading of the Letter

What new information do you have about the letter?

How accurate was the sentence you wrote?

Why do you think the author wrote this letter?

Why do you think someone saved this letter?

What questions do you have about this letter?

How can you learn the answers to your questions?

WRITTEN DOCUMENT ANALYSIS



First Look

Type of Document (Check):

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Newspaper | <input type="radio"/> Map | <input type="radio"/> Report | <input type="radio"/> Congressional Record |
| <input type="radio"/> Letter | <input type="radio"/> Telegram | <input type="radio"/> Memorandum | <input type="radio"/> Census Report |
| <input type="radio"/> Patent | <input type="radio"/> Press Release | <input type="radio"/> Advertisement | <input type="radio"/> Other _____ |

Unique Physical Characteristics of the Document (check one or more):

- | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Interesting Letterhead | <input type="radio"/> Typed | <input type="radio"/> Notations | <input type="radio"/> Other |
| <input type="radio"/> Handwritten | <input type="radio"/> Seals | <input type="radio"/> Received stamp | _____ |

Date(s) of the Document;

Author (or Creator) of the Document:

Position (Title):

For what audience was the document written?

Document Content Information

List three phrases or statements that caught your attention or you think are important.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Why do you think this document was written?

What in the document helps you know why it was written? Quote from the document.

Why do you think this document was saved?

Was the document meant to be viewed by the public or a specific person or group?

List two things the document tells you about life in the United States at the time it was written.

- 1.
- 2.

Write a question to the author that is left unanswered by the document.

Gardner photo of Lincoln and Tad



PRESIDENT LINCOLN AND HIS SON THADDEUS.

THE LAST PHOTOGRAPH THE PRESIDENT SAW FOR.

Published by G. F. BROWN & Co., 42 BRATTLE STREET, BOSTON.

Sarah Hale to Abraham Lincoln

private

Philadelphia, Sept. 28th 1863.

Hon. Abraham Lincoln -

President of the United States

Sir. -

Permit me, as Editor of the "Lodge's Book", to request a few minutes of your precious time, while laying before you a subject of deep interest to myself and - as I trust - even to the President of our Republic, of some importance.

This subject is to have the day of our annual - at Thanksgiving made a National and fixed Union Festival.

You may have observed that, for some years past, there has been an increasing interest felt in our land to have the Thanksgiving held on the same day in all the States; it now needs National recognition and authoritative fixation only, to become permanently, an American custom and institution.

Enclosed are three papers (being printed these on costly red) which will make the idea and its progress clear and show also the popularity of the plan.

For the last fifteen years I have set forth this idea in the "Lodge's Book", and placed the papers before the Governors of all the States and Territories - also I have sent them to our Ministers abroad, and our Ministers to the brethren and commanders in the Army. From the recipients I have received, uniformly the most kind approval. Two of these letters - one from Governor (now General) Banks and one from

Sarah Hale to Abraham Lincoln Transcript

From Sarah J. Hale to Abraham Lincoln¹, September 28, 1863 Private Philadelphia, Sept. 28th 1863.

Sir.--

Permit me, as Editress of the "Lady's Book", to request a few minutes of your precious time, while laying before you a subject of deep interest to myself and -- as I trust -- even to the President of our Republic, of some importance. This subject is to have the day of our annual Thanksgiving made a National and fixed Union Festival.

You may have observed that, for some years past, there has been an increasing interest felt in our land to have the Thanksgiving held on the same day, in all the States; it now needs National recognition and authoritative fixation, only, to become permanently, an American custom and institution.

Enclosed are three papers (being printed these are easily read) which will make the idea and its progress clear and show also the popularity of the plan.

For the last fifteen years I have set forth this idea in the "Lady's Book", and placed the papers before the Governors of all the States and Territories -- also I have sent these to our Ministers abroad, and our Missionaries to the heathen -- and commanders in the Navy. From the recipients I have received, uniformly the most kind approval. Two of these letters, one from Governor (now General) Banks and one from Governor Morgan² are enclosed; both gentlemen as you will see, have nobly aided to bring about the desired Thanksgiving Union.

But I find there are obstacles not possible to be overcome without legislative aid -- that each State should, by statute, make it obligatory on the Governor to appoint the last Thursday of November, annually, as Thanksgiving Day; -- or, as this way would require years to be realized, it has occurred to me that a proclamation from the President of the United States would be the best, surest and most fitting method of National appointment.

I have written to my friend, Hon. Wm. H. Seward, and requested him to confer with President Lincoln on this subject As the President of the United States has the power of appointments for the District of Columbia and the Territories; also for the Army and Navy and all American citizens abroad who claim protection from the U. S. Flag -- could he not, with right as well as duty, issue his proclamation for a Day of National Thanksgiving for all the above classes of persons? And would it not be fitting and patriotic for him to appeal to the Governors of all the States, inviting and commending these to unite in issuing proclamations for the last Thursday in November as the Day of Thanksgiving for the people of each State? Thus the great Union Festival of America would be established.

Now the purpose of this letter is to entreat President Lincoln to put forth his Proclamation, appointing the last Thursday in November (which falls this year on the 26th) as the National Thanksgiving for all those classes of people who are under the National Government particularly, and commending this Union Thanksgiving to each State Executive: thus, by the noble example and action of the President of the United States, the permanency and unity of our Great American Festival of Thanksgiving would be forever secured.

An immediate proclamation would be necessary, so as to reach all the States in season for State appointments, also to anticipate the early appointments by Governors.³

Excuse the liberty I have taken
With profound respect
Yrs truly

Sarah Josepha Hale,

Thanksgiving in the time of Lincoln

APPENDIX.

themselves accordingly, and in conformity with the constitution of the United States and the laws of congress in such case made and provided.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed, this fifteenth day of September, in [L. s.] the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the eighty-eighth.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

By the President :

WILLIAM H. SEWARD, *Secretary of State.*

No. 8.

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: Sept. 24, 1863.

A PROCLAMATION.

WHEREAS, in my proclamation of the twenty-seventh of April, 1861, the ports of the States of Virginia and North Carolina were, for reasons therein set forth, placed under blockade; and whereas the port of Alexandria, Virginia, has since been blockaded, but as the blockade of said port may now be safely relaxed with advantage to the interests of commerce: Preamble.

Now, therefore, be it known that I, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, President of the United States, pursuant to the authority in me vested by the fifth section of the act of congress, approved on the 13th of July, 1861, entitled "An act further to provide for the collection of duties on imports, and for other purposes," do hereby declare that the blockade of the said port of Alexandria shall so far cease and determine, from and after this date, that commercial intercourse with said port, except as to persons, things, and information contraband of war, may from this date be carried on, subject to the laws of the United States, and to the limitations and in pursuance of the regulations which are prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury in his order which is appended to my proclamation of the 12th of May, 1862. Commercial intercourse with Alexandria permitted, subject, &c. 1861, ch. 3, § 5. Vol. xii. p. 257.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this twenty-fourth day of September, in [L. s.] the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the United States the eighty-eighth.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

By the President :

WILLIAM H. SEWARD, *Secretary of State.*

No. 9.

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: Oct. 3, 1863.

A PROCLAMATION.

THE year that is drawing toward its close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever-watchful providence of Almighty God. Day of thanksgiving and praise set apart.

In the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity, which has sometimes seemed to foreign states to invite and provoke their aggressions, peace has been preserved with all nations, order has been maintained, the laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has prevailed everywhere,

except in the theatre of military conflict; while that theatre has been greatly contracted by the advancing armies and navies of the Union.

Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defence have not arrested the plough, the shuttle, or the ship; the axe has enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than heretofore. Population has steadily increased, notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege, and the battle-field, and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years with large increase of freedom.

No human counsel hath devised, nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy.

It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and one voice by the whole American people. I do, therefore, invite my fellow-citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a Day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens. And I recommend to them that, while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners, or sufferers, in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty hand to heal the wounds of the nation, and to restore it, as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes, to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquillity, and union.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this third day of October, in the year [L. S.] of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the United States the eighty-eighth.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

By the President :

WILLIAM H. SEWARD, *Secretary of State.*

No. 10.

Oct. 17, 1863. BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA :

A PROCLAMATION.

Preamble. WHEREAS, the term of service of a part of the volunteer forces of the United States will expire during the coming year; and whereas, in addition to the men raised by the present draft, it is deemed expedient to call out three hundred thousand volunteers to serve for three years or the war, not however exceeding three years :

Three hundred thousand men called for. Now, therefore, I, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, President of the United States and Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy thereof, and of the militia of the several states when called into actual service, do issue this my proclamation, calling upon the governors of the different states to raise and have enlisted into the United States service, for the various companies and regiments in the field from their respective states, their quotas of three hundred thousand men.

Volunteers to receive advance pay, bounty, &c. I further proclaim that all volunteers thus called out and duly enlisted shall receive advance pay, premium, and bounty, as heretofore communicated to the governors of states by the War Department, through the provost-marshal general's office, by special letters.

to be credited to state. I further proclaim that all volunteers received under this call, as well as all others not heretofore credited, shall be duly credited on, and deducted from, the quotas established for the next draft.