

The Remedial Herstory Project

INQUIRY-BASED LESSON PLAN

STAGING THE INQUIRY

For this inquiry, teachers should consider opening with an intriguing and open ended question, then provide some background on this topic generally in the form of a video, brief lecture, or presentation. Close the introduction by asking students what questions they have, guide them in discussion to the question for the inquiry, highlighted at the top of the next page.

ACTIVITY TASKS

- Pose a broad open ended question. Provide background information.
- Students respond to questions in this packet independently or with a partner.
- Consider doing one of the following to extend the exercise:
 - Facilitate student discussion of the compelling question.
 - Facilitate a 4-corner debate.
 - Facilitate a structured academic controversy.
 - Students assume the characters involved and discuss the compelling question in character.
- Students craft an argument.

C3 FRAMEWORK

D1.1.9-12. Explain how a question reflects an enduring issue in the field.

D1.2.9-12. Explain points of agreement and disagreement experts have about interpretations and applications of disciplinary concepts and ideas associated with a compelling question.

D2.His.4.9-12. Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.

D2.His.5.9-12. Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people's perspectives.

D2.His.10.9-12. Detect possible limitations in various kinds of historical evidence and differing secondary interpretations.

D2.His.11.9-12. Critique the usefulness of historical sources for a specific historical inquiry based on their maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose.

D2.His.12.9-12. Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to pursue further inquiry and investigate additional sources.

D2.His.14.9-12. Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.

D2.His.16.9-12. Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.

Inquiry Activity: Why do Americans celebrate Thanksgiving?

Read the documents below. After each document set, consider, why do Americans celebrate Thanksgiving?

Document A: Thanksgiving

In September 1620, a small ship called the Mayflower left Plymouth, England, carrying 102 passengers... the Pilgrims, as they are now commonly known, began the work of establishing a village at Plymouth.

Throughout that first brutal winter, most of the colonists remained on board the ship, where they suffered from exposure, scurvy and outbreaks of contagious disease. Only half of the Mayflower's original passengers and crew lived to see their first New England spring. In March, the remaining settlers moved ashore, where they received an astonishing visit from an Abenaki Native American who greeted them in English.

Several days later, he returned with another Native American, Squanto, a member of the Pawtuxet tribe who had been kidnapped by an English sea captain and sold into slavery before escaping to London and returning to his homeland on an exploratory expedition. Squanto taught the Pilgrims, weakened by malnutrition and illness, how to cultivate corn, extract sap from maple trees, catch fish in the rivers and avoid poisonous plants. He also helped the settlers forge an alliance with the Wampanoag, a local tribe, which would endure for more than 50 years and tragically remains one of the sole examples of harmony between European colonists and Native Americans.

In November 1621, after the Pilgrims' first corn harvest proved successful, Governor William Bradford organized a celebratory feast and invited a group of the fledgling colony's Native American allies, including the Wampanoag chief Massasoit. Now remembered as American's "first Thanksgiving" – although the Pilgrims themselves may not have used the term at the time – the festival lasted for three days. *History.com Editors. "Thanksgiving 2020." Last Modified November 20, 2020.*

<https://www.history.com/topics/thanksgiving/history-of-thanksgiving>.

Document B: The Myths of the Thanksgiving Story and the Lasting Damage They Imbue: In truth, massacres, disease and American Indian tribal politics are what shaped the Pilgrim-Indian alliance at the root of the holiday

...When the pilgrims landed at Plymouth in 1620, the sachem (chief) Ousamequin offered the new arrivals an entente, primarily as a way to protect the Wampanoags against their rivals, the Narragansetts. For 50 years, the alliance was tested by colonial land expansion, the spread of disease, and the exploitation of resources on Wampanoag land. Then, tensions ignited into war. Known as King Philip's War (or the Great Narragansett War), the conflict devastated the Wampanoags and forever shifted the balance of power in favor of European arrivals. Wampanoags today remember the Pilgrims' entry to their homeland as a day of deep mourning, rather than a moment of giving thanks.

We spoke with Silverman, a history professor at George Washington University, about his research and the argument he makes in his book.

How did you become interested in this story? I've had a great many conversations with Wampanoag people, in which they talk about how burdensome Thanksgiving is

for them, particularly for their kids... sitting in school, feeling invisible and having to wade through the nonsense that teachers were shoveling their way. They felt like their people's history as they understood it was being misrepresented. They felt that not only their classes, but society in general was making light of historical trauma which weighs around their neck like a millstone. Those stories really resonated with me.

What is the Thanksgiving myth? The myth is that friendly Indians, unidentified by tribe, welcome the Pilgrims to America, teach them how to live in this new place, sit down to dinner with them and then disappear. They hand off America to white people so they can create a great nation dedicated to liberty, opportunity and Christianity for the rest of the world to profit. That's the story – it's about Native people conceding to colonialism. It's bloodless and in many ways an extension of the ideology of Manifest Destiny.

What are the most poignant inaccuracies in this story? ...Most poignantly, using a shared dinner as a symbol for colonialism really has it backward. No question about it, Wampanoag leader Ousamequin reached out to the English at Plymouth and wanted an alliance with them. But it's not because he was innately friendly. It's because his people have been decimated by an epidemic disease, and Ousamequin sees the English as an opportunity to fend off his tribal rebels. That's not the stuff of Thanksgiving pageants. The Thanksgiving myth doesn't address the deterioration of this relationship culminating in one of the most horrific colonial Indian wars on record, King Philip's War, and also doesn't address Wampanoag survival and adaptation over the centuries, which is why they're still here, despite the odds...



From the very beginning, a sizable number of Wampanoags disagreed with Ousamequin's decision to reach out to [the English] and tried to undermine the alliance. Ousamequin puts down multiple plots to wipe out the colony and unseat him... Some Wampanoags believed they caused epidemics and there were prophecies that this would be the end of the People.

How does your telling of these events differ from other existing scholarship? The main difference has to do with King Philip's War. The question is whether native people, led by Metacomet, or Philip as the English call him, were plotting a multi-tribal uprising against the English... This is about as contrary to the Thanksgiving myth that one can get. That's the story we should be teaching our kids. They should be learning about why native people reached that point, rather than this nonsense that native people willingly handed off their country to the invaders. It does damage to how our native countrymen and women feel as part of this country, it makes white Americans a lot less reflective about where their privilege comes from, and it makes us a lot less critical as a country

when it comes to interrogating the rationales that leaders will marshal to act aggressively against foreign others. If we're taught to cut through colonial rhetoric we'll be better positioned to cut through modern colonial and imperial rhetoric.

Bugos, Claire. "The Myths of the Thanksgiving Story and the Lasting Damage They Imbue: In truth, massacres, disease and American Indian tribal politics are what shaped the Pilgrim-Indian alliance at the root of the holiday." Last modified November 26, 2019. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/thanksgiving-myth-and-what-we-should-be-teaching-kids-180973655/>.

Based on these two sources, why do Americans celebrate Thanksgiving?

Document C: From Hale to Lincoln September 28, 1863

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.

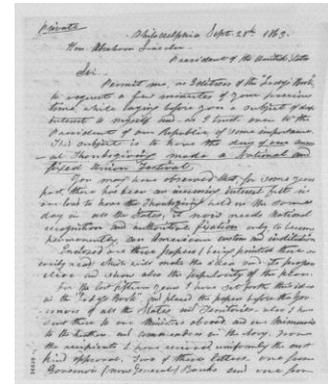
You may have observed that, for some years past, there has been an increasing interest felt in our land to have the Thanksgiving held on the same day, in all the States; it now needs National recognition and authoritative fixation, only, to become permanently, an American custom and institution...

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... From the recipients I have received, uniformly the most kind approval...

But I find there are obstacles not possible to be overcome without legislative aid... 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... 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...



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.

Excuse the liberty I have taken

With profound respect

Yrs truly Sarah Josepha Hale,

Lincoln, Abraham. Abraham Lincoln papers: Series 1. General Correspondence. 1833 to 1916: Sarah J. Hale to Abraham Lincoln, Monday, Thanksgiving. 1863. Manuscript/Mixed Material. <https://www.loc.gov/item/mal2669900/>.

Document D: Meet Sarah Josepha Hale, The Woman Who Convinced President Lincoln To Make Thanksgiving A National Holiday

Sarah Josepha Hale wanted Thanksgiving to become a unifying holiday that celebrated peace. Ironically, her campaign might have failed without the Civil War. Starting in 1846, Hale tirelessly advocated for a Thanksgiving holiday and encouraged her readers to write to their representatives. But some politicians were not receptive to Hale's activism. President Zachary Taylor threw up his hands in 1849 and said each state could set its own Thanksgiving day. Others argued that Thanksgiving violated the separation of church and state.

Southerners rejected the holiday as another Northern imposition. In Virginia, Governor Henry Wise scoffed that he refused to acknowledge the "theatrical national claptrap that is Thanksgiving." ...When war broke out between North and South, Hale saw Thanksgiving as more important than ever. In an editorial, she encouraged readers to "put aside sectional feelings and local incidents" to celebrate Thanksgiving. Instead, the holiday became even more divided. In 1861, Jefferson Davis [the president of the rebelling Confederacy] proclaimed a day of Thanksgiving after a Confederate victory. The next year, the Confederate President issued a similar proclamation. The Union states celebrated their own Thanksgiving in 1862 after the April Battle of Shiloh and in 1863 after the July Battle of Gettysburg.

...when Sarah Josepha Hale sent a personal letter to the president, Lincoln listened...Hale openly linked the holiday with the war effort, calling it "fitting and patriotic" to hold Thanksgiving as a "great Union Festival of America." The editor encouraged Lincoln to choose the last Thursday in November for the holiday in memory of George Washington's 1789 day of Thanksgiving. Since Nov. 26, 1863 was less than two months away, Hale gently suggested "an immediate proclamation would be necessary." Sarah Hale's dream of a unifying Thanksgiving looked farther out of reach than ever. Lincoln had just declared a day of Thanksgiving in Aug. 1863 for Gettysburg. It seemed a long shot to ask the president to declare a national Thanksgiving holiday a few months later.... Less than a week after receiving Hale's letter, Lincoln issued the proclamation Hale recommended. In his Oct. 3, 1863 proclamation, the president explained, "in the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity, the American people should take some time for gratitude." ...



Sarah Josepha Buell Hale, -1879, oval, half-length portrait, None. [Between 1850 and 1898] Photograph. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2005687170/>.

Hale was an important voice in 19th-century America, but she believed in the “secret, silent influence of women.” Although she promoted women’s education and argued for women’s employment, Hale did not think women should take a prominent role in public life. In fact, she was against giving women the right to vote... Because of her views, Hale was likely happy to let Lincoln take public credit for the national holiday while she secretly influenced him behind the scenes.

Carlton, Genevieve. “Meet Sarah Josepha Hale, The Woman Who Convinced President Lincoln To Make Thanksgiving A National Holiday.” Last modified November 23, 2020.
<https://allthatsinteresting.com/sarah-hale>.

Based on these two sources, why do Americans celebrate Thanksgiving?

Document E: 1800-1860: True Women, Separate Spheres, And Many Emergencies

“Man is strong – woman is beautiful”

In the first half of the 19th century, American women changed from colonial goodwives to people with more modern concerns. They went to school and knew a great deal more about what was going on in the world outside their own neighborhoods...

Sarah Josepha Hale... was a mother of five who was widowed young-she wore black for fifty-four years in memory of her departed husband. Pregnant with her last child, and nearly forty years old when he died, she tried to feed her brewed by selling hats, then by writing, entering essay contests with ferocious energy. She turned out poems (including one about Mary’s little lamb) and publish a novel, which she assured her followers had been written “not to win fame, but support for my little children.” In 1827, a Boston minister offered her a job running *Ladies Magazine*, a new publication that became the first magazine edited by a woman, for women.

It would be hard to find a more perfect example of the contradictions of 19th century womanhood and the workaholic editor continually reminding her readers how lucky they were to be presiding over the horrors rather than engaging in the “silly struggle for honor and preferment” in the outside world. The period before the Civil War was, for women, both a time of liberation and new restrictions. Teaching became a respectable career giving middle-class girls an option in life beyond marriage or dependent spinsterhood. Working-class girls entered the factories... A few female pioneers found their way into the professions and became doctors or ministers or journalists; others entered the public life as reformers or lecturers. But at the same time, Americans of both sexes were setting the most rigid rules for proper womanly behavior in the country’s history. Writers loved to list the qualities of the true woman, and they were always the opposite of the virtues of the true man. “Man is strong – women is beautiful. Man is darling and confident – woman is diffident and unassuming. Man is in great action – woman in suffering,” explained *Ladies Magazine*.

Men's and women's lives operated on separate tracks, even in society. At many dinner parties the sexes were actually seated at opposite ends of the table...men lived in a growing alternate universe of restaurants and clubs and theaters, women kept to their parlors and sewing rooms... Women were so cut out of public lives that even the holidays went on without them. The Fourth of July, with its military maneuvers and all-male parades, was the biggest occasion of the year. "Stayed in all day and saw the procession and all there was to be seen from my window," wrote a San Francisco housewife. As the nation got closer to midcentury, women gradually became the audience, clustering in yards and balconies to wave handkerchiefs, or perhaps sitting on special stands along the parade route. (Young ladies were promoted even further, to decorations on the floats.) Women's main response to being excluded was not to demand a chance to march, but to create entirely new holidays, which people celebrated by staying home. Sarah Hale led the effort to get Abraham Lincoln to proclaim Thanksgiving a national holiday.

Collins, Gail. America's Women. New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers, 2004.

Based on this source, why do Americans celebrate Thanksgiving?