

# Thanksgiving essay example

[Life](#), [Friendship](#)



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## **Introduction**

Traditionally, Thanksgiving is an occasion, mainly celebrated in the US and Canada, to offer special thanks to the almighty in appreciation of the abundance of food and happiness blessing our lives. In celebration of Thanksgiving, people get together with their friends and family over gourmet food and feasting meal comprised of delicacies including roasted turkey, potatoes, stuffing, dainty vegetables and pumpkin pies. A national holiday Thanksgiving falls on the fourth Thursday of November in the US.

Thanksgiving is a popular time of the year when people meet their families, travel extensively and indulge in a binge of shopping. Since there are many discounts offered on almost on all the goods sold in shops, it is a favorite season for shopping. Being a national holiday, most of the government offices, schools, colleges, universities, business houses remain closed on Thanksgiving. The entire country wears a festive look and revels in the

madness of the celebration on this day. Going forward in this article, I would like to delve deeper into the subject of Thanksgiving by throwing light on its historical background, the purpose of its celebration, misinterpretation of Thanksgiving by the current generation and Thanksgiving viewed from the eyes of a foreigner spending his first Thanksgiving in the states.

## **History of Thanksgiving**

The history of Thanksgiving dates back to the fall of 1621 when pilgrims and native Americans celebrated the joy of their successful harvest in Plymouth, Massachusetts amidst a three day long feast of fresh produce and merrymaking. But the mere celebration of good harvest did not translate into an annual celebration or national holiday overnight. What set the base for celebration in 1621 later on morphed into a sporadic tradition of offering thanks for specific blessings of life including the end of a drought, good harvest or a win in a particular battle. It was only in 1777 in the month of October that 13 colonies came together in celebration of Thanksgiving in unison. Thanksgiving got a national recognition in 1789 with President George Washington announcing Thursday, November 26 to be a day of prayer and thanksgiving in acknowledgement of the opportunity to offer thanks for the formation of a new nation and a viable constitution. Still, Thanksgiving didn't become an annual celebration. It was due to the efforts taken by a lady called Sarah Josepha Hale that the concept of modern day celebration of annual Thanksgiving came into picture. At a time when the civil war was bearing down on the integrity of United States, on her suggestion the then president Abraham Lincoln took the opportunity of bringing the nation together by declaring the last Thursday of November as a

day of Thanksgiving, thereby awarding it a status of a national and annual holiday. The successive presidents of Lincoln honoring the tradition set by him proclaimed the last Thursday of November to be a day of Thanksgiving. Only aberration occurred in 1939 during the tenure of President Franklin D. Roosevelt who taking the complaint of retailers into consideration pre-poned the day of Thanksgiving a week earlier, giving rise to a lot of controversy.

## **Purpose of Thanksgiving**

In our busy day to day life, we often forget to be thankful for the simple things that we enjoy but take for granted, such as food, clothing, health, shelter, job, family and friends. Thanksgiving gives us the opportunity to be grateful for what we have and offer our support to people who are going through some rough phases of their lives by inviting them to be a part of a Thanksgiving dinner and lighten them up. The purpose of Thanksgiving not only lies in being thankful for what we have but in giving back the joys we have to people around us who are in suffering. It is a time when getting together with friends and family, we refresh our memories by looking back to some beautiful moments of our life and recreate new memories. It is that time of the year when people forget their differences in opinion and conflict partaking in the celebration of unity and of being thankful.

## **Misinterpretation of Thanksgiving by the Current Generation**

Black Friday is the day that comes right after Thanksgiving, kickstarting a shopping season for Christmas. Now due to the retailers all around the United States giving a whopping discounts on Black Friday, Thanksgiving is losing its purpose as there are many people who try to get over with their

Thanksgiving dinner as quickly as possible to line in a queue for hours, shove their way into the retail stores to avail the special discounts offered on Black Friday. In order to manage the rush of frenzied shoppers, many stores open in the wee hours of Thanksgiving and therefore, people who wait the entire year to make use of this moment of opportunity of purchasing goods in an unusually lower price choose shopping on Black Friday over their Thanksgiving dinner. The melee over availing the Black Friday deals is very unnerving. There have been instances of an employee in Wal-Mart having been crushed under the feet of frantic consumers trying to get hold of the items on sale. Such incidents are becoming largely common these days. Therefore, it is time when we should reflect back and think if in the rush of getting good deals, are we not corroding the age-old essence of Thanksgiving along with our morals? Thanksgiving is a day meant to be spent with family and friends in appreciation for the simple things of our life and not in chasing good deals.

### **Thanksgiving in the Eyes of a Foreigner**

I am foreign to US, having come a long way from an Asian country. Last year was the first time I had the opportunity of spending Thanksgiving in the US. I was invited to a dinner thrown by a friend. I was thoroughly impressed by the Thanksgiving tradition of offering thanks for the little pleasures of life we bask in. The food, feasting and the conversation contributed to making my first Thanksgiving dinner a memorable one. I felt truly blessed of being a part of this wonderful custom that Thanksgiving offers.

## **Conclusion**

Thanksgiving is a meaningful occasion, coming on the fourth Thursday of November that gives us an opportunity to spend time with family and friends in reflection of the good things we have in our life. The tradition of Thanksgiving dating back to as early as 1621 did not change into a national holiday and an annual celebration overnight, taking few hundred years for the official Thanksgiving date to be announced. The purpose of Thanksgiving in being thankful and spreading the joys around is, however, losing its substance in the face of a huge craze over Black Friday shopping with stores beginning to open in the wee hours of Thanksgiving night. The current generation of people indulge themselves more in pursuing the deals offered on Black Friday than spending a night of festivity among friends. Personally my tryst with Thanksgiving has been a wonderful one. Having been invited over dinner to a friend's house, I have got the opportunity to indulge in the tradition of feasting and offering thanks for every simple pleasure of life. The very essence and purpose of the entire celebration is so meaningful that one is bound to bask in its glory, whether Christian or not.

## **Reference**

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