

The REAL Thanksgiving

WebQuest Description: This assignment is designed to open your eyes to the Thanksgiving Story, not normally described in the history books. Who were the people? What was the feast really all about? etc.

Grade Level: 6-8

Curriculum: Technology

Keywords: Thanksgiving, animation, technology, humor, holiday facts

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Introduction

In the Fall of 1621, The Pilgrims landed on the shores of what is now called the United States and started a new life. History books tell of a celebratory feast that consisted of various types of meats, fruits, and vegetables that were shared between the pilgrims and the indians. The feast as we know it is called Thanksgiving. The purpose of this lesson is to dive into the history "books" and research details that others may not know about. Tell of the celebration itself, the people and their lives. Perhaps, describe life back then and the relationship they had with the indians. Touch on the Mayflower and how hard it was to create a new life in America.

Tasks

When we think of the first Thanksgiving, we think of a picnic table covered with cornucopias of pumpkins, fruit, corn, and huge plates of turkey sitting closely nearby. We also think of Pilgrims and Indians standing around shaking hands and being friendly to one another. Did you know that the feast shared with the Wampanoag Indians (which we have come to know as Thanksgiving) and the first mention of Thanksgiving are really not the same event. During the first winter in 1621, 46 of the 102 pilgrims died. Thankfully, the following year resulted in a plentiful harvest. The pilgrims decided to celebrate with a feast that would include 90 natives who helped the pilgrims survive during that first winter. One of the most celebrated of those natives was a Wampanoag who the settlers called Squanto. He taught the pilgrims where to fish and hunt and where to plant New World crops like corn and squash. He also helped negotiate a treaty between the pilgrims and chief Massasoit. Your assignment is as follows: Dive into the history "books" and seek out interesting, odd, weird, and rare information that is not normally found in standard history books. You will gather three facts and the information surrounding them. Post your information onto the attached Google Docs file, with your name along side your entry. Create a 2 - 3 minute cartoon in GoAnimate describing the information and facts that you discovered. Don't be afraid to be creative and humorous. You are not being graded on your expertise as an animator. Have fun!

Process

Try not to simply google the information and plop it down on paper. Go the extra step to really conduct research and find facts that most people don't know about. You never know, using some of the tools noted below, you may find out something about your past family history that you weren't aware of. Research tools might include, but not be limited to: internet search / metasearch engines, ancestry books and sites, historical documents, videos, and audio recordings. Website to consider: Dogpile (Metasearch engine) Ancestry.com History.com Also, consider using the URLs that are listed below. Once you have your three pieces of information... and supporting information, go to the Google Doc listed below (#5) and enter your information as directed. Then, venture into GoAnimation (www.goanimation.com) and create your 2-3 minute story. See attached link (#6) for an example. Note... mine is only approx 30 secs. Yours will be 2-3 minutes. When all is completed, you will present your facts and video to the class. You will be graded using the attached Rubric. You might want to review the rubric before you're done. Learn something, and have fun!

Evaluation

Category and Score	Beginning	Developing	Very Good	Exemplary	Score
3 Facts posted on Google Doc	3 ordinary facts posted	3 interesting, but ordinary facts posted	3 interesting facts posted	3 interesting and unusual facts posted	25
Cartoon lasted 2-3 minutes	30 seconds to 1 minute	1 minute to 1.5 minutes	2 minutes	2.5-3 minutes or more	25
Animation told a clear story that contained three distinct facts	Story was unclear and disjointed	Story was clear but did not contain all three facts	Story was clear and contained three facts	Story was clear and contained three distinct facts	25
Project was completed as directed	Project was not completed as directed.	Project loosely followed the theme and guidelines	Production followed the guidelines	Production was precise in following the guidelines.	25
				Total Score	100

Conclusion

The idea of the American Thanksgiving feast is a fairly recent fiction. The idyllic partnership of 17th Century European Pilgrims and New England Indians sharing a celebratory meal appears to be less than 120 years-old. And it was only after the First World War that a version of such a Puritan-Indian partnership took hold in elementary schools across the American landscape. We can thank the invention of textbooks and their mass purchase by public schools for embedding this "Thanksgiving" image in our modern minds. It was, of course, a complete invention, and just another in a long line of inspired nationalistic myths. The first Thanksgiving Day did occur in the year 1637, but it was nothing like our Thanksgiving today. On that day the Massachusetts Colony Governor, John Winthrop, proclaimed such a "Thanksgiving" to celebrate the safe return of a band of heavily armed hunters, all colonial volunteers. They had just returned from their journey to what is now Mystic, Connecticut where they massacred 700 Pequot Indians. Seven hundred Indians - men, women and children - all murdered. This day is still remembered today, 373 years later. No, it's been long forgotten by white people, by European Christians. But it is still fresh in the mind of many Indians. A group calling themselves the United American Indians of New England meet each year at Plymouth Rock on Cole's Hill for what they say is a Day of Mourning. They gather at the feet of a statue of Chief Massasoit of the Wampanoag to remember the long gone Pequot. They do not call it Thanksgiving, and there is no football game afterward. Hopefully you have gained some insight into one of our nation's holidays and discovered that not all stories that you read in the history book are true to fact. It sometimes takes a little digging to find the REAL truth.

Teacher Page

unavailable
Standards

Credits

Other