

ACTIVITY. Match the seven headings to the correct paragraphs in the text.

HEADINGS:

A	A Very American Holiday
B	No One's Going Hungry
C	A Funny Ritual
D	What Happens Next
E	Honey, I Might Be a Little Late
F	Something for Everyone
G	Keep Your Eye on the Ball
H	Give Thanks to Those Who Were Here First
J	The Essence of Thanksgiving (EXAMPLE) 0

Thanksgiving

0. What better way to give thanks to the gods, weather, ancestors, or whoever it may be, than a big celebration. This is the spirit of the American Thanksgiving holiday. Celebrated on the last Thursday of November, it originated as a harvest festival, examples of which have existed since antiquity. Abundant food and time off work in the fields are two central pillars of harvest festivals: eating, enjoyment, and music are other common features of harvest festivals around the world.

19. The most well-known historic thanksgiving event in US popular culture is that of the Plymouth Plantation in 1621. After a harsh winter had killed half of the Plymouth settlers, the last surviving Patuxet Native American, Squanto (who had learned English as a slave in Europe), taught the Pilgrim colonists the basics of catching eels and growing corn and lent his skills as an interpreter to them. This led to a bountiful season celebrated with a harvest feast. The Wampanoag leader Massasoit also gifted food to the colonists during the first winter when supplies brought from England ran out.

20. Since then, the land of pilgrims and Native Americans has turned into the richest and most powerful nation on Earth, and Thanksgiving has changed alongside it. With a highly mobile population of over 330 million people, Thanksgiving weekend can be a difficult time. Almost every year, a record-breaking number of Americans take to the roads and air to find their way back from wherever they are working or studying to meet family. Some weary wanderers can spend up to 3 ½ times longer than usual on these trips. But the reward of being reunited with the family makes it all worth it.

21. Or does it? Bring enough people together, add some alcohol, old family feuds, a dash of politics, and you have the perfect recipe for a traditional Thanksgiving argument. However, the petty fighting can soon be forgotten when faced with the mountains of sustenance that comprise the main event of the day. Sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce, corn, every type of fall vegetable, squash, and pumpkin pie are among the side dishes commonly partaken of – all products native to the Americas. However, the star is, of course, the turkey, with an estimated 85% of Americans consuming it roasted and stuffed.

22. Tens of millions of the creatures are slaughtered every year to satisfy demand, but two very lucky turkeys live to tell a very different tale. Since 1947, the National Turkey Federation has donated to the President of the United States two live turkeys for promotional purposes. John F. Kennedy was said to be the first to spare the turkey - claiming he wasn't planning on eating it - and Ronald Reagan was the first to officially grant the turkey a presidential pardon, a PR stunt carried out in 1987. It has since become a permanent annual tradition.

23. For some Americans, the real highlight of Thanksgiving is not the food, the family or gratitude to God, but instead a different type of religion: the NFL. The Detroit Lions and the Dallas Cowboys always host a game, and since 2012, a third game, played in the evening, has been contested by division rivals, thus adding to the excitement. The CBS TV network awards the most valuable player of the match they broadcast with a cooked turkey leg, which the recipient then takes a bite out of for the cameras.

24. For those less inclined to watch men running around in protective gear and falling over every 10 seconds, Thanksgiving offers other forms of entertainment. In New York City, the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade crosses the city, while being televised nationally on NBC. Said to be the largest of its type in the world, the parade features floats with different themes, performances from musicals, enormous balloons of cartoon characters, TV personalities, and marching bands. The float that traditionally ends the spectacle carries Santa Claus, its arrival being an unofficial sign of the beginning of Christmas.

25. But before Americans start getting the decorations out of the attic, there is the little matter of the day after the Thursday of Thanksgiving: the Friday that is now popularly known as Black Friday. This day has routinely been the busiest shopping day of the year in the United States since 2005, characterised by chaotic, early-morning sales at major retailers that were closed on Thanksgiving. Such is the shopping frenzy that the event now actually starts on Thanksgiving, often around 5-6pm on the Thursday.

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