



Proclamation -- Thanksgiving Day

Thanksgiving offers each of us the chance to count our many blessings -- the freedoms we enjoy, the time we spend with loved ones, the brave men and women who defend our Nation at home and abroad. This tradition reminds us that no matter what our background or beliefs, no matter who we are or who we love, at our core we are first and foremost Americans.

Our annual celebration has roots in centuries-old colonial customs. When we gather around the table, we follow the example of the Pilgrims and Wampanoags, who shared the fruits of a successful harvest nearly 400 years ago.

When we offer our thanks, we mirror those who set aside a day of prayer. And when we join with friends and neighbors to alleviate suffering and make our communities whole, we honor the spirit of President Abraham Lincoln, who called on his fellow citizens to "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, tranquility, and union."

Our country has always been home to Americans who recognize the importance of giving back. Today, we honor all those serving our Nation far from home. We also thank the first responders and medical professionals who work through the holiday to keep us safe, and we acknowledge the volunteers who dedicate this day to those less fortunate.

This Thanksgiving Day, let us forge deeper connections with our loved ones. Let us extend our gratitude and our compassion. And let us lift each other up and recognize, in the oldest spirit of this tradition, that we rise or fall as one Nation, under God.

(Former President Barack Obama, November, 2013)

Work Sheet: Analyzing President Obama's Thanksgiving Proclamation

1. Is President Obama's Thanksgiving statement a primary or secondary source? Explain.

2. In the document, there is a reference to Abraham Lincoln. The President asked God to help the nation realize "full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility, and union." To what extent has the nation met the hopes of President Lincoln?

3. President Obama recalled that "Pilgrims and Wampanoags...shared the fruits of a successful harvest nearly 400 years ago." What does that suggest about the relationship between recent arrivals from England and Native Americans?

4. President Obama indicated that he sees the nation as one based on caring and mutual respect? Provide evidence from the document that this is Obama's outlook.

5. Based on your reading of the document, do you think Obama considers Thanksgiving a special holiday?

6. President Obama urges Americans to “count our many blessings.” What do you think he had in mind? What are your “special blessings?”
