

Lesson Plan: Mirabelle's Thanksgiving Adventure

Materials Needed:

- Construction paper (brown, red, orange, yellow, white, black)
 - Empty toilet paper or paper towel rolls (at least 2)
 - Crayons or markers
 - Child-safe scissors
 - Glue stick
 - A pencil
 - Access to YouTube
 - (Optional) Simple picture book about the first Thanksgiving
 - (Optional) Index cards or small pieces of paper for the food sorting game
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Day 1: The People of the First Thanksgiving

Focus: To introduce the Pilgrims and the Wampanoag people and understand their roles in the first Thanksgiving feast through storytelling and a creative craft.

1. The Big Question (5 minutes)

- **Goal:** To connect the lesson to Mirabelle's own experiences.
- **Activity:** Start by asking, "Mirabelle, what is your favorite food to eat on Thanksgiving?" Chat about the yummy foods we have today. Then ask, "Have you ever wondered what people ate at the very *first* Thanksgiving? It was a little different! Today, we're going to travel back in time to find out."

2. YouTube Story Time (10 minutes)

- **Goal:** To learn the basic story of the Pilgrims' arrival and their interaction with the Wampanoag people.
- **Activity:** Watch the video "The First Thanksgiving | A Little Einsteins Adventure" on YouTube. It's animated and presents the story in a simple, child-friendly way, focusing on friendship and helping each other.
- **Discussion:** After the video, ask simple questions to check for understanding:
 - "What were the two groups of people we met in the story?" (Pilgrims and Wampanoag)
 - "Did the Pilgrims know how to grow food in their new home at first?" (No)
 - "Who helped them learn?" (The Wampanoag, like Squanto)

3. Hands-On History: Crafting the Characters (20 minutes)

- **Goal:** To make the historical figures tangible and memorable through a fun craft.
 - **Activity:** Let's make a Pilgrim and a Wampanoag friend!
 1. Take two empty toilet paper rolls. These will be the bodies.
 2. **For the Pilgrim:** Use black construction paper to make a simple hat and a belt with a
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yellow buckle. Use white paper to make a collar. Glue these onto one of the rolls. Draw a simple, friendly face.

3. **For the Wampanoag friend:** Use brown construction paper to create a simple tunic or headband. You can add a colorful feather made from red or yellow paper. Draw a friendly face on this roll, too.
4. As you craft, talk about the people they represent. "This Pilgrim traveled a long way on a ship called the Mayflower. This Wampanoag friend already lived here and knew the land very well."

4. Drawing the Feast (10 minutes)

- **Goal:** To apply knowledge by thinking critically about what foods were available at the first feast.
- **Activity:** Give Mirabelle a piece of paper. Say, "Let's imagine you were invited to the first feast! Using your new friends for inspiration, can you draw some foods the Pilgrims and the Wampanoag might have shared?" Encourage her to draw things like corn, fish, deer, and berries, not modern foods like pie or mac & cheese. This is a great, gentle way to assess what she learned.

Day 2: Thanksgiving Then & Now

Focus: To connect the historical event to the modern meaning of Thanksgiving (gratitude) and compare past and present traditions.

1. Welcome Back, Friends! (5 minutes)

- **Goal:** To review yesterday's lesson.
- **Activity:** Bring out the Pilgrim and Wampanoag figures Mirabelle made. Ask, "Do you remember who our friends are? Can you tell me their story again?" Let her use the figures to retell the main points in her own words.

2. The "Thankful Turkey" Craft (15 minutes)

- **Goal:** To understand that the core meaning of Thanksgiving is gratitude and to practice expressing it.
- **Activity:** This is a classic for a reason!
 1. Trace Mirabelle's hand on a piece of brown construction paper and cut it out. The palm and thumb are the turkey's body and head.
 2. Cut out four "feathers" from different colored paper (red, orange, yellow).
 3. On each feather, help Mirabelle write or draw one thing she is thankful for. It could be family, her pet, a favorite toy, or a fun activity.
 4. Glue the feathers to the back of the turkey's "body" (the four fingers).
 5. Draw an eye and a little wattle on the thumb. Now she has a visual reminder of all the things she's grateful for!

3. Food Sort Fun: Then vs. Now (10 minutes)

- **Goal:** To creatively demonstrate an understanding of how traditions have changed over time.
- **Activity:**
 1. Prepare simple picture cards (you can draw them quickly on index cards) of different foods.
 - **"Then" Foods:** Corn on the cob, a whole fish, a deer, wild berries.
 - **"Now" Foods:** A slice of pumpkin pie, a bowl of mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce

from a can, a bread roll.

2. Create two piles or areas on the table: one labeled "Then" and one labeled "Now."
3. Ask Mirabelle to look at each food card and decide if it's something from the first feast ("Then") or something we eat today ("Now"). Let her sort them into the correct piles. This is a game-like assessment that is fun and active.

4. Parade Time! (5-10 minutes)

- **Goal:** To see how Thanksgiving is celebrated in a big way today.
- **Activity:** End the lesson on a fun, modern note. Find a short, exciting clip of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade on YouTube. Watch one of the giant balloons float by or a marching band perform. Explain, "This is one of the fun ways we celebrate Thanksgiving today! It's very different from the first feast, but the happy, thankful feeling is still the same."

Rubric Evaluation of Lesson Plan

Merit Category	Evaluation & Indicators of Excellence
1. Learning Objectives	<p>Excellent. The objectives are specific, measurable, and developmentally appropriate for a 6-year-old.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives like identifying the two groups, describing what they ate, and naming things to be thankful for are clear and can be directly observed through the activities (crafts, drawing, sorting game). • The focus is on understanding concepts (helping, gratitude, change over time) rather than memorizing dates or complex names.
2. Alignment with Standards and Curriculum	<p>Excellent. While designed for a homeschool setting without formal standards, the lesson aligns perfectly with early elementary social studies curriculum goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It addresses foundational concepts such as history (past vs. present), cultural traditions, and community. • The two-day progression (history first, then modern connection) is logical and builds knowledge sequentially.
3. Instructional Strategies	<p>Excellent. The plan uses a wonderful variety of teaching methods that cater to a young learner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods are clearly articulated in a step-by-step format. • It successfully blends visual learning (YouTube), auditory learning (discussion), and kinesthetic learning (crafting, sorting game). • Techniques like using character crafts for retelling a story encourage active learning and participation.
4. Engagement and Motivation	<p>Excellent. The lesson is designed to be highly engaging for a young child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It connects to the student's personal experience ("What do you eat?") and gives her a voice ("What are you thankful for?"). • The use of hands-on crafts, a sorting "game," and short, animated videos makes learning feel like play. • Personalizing the plan by name ("Mirabelle") adds a motivating touch.
5. Differentiation and Inclusivity	<p>Excellent. The plan is naturally differentiated for a single student and handles the historical topic with sensitivity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It offers built-in modifications, such as allowing drawing instead of writing for the "Thankful Turkey," which accommodates developing literacy skills. • The chosen video and crafting activities portray the Wampanoag as knowledgeable helpers and integral to the story, promoting a respectful and inclusive historical perspective.
6. Assessment Methods	<p>Excellent. Assessments are formative, seamlessly integrated, and directly measure the objectives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding is checked through low-stakes, creative outputs: the "Drawing the Feast" activity assesses comprehension of historical context, the retelling with character crafts assesses narrative recall, and the "Then vs. Now" sort assesses the ability to compare and contrast. • No stressful quizzes are used; assessment is performance-based and fun.
7. Organization and Clarity	<p>Excellent. The plan is exceptionally well-organized and easy to follow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The two-day structure is clear, with each day having a distinct focus. • Each activity includes a stated goal, followed by simple, numbered steps. • Transitions are logical (e.g., using the craft from Day 1 to start the review on Day 2). The clarity makes it easy for any parent or teacher to implement.

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<p>8. Creativity and Innovation</p>	<p>Excellent. The lesson strongly emphasizes creativity and application over rote learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities like making toilet paper roll figures and the food sorting game are creative ways to interact with historical content. • The "Thankful Turkey" craft innovatively connects a historical event to a personal, abstract concept (gratitude). • The plan encourages critical thinking (e.g., "What foods would they have had *then*?"), pushing beyond simple memorization of the Thanksgiving story.
<p>9. Materials and Resource Management</p>	<p>Excellent. The plan uses simple, accessible, and low-cost materials.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The materials list is detailed and consists of common household and craft supplies. • It makes effective use of free online resources (YouTube), eliminating the need for special purchases. • All materials are age-appropriate and safe for a 6-year-old.