

Name _____



Beyond The Plate

Directions: Read the following informational text about the history and evolution of Thanksgiving. Then, use the information from the text to answer the questions that follow.

A Holiday in Progress

Most people know about the famous harvest feast of 1621, but did you know that Thanksgiving was not an official national holiday for over two hundred years after that? For a long time, different states celebrated it on different days. It was not until the middle of the **American Civil War** in 1863 that President Abraham Lincoln declared a national day of Thanksgiving. He hoped it would help bring a divided country together during a very difficult time.

The way we celebrate has also changed because of **technology**. In the early years, the holiday was strictly about giving thanks for a successful harvest and surviving the winter. There were no parades or football games. The first **Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade** did not happen until 1924. It was actually started by store employees who wanted to celebrate the beginning of the Christmas shopping season. They even used live animals from the Central Park Zoo!

Another major change involves the food. While we think of turkey as the star of the show, the 1621 feast relied heavily on **seafood** like mussels and lobster, as well as native fruits like cranberries. However, they did not have sugar to make cranberry sauce. Today, Thanksgiving is a blend of these old traditions and new customs, like watching sports or volunteering at food banks to help others in the **community**.

1. According to the passage, which President finally made Thanksgiving a national holiday?
2. What was the **original purpose** of the holiday before parades and football were added?
3. Why did the employees of Macy's start the very first parade in 1924?
4. Name two types of **seafood** that were eaten at the 1621 feast but are less common at Thanksgiving today.
5. How did the lack of **sugar** affect the way people ate cranberries in the 1600s?
6. Based on the text, why did President Lincoln choose to declare the holiday during the Civil War?