

Thanksgiving and Black Friday Traditions

Difficulty:



Date of release:

Friday 09 December 2011

Discussion activities to be done after completing this EA lesson

Today's report is about Thanksgiving and the day after Thanksgiving. What do Americans generally do on Thanksgiving? Are there also traditions for the day after? How do people generally spend that day?

Extension discussion topics

A. Talking about and going over the specific topic / idea / issue in listening text

Introduction = What do people do on Thanksgiving? What do they do on Black Friday?

1. What do you remember about Thanksgiving? When is it? How is it celebrated?

- fourth Thursday in November.
- family gatherings.
- big meal that generally includes turkey, stuffing and pumpkin pie.

2. What is Black Friday? What sorts of things do people do on that day?

- the day after Thanksgiving.
- shopping is a popular activity.
- going to the movies or out to coffee.

What do you like to do on holidays?

3. Whose Black Friday activities do we hear about? What are they doing?

- Amy Sosin: no shopping; too scary! (too many people in the shops) Family time; spend time together, play games, watch a movie.
- Megan Wright: no shopping; movies, maybe out to coffee.
- the Flores family: shopping on the drive back home to Florida.
- Helen Zinner: resting and relaxing because she ate too much the day before and went to bed too late.

B. Expanding on (one of) the topics / ideas / issues in listening text

Topic = Holidays.

1. Thanksgiving is a holiday that most Americans think of as being “typically American”, but there are some other countries that celebrate something similar. Does your country have a particular day when people think about the gifts they have been given in life (good health, family, education, enough food, etc.)? How do people celebrate this day? Do most people have to work on this day?
2. Is there a particular holiday that is celebrated only in your country? Only in your region? How is this holiday celebrated?
3. In the U.S., there are a lot of holidays where people who work in offices or schools do not have to work, but people who work in stores, restaurants, cinemas and other service-oriented positions have to work. Do you think this is fair? Are there holidays like this in your country?
4. How many holidays are there in your country where most people do not have to work? Do you know how your country compares to the rest of the world?

OR, Topic = Black Friday.

Find out all you can about Black Friday and give an oral presentation of your findings to a partner or to your teacher. Why do people call the day after Thanksgiving Black Friday? You can start here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Friday_%28shopping%29

C. Extending discussion of (one of) the topics / ideas / issues in listening text

Topic = Capital cities.

1. In the report, we learned about the Flores family coming to Washington, D.C., to visit monuments, government buildings and historical places. Do you know of any of these types of places in Washington, D.C.? Do you recognize any of the images on the Wikipedia page for Washington, D.C.? (See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington,_D.C.)
2. What is the capital city in your country? What do people visit when they come to the city? Do you know of any places in the capital that most people do not visit, but that you think are very interesting? Do you have a favorite place to visit in your capital city?
3. Have you visited any capital cities outside your country? Which ones? Describe your visit. Which capital city in the world would you most like to visit?
4. How many capital cities can you name in Africa? Asia? Europe? North and South America? Oceania? (The teacher could break the class into small groups that would each work on one continent, or would try to come up with as many capital names as possible, to see which group found the most. They could also try to think of one interesting detail for each capital.)

Audioscript

Our question this week comes from Kazakhstan. Stanislav Ukiyev wants to know about Thanksgiving holiday traditions in the United States.

Thanksgiving is observed on the fourth Thursday in November. The day usually involves family gatherings leading up to a big dinner. The main dish is often turkey with stuffing. After dinner, sweet treats are usually offered. Pumpkin pie is a popular choice.

Many Americans also have customs for the day after Thanksgiving, which has come to be known as Black Friday. Probably the one custom you have heard of is shopping. Many stores have big sales. Store owners lower prices to help increase business at the start of Christmas shopping season.

We talked to people around Washington to see if shopping was the tradition they followed on Black Friday. It is decidedly not the activity of choice for Amy Sosin of Arlington, Virginia.

"Well, we don't have a specific tradition except that we make it a point not to go shopping on Black Friday, because it scares all of us. We usually just do family time. We might watch a movie, just spend time together and play games."

Megan Wright is of the same opinion. She is from Santa Monica, California.

"I prefer not to shop. Usually we go to the movies, and perhaps out to coffee."

Megan Wright says she plans to see the new movie "The Muppets" on Black Friday.

The Flores family is from Orlando, Florida. They are spending this Thanksgiving in Washington. Jose Flores says his children love to study American history at school. So they decided to come to the nation's capital this holiday. They are visiting monuments, government buildings and other historical places.

But Mrs. Flores says there will be some shopping Friday on the drive back to Florida. She plans to stop at some stores along the way.

Helen Zinner is from San Antonio, Texas. She describes her traditional Thanksgiving Friday.

"Probably resting and relaxing from eating too much and spending time with family until late into the night before."