



LESSON PLAN

The Real Story of Thanksgiving

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LESSON PLAN

Goals

The goal of this lesson is to deconstruct the story of Thanksgiving and reframe it from a Native American perspective. Students will learn the significance of annual times of harvest in the Wampanoag and Pilgrim cultures by comparing and contrasting the ways in which these holidays were observed.

Standards

This course is designed to meet the following standards for English Language Arts: W.9-10.1; RH.9-10.1; RH.9-10.2; WHST.9-10.8; WHST.9-10.9; SL.11-12.2; SL.11-12.3; RH.9-10.9; WHST.9-10.2; RST.9-10.7; RST.9-10.9; W.9-10.3; RH.11-12.1; RH.11-12.2

Courses and Grade Level

This lesson is designed for use in upper division, high school classes, but it can be modified for earlier grade levels, as well as college-level curriculum use.

Unit Length

This lesson plan requires approximately a week of instruction time.

- 225 minutes of classroom time, broken up into five 45 minute segments
- 3 hours of homework time

Required Materials

- Computer/laptop/ipad
- Internet access



OBJECTIVES AND ASSESSMENT

Students will be able to:	CA Standards:	Learning Activity	Evidenced By:
Students will be exposed to the deeper motives involved in the creation of the Thanksgiving Holiday.	W.9-10.1 RH.9-10.1 RH.9-10.2	Video News sources	Video Activity Discussion Homework Assignment
Students will understand how the misrepresentation of the Wampanoag people affects their current reality and how the birth of The National Day of Mourning came about.	WHST.9-10.8	Group Activity	Video Discussion
Students will understand the Native Americans and colonist relationship.	WHST.9-10.9	Worksheet	Video Quiz
The real Harvest Feast versus Thanksgiving and the impact of the False narrative on American society.	SL.11-12.2 SL.11-12.3 RH.9-10.9	Video	Homework Assignment
Students will gain a comprehensive overview of the historical relationship between food and gratitude from the past to present.	WHST.9-10.2 RST.9-10.7 RST.9-10.9	Video	Worksheet
Students will understand colonization and how it's logics get codified into American ideology and core American "myths" that uphold white supremacy and ongoing colonization, erasure of genocide.	W.9-10.3 RH.11-12.1 RH.11-12.2	Videos	Homework Worksheets



Handouts

Drawing and Symbolism Worksheet
Life in the Wampanoag Moccasins Video Worksheet
Life in the Settlers' Shoes Video Worksheet
Mourt's Relations: A Letter Sent from New England to a Friend . . .
The Actual Harvest Feast
Thanksgiving Perspectives
Group Email/Text Homework
Massasoit's Relations
Critical Thinking Take Home Essay

Video Resources

[The First Thanksgiving: What Really Happened | Uncivil History](#)
[Plimoth Plantation: Virtual Field Trip](#)
[Kimberlé Crenshaw: What is Intersectionality?](#)
[Thanksgiving Through Native Eyes | MashpeeTV](#)
[National Day of Mourning](#)
[Thanksgiving from Wampanoag Youth](#)

Readings

[The True Indigenous History of Thanksgiving](#)
[3 Ways to Decolonize Thanksgiving](#)
[Keepunumuk: Weeâchumun's Thanksgiving Story](#)

Additional Teacher Resources

[The First Thanksgiving Teaching Guide: Grades 6–8](#)
[Thanksgiving Lesson Plans and Resources](#)
[Thanksgiving Activities and Worksheets](#)
[Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe](#)
[Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project History](#)
[Frank James and the History of the National Day of Mourning](#)
[The Four "I's" of Oppression](#)
[How to "Indigenize" Thanksgiving](#)





INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

DAY 1: LIFE IN THE FIRST PEOPLES' MOCCASINS

Duration	Activity	Steps and Instructions
5 minutes	Opening Exercise	Introduce the topic and have students complete the "Drawing and Symbolism Thanksgiving Worksheet." Have the students put these aside until after the videos.
5 minutes	Teacher Presentation	Introduce the history of the Wampanoag People.
10 minutes	Video and Reflection	Distribute the worksheet, "Life in the Wampanoag Moccasins." Ask students to fill in the worksheet while watching the videos. Have students submit worksheets, then review correct answers. Play video We are Still Here: 400 Years of Wampanoag History .
6 minutes	Video and Reflection	Play video The First Thanksgiving: What Really Happened Uncivil History .
15 minutes	Video and Reflection	Play video Thanksgiving Through Native Eyes MashpeeTV .
10 minutes	Discussion	Ask students to tape their pictures to a wall. Encourage them to look at each others' images and share their drawings with the class, particularly any imagery of the Wampanoag people. Ask students: "What stood out to them about the Wampanoag Perspective?"



DAY 2: LIFE IN THE SETTLERS' SHOES

Duration	Activity	Steps and Instructions
30 minutes	Video	Play video Plimoth Plantation: Virtual Field Trip . Distribute "Life in the Settlers Shoes" worksheet.
5 minutes	Discussion	Turning the attention to the Picture Wall, re-examine the images from Day 1 and discuss imagery of the Pilgrims. Ask students how their understanding of the Thanksgiving Holiday has changed. What would they change about their pictures?
8 minutes	Teacher Presentation Video	Introduce intersectionality. Discuss what we are missing out when we only hear one perspective on an issue/event, etc. Watch video What is Intersectionality?
2 minutes	Homework	Distribute "Group Email/Text" homework. Review it and answer any student questions.

DAY 3: THE ACTUAL HARVEST FEAST

Duration	Activity	Steps and Instructions
5 minutes	Teacher Presentation	Review the timeline of the Pilgrims' journey until the Harvest meal.
15 minutes	Video	Play video Thanksgiving Through Native Eyes MashpeeTV .
25 minutes	Group Activity	Distribute the handouts, "Massasoit's Relations," and "Mourt's Relations: A Letter Sent from New England to a Friend . . ." See teacher guide for instructions.
1 minute	Homework	Distribute "The Actual Harvest Feast" homework. Review it and answer any student questions.



DAY 4: THE NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING

Duration	Activity	Steps and Instructions
5 minutes	Teacher Presentation	Explain the National Day of Mourning.
10 minutes	Video	Play video The National Day of Mourning .
10 minutes	Teacher Presentation	Introduce Frank James and the birth of the National Day of Mourning. Then, choose students to read his speech out loud.
10-15 minutes	Discussion	See teacher guide for prompts.
2 minutes	Review Homework	<p>Have students read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The True Indigenous History of Thanksgiving • 3 Ways to Decolonize Thanksgiving • Keepunumuk: Weeâchumun's Thanksgiving Story <p>Distribute and review homework, "Thanksgiving Perspectives." Fill in a venn diagram comparing and contrasting the harvest feast and the thanksgiving holiday.</p>



DAY 5: HOW TO DECOLONIZE THANKSGIVING TODAY

Duration	Activity	Steps and Instructions
10 minutes	Teacher Presentation	Review the concepts of "erasure," "decentering" and "oppression."
5 minutes	Reflection	Have students write a written reflection, following the prompts in the teacher guide.
20 minutes	Video	Play video Thanksgiving from Wampanoag Youth .
5 minutes	Discussion	Ask students to share their responses to the video.
5 minutes	Homework	Distribute "Critical Thinking Take Home Essay." Review it and answer any student questions

GRADING

Activity	Points (100 Total)
Homework Day 2 - The Real Thanksgiving Group Text - 10 points Day 3 - The Actual Harvest Feast - 10 points Day 4 - Thanksgiving Perspective - 10 points Day 5 - Critical Thinking Take Home Essay - 10 points	40 pts
Class Activities Day 1 - Real Thanksgiving Video Worksheet - 20 points Day 2 - Life in the Settlers' Shoes - 20 points Day 3 - Massasoits Relations - 20 points	60 pts



Name: _____

DRAWING AND SYMBOLISM

Instructions: In the space below, draw a scene or a series of images associated with the Thanksgiving Holiday.

List 5 important concepts associated with the Thanksgiving Holiday.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



Name: _____

LIFE IN THE WAMPANOAG MOCCASINS VIDEO WORKSHEET

Instructions: Answer the questions and write the definitions to the following words as they are discussed in the videos. The Links to the video are as follows if you need to watch them again.

[We are still here: 400 years of Wampanoag History](#)

[The Real History of Thanksgiving, Uncivil History](#)

[Thanksgiving from Native Eyes, MashpeeTV](#)

1. Before watching the videos, were you aware of the Wampanoag Tribe? Discuss something that stood out to you about the tribal people in the 16th century.

2. What was *The First Washing*, and what did it signify to the Native people?

3. In what years did the Plague- or Great Dying hit the Wampanoag Nation and how did the settlers view this devastating event?



Name: _____

LIFE IN THE WAMPANOAG MOCCASINS VIDEO WORKSHEET (CONT.)

4. Describe Tisquantum and his role amongst the tribal peoples and the Pilgrims.

5. Why is it important for the Wampanoag People to tell their story?



LIFE IN THE WAMPANOAG MOCCASINS VIDEO WORKSHEET

ANSWER KEY

Instructions: Answer the questions and write the definitions to the following words as they are discussed in the videos. The Links to the video are as follows if you need to watch them again.

Grading: 20 points total

- Q1: 4 points
- Q2: 4 points
- Q3: 2 points
- Q4: 5 points
- Q5: 5 points

1. Before watching the videos, were you aware of the Wampanoag Tribe? Discuss something that stood out to you about the tribal people in the 16th century.

(Open-ended Question, Answers will vary) Key Terms: seasonal migratory, structured government

2. What was *The First Washing*, and what did it signify to the Native people?

The first moment when women and children stepped off the boat to wash their clothes. This was the first time Native onlookers would have seen women and children, which meant to them that these newcomers were there to stay.

3. In what years did the Plague- or Great Dying hit the Wampanoag Nation and how did the settlers view this devastating event?

1616-1619. The Pilgrims felt it was a gift from God who cleared the land for their arrival.

4. What was *The First Washing*, and what did it signify to the Native people?

Tisquantum or "Squanto" was an English-speaking Wampanoag man who was captured, taken to the European continent and England as a slave, and returned home. He was an English ally who taught them the foods of the land. He was also believed to be a traitor who wanted to overthrow Massasoit.

5. What was *The First Washing*, and what did it signify to the Native people?

(Open-ended Question, Answers will vary) Key Terms: Important to tell the truth, what really happened, how the arrival of the settlers impacted Native life at the time, and in the future.



Name: _____

LIFE IN THE SETTLERS' SHOES VIDEO WORKSHEET

1. Who was Hobbomock?

2. What did the "Pilgrims" call themselves?

3. How did the Pilgrims observe their days of thanks?

4. How did the Wampanoag people observe their days of thanks?

5. What year did the first harvest meal between the Pilgrims and Native Peoples occur, and how long did it last?



Name: _____

LIFE IN THE SETTLERS' SHOES VIDEO WORKSHEET (CONT.)

6. What foods were eaten at the harvest meal?

7. Why is it important for both the Wampaoag and the Settlers to equally present their versions of history?

8. How could the Plimoth Plantation video better represent the Wampanoag people?



LIFE IN THE SETTLERS' SHOES

VIDEO WORKSHEET

ANSWER KEY

ASSESSMENT/GRADING RUBRIC

Grading: 20 points total

- Q1: 1 point
- Q2: 2 points
- Q3: 5 points for listing the ways/contexts in which the Pilgrims gave thanks and what it meant to them.
- Q4: 5 points for listing each of the ways/contexts in which the Wampanoag gave thanks and what it meant to them.
- Q5: 2 points (1 for each answer)
- Q6: 3 points for naming at least 3 food items
- Q7: 1 point
- Q8: 1 point

1. Who was Hobbomock?

He was charged with the duty to Watch the English from Massasoit.

2. What did the "Pilgrims" call themselves?

In the 1800's found in the writings of William Bradford a passage said "they knew they were Pilgrims." However, they called themselves Puritans, Purists or Separatists.

3. How did the Pilgrims observe their Day of Thanks? (2 points)

They observed gratitude daily, especially when they were cooking and eating. Following a harvest, the Pilgrims fasted as their way to give thanks. For them, hunger reminded them of how thankful they should be with what God has provided them.

4. How did the Wampanoag people observe their days of Thanks?

Before, during and after hunting, the Wampanoag gave thanks. They also gave thanks through prayer before eating, before the sun comes up, and after it goes down. These ways of giving thanks have continued to the present day. Nowadays, Wampanoag celebrate several "thanksgiving" days, including the spring new year, strawberry (the first berry) thanksgiving, green corn thanksgiving, cranberry (the last berry) thanksgiving, and thanksgiving for the first snowfall. For the Wampanoag peoples, Thanksgiving is a time for feasting.



LIFE IN THE SETTLERS' SHOES VIDEO WORKSHEET ANSWER KEY (CONT.)

5. What year did the Harvest meal occur and how long did it last?

1621. 3 days.

6. What foods were eaten at the Harvest meal?

Name at least 3 of the following: Deer, fish, duck, clams, pumpkin, corn, cranberries.

7. Why is it important for both the Wampaoag and the Settlers to equally present their versions of history?

Opinion. Answers will vary.

8. How could the Plimoth Plantation video better represent the Wampanoag people?

Opinion. Answers will vary.



Name: _____

GROUP EMAIL/TEXT HOMEWORK

Instructions: Upload, capture a screenshot or take four pictures from various media (books, television...)

These pictures should include 2 pictures that misrepresent Wampanoag People, and 2 pictures that misrepresent the Harvest meal.

A. Explain how your images relate to stereotypes, discrimination, oppression and a false narrative of the relationship between the Wampanoag and the Pilgrims in the group text and in the space below.

B. Connect the in-class discussion on Intersectionality to answer the question: "What we are missing out on when we only see one perspective on an issue or event?"



GROUP TEXT HOMEWORK

ANSWER KEY

Instructions: Upload, capture a screenshot or take four pictures from various media (books, television...)

Grading: 10 points total

- **5 points for Part A. Images must conform to the directions**
- **5 points for Part B. Students must make connections between Intersectionality, representation matters, false narrative, American Nationalism etc.**

These pictures should include 2 pictures that misrepresent Wampanoag People, and 2 pictures that misrepresent the Harvest meal.

A. Explain how your images relate to stereotypes, discrimination, oppression and a false narrative of the relationship between the Wampanoag and the Pilgrims in the group text and in the space below.

B. Connect the in-class discussion on Intersectionality to answer the question: "What we are missing out on when we only see one perspective on an issue or event?"



Name: _____

MASSASOIT'S RELATIONS

Instructions: In your group, read Mourt's Relations and think about the possible gaps in his account about the Harvest Feast. What are some details that are missing? Answer the following questions.

1. What source/voices are missing from Mourt's Relations?

2. How would different people involved at the time think differently about the situation, or how would the situation affect different groups in society differently?

Write a description of the event from the perspective of Massasoit, the Sachem, of the Pokanoket who arrived at the Pilgrim Village with 90 Warriors.

3. Group Discussion: What is the impact on society when we only hear one perspective on a National issue/event?



MASSASOIT'S RELATIONS

ANSWER KEY

Instructions: In your group, read Mourt's Relations and think about the possible gaps in his account about the Harvest Feast. What are some details that are missing? Answer the following questions.

Grading: 20 points total

- 5 points for answering all the questions
- 5 points for citing key individuals from the Native American and Pilgrim groups
- 5 points for writing Massasoit's relation rooted in the reality of the times of 1620
- 5 points for at least one proven example of a societal impact, written clearly

1. What source/voices are missing from Mourt's Relations?
2. How would different people involved at the time think differently about the situation, or how would the situation affect different groups in society differently?

Write a description of the event from the perspective of Massasoit, the Sachem, of the Pokanoket who arrived at the Pilgrim Village with 90 Warriors.

3. Group Discussion: What is the impact on society when we only hear one perspective on a National issue/event?



MOURT'S RELATIONS

A LETTER SENT FROM New England to a friend in these parts, setting forth a brief and true Declaration of the worth of that Plantation; As also certain useful Directions for such as intend a VOYAGE into those Parts.

Loving, and old Friend; although I received no letter from you by this ship, yet forasmuch as I know you expect the performance of my promise, which was, to write unto you truly and faithfully of all things. I have therefore at this time sent unto you accordingly.

Referring you for further satisfaction to our more large relations. You shall understand, that in this little time, that a few of us have been here, we have built seven dwelling-houses, and four for the use of the plantation, and have made preparation for divers others. We set the last spring some twenty acres of Indian corn, and sowed some six acres of barley and peas, and according to the manner of the Indians, we manured our ground with herrings or rather shads, which we have in great abundance, and take with great ease at our doors. Our corn did prove well, and God be praised, we had a good increase of Indian corn, and our barley indifferent good, but our peas not worth the gathering, for we feared they were too late sown, they came up very well, and blossomed, but the sun parched them in the blossom; our harvest being gotten in, our governor sent four men on fowling, that so we might after a more special manner rejoice together, after we had gathered the fruit of our labors; they four in one day killed as much fowl, as with a little help beside, served the company almost a week, at which time amongst other recreations, we exercised our arms, many of the Indians coming amongst us, and among the rest their greatest King Massasoit, with some ninety men, whom for three days we entertained and feasted, and they went out and killed five deer, which they brought to the plantation and bestowed on our governor, and upon the captain, and others. And although it be not always so plentiful, as it was at this time with us, yet by the goodness of God, we are so far from want, that we often wish you partakers of our plenty.

We have found the Indians very faithful in their covenant of peace with us; very loving and ready to pleasure us: we often go to them, and they come to us; some of us have been fifty miles by land in the country with them; the occasions and relations whereof you shall understand by our general and more full declaration of such things as are worth the noting, yea, it hath pleased God so to possess the Indians with a fear of us, and love unto us, that not only the greatest king amongst them called Massasoit, but also all the princes and peoples round about us, have either made suit unto us, or been glad of any occasion to make peace with us, so that seven of them at once have sent their messengers to us to that end, yea, an Fle at sea, which we never saw hath also together with the former yielded willingly to be under the protection, and subjects to our sovereign Lord King James, so that there is now great peace amongst the Indians themselves, which was not formerly, neither would have been but for us; and we for our parts walk as peaceably and safely in the wood, as in the highways in England, we entertain them.

From: "G. Mours Relation" Letter from Reverend Edward Winslow- A Relation or Journall of the Beginning and Proceedings of the English Plantation Setled at Plimoth in New England, by Certaine English Adventurers both Merchants and Others, with the Difficult Passage, their Safe Arrivall, their Joyfull Building of, and Comfortable Planting Themselves in the Now Well Defended Towne of New Plimoth.



Name: _____

THE ACTUAL HARVEST FEAST

Read the passage about the first harvest meal from Mourt's Relations below. Then imagine you are a Settler who was there at the event and amongst the Native people. Write a diary entry about the Harvest Feast and include what you ate and observed about the Native people (300-500 words).

"Our harvest being gotten in, our governor sent four men on fowling, that so we might after a special manner rejoice together after we had gathered the fruit of our labors. They four in one day killed as much fowl as, with a little help beside, served the company almost a week. At which time, among other recreations, we exercised our arms, many of the Indians coming amongst us, and among the rest their greatest king Massasoit, with some ninety men, whom for three days we entertained and feasted, and they went out and killed five deer, which they brought to the plantation and bestowed upon our governor, and upon the captain, and others. And although it be not always so plentiful as it was at this time with us, yet by the goodness of God, we are so far from want that we often wish you partakers of our plenty." -

Mourts Relation



THE ACTUAL HARVEST FEAST

ANSWER KEY

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Mourts Relation

Grading: 10 points total

- 5 points for clarity of argument
- 5 points for offering the content: what they ate and observed



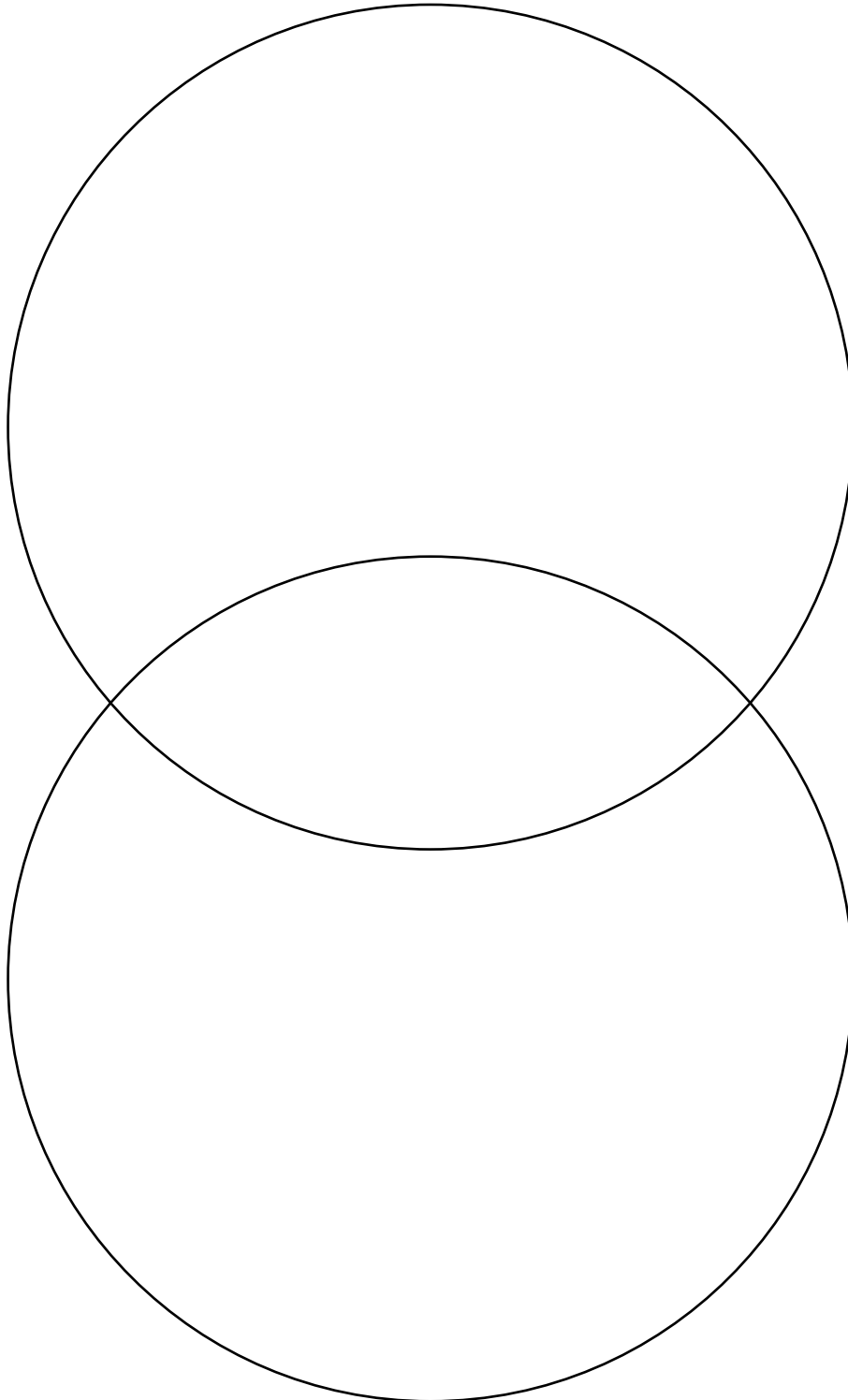
Name: _____

THANKSGIVING PERSPECTIVES

Instructions: Fill in a venn diagram comparing and contrasting the Harvest Feast and the Thanksgiving Holiday. List at least 5 sets of comparisons/contrasts.

THANKSGIVING

HARVEST FEAST





THANKSGIVING PERSPECTIVES

ANSWER KEY

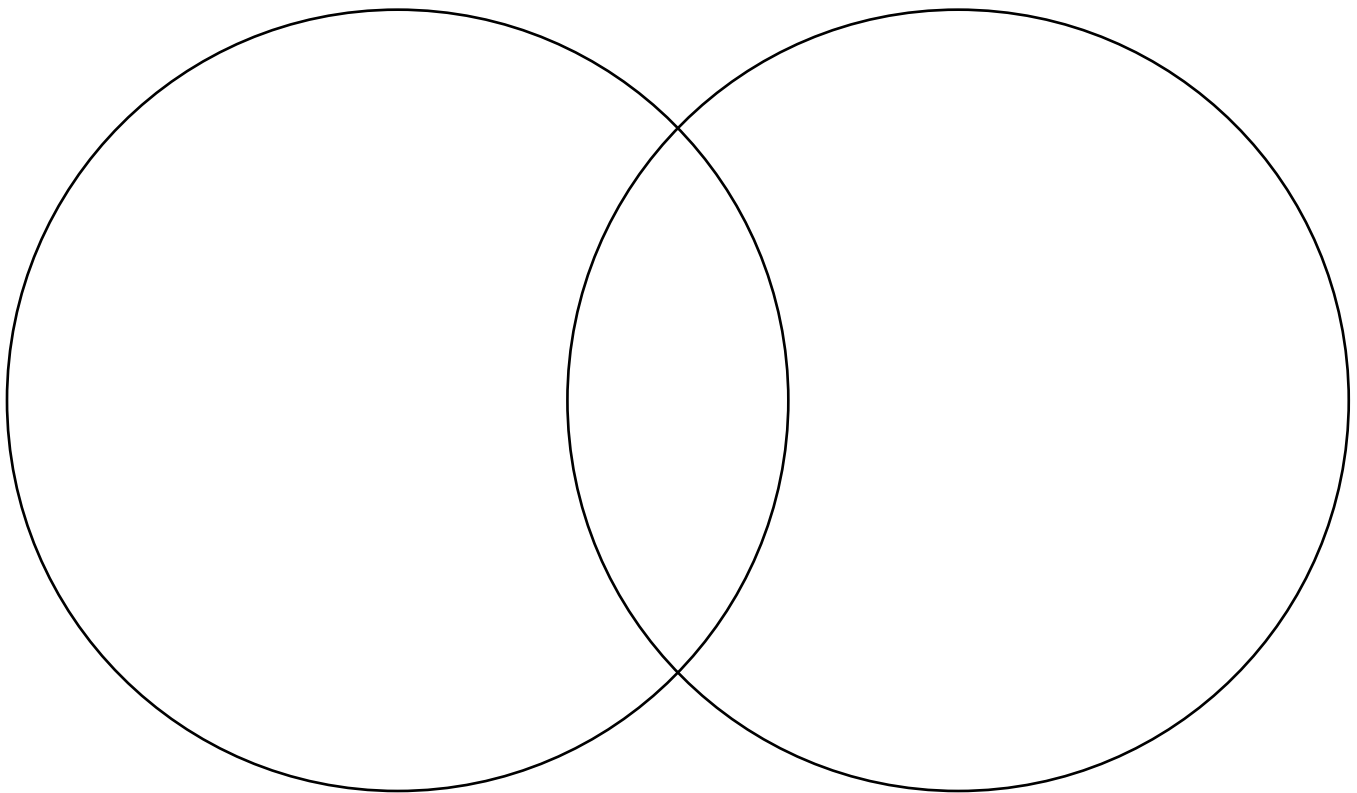
Instructions: Fill in a venn diagram comparing and contrasting the Harvest Feast and the Thanksgiving Holiday. List at least 5 sets of comparisons/contrasts.

Grading: 10 points total

- 1 point for each comparison/contrast. There should be a minimum of 10, 5 in each circle.

HARVEST FEAST

THANKSGIVING





Name: _____

CRITICAL THINKING TAKE HOME ESSAY

Instructions: Write two 250-500 word essays that answer the following prompts.

Decolonizing Thanksgiving

What are some of the challenges around decolonizing the Thanksgiving holiday? Share at least 3 examples.

Thanksgiving Futures

Do you think that the Thanksgiving holiday will change in the future? If so, how will it change? If not, why not? Provide evidence for your argument drawn from concepts you learned.



CRITICAL THINKING TAKE HOME ESSAY

ANSWER KEY

Grading: 10 points total

Instructions: Write two 250-500 word essays that answer the following prompts.

Decolonizing Thanksgiving

What are some of the challenges around decolonizing the Thanksgiving holiday? Share at least 3 examples.

- **2 points for listing at least two challenges.**
- **Each example is worth 1 point for a total of 3.**

Thanksgiving Futures

Do you think that the Thanksgiving holiday will change in the future? If so, how will it change? If not, why not? Provide evidence for your argument drawn from concepts you learned.

- **1 point for the student's opinion.**
- **4 points for at least two pieces of evidence.**