

## SOCIAL STUDIES · GRADES 3–4

# The First Thanksgiving

What we know — and what's myth

## Common stories vs what historians say

Common story	What historians actually know
The Pilgrims invited the Wampanoag.	We don't know who 'invited' whom. The Wampanoag arrived after hearing celebratory shots; some accounts suggest they came armed.
They ate turkey with cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie.	They likely ate venison (deer) brought by the Wampanoag, fowl, and corn. No pumpkin pie — they had no ovens for it.
It was called 'Thanksgiving' at the time.	It was just a harvest celebration. The 'Thanksgiving' name and holiday came centuries later.
The Pilgrims and Wampanoag were friends.	They had a fragile alliance — but conflict followed within a generation, leading to wars and devastating loss for the Wampanoag.
It happened only once.	Harvest celebrations were common — this 1621 meal got remembered specifically because it was written about.

## Why the nuance matters

Many holidays have stories that simplify history. Knowing the more accurate version doesn't make the holiday less meaningful — it makes it more honest. The Wampanoag people are still here today; their story matters too.

## Discuss



1. Why might a simplified version of history get told over and over?
2. What's a fair way to celebrate a holiday while remembering all sides of its history?
3. If you were a Wampanoag child today, what might you want people to know?

