



10 Thanksgiving Activities for Seniors

Easy Thanksgiving games and activities for a senior center, assisted living, or home.



1. Thanksgiving bingo. Our free Thanksgiving bingo has 12 large print cards with an owl free square, calling slips and an online caller.

3. Large print word searches. Two big-letter puzzles: Thanksgiving dinner foods, and words about giving thanks.

5. A thankful tree. Cut out the paper leaves on the last page, write one thing you are thankful for on each, and tape them to a branch or a paper tree on the wall.

7. Pie tasting. Set out small slices of two or three pies, like pumpkin, apple and pecan, and vote for a favorite. Check diets and allergies first.

9. Thank-you notes. Write a short note to staff, volunteers, a neighbor or family. A few kind words mean a lot.

2. Thanksgiving trivia. Read the 20 questions aloud and let the whole room help. Answers and sources are on the answer page.

4. A Gratitude Circle. A gentle 30 minute sharing circle. The leader guide and prompts are on the next to last page.

6. Recipe swap. Ask everyone to share a family recipe or a favorite dish. Copy them into a little group cookbook.

8. Watch the parade together. Watch the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade on TV with coffee and talk about parades from long ago.

10. Music and memories. Play songs of thanks and harvest-time favorites, and ask what each song brings to mind.

Thanksgiving activities for seniors at home

- Call someone you are thankful for and tell them why.
- Do the word search or trivia with a grandchild over the phone or a video call.
- Write down a family recipe and the story behind it.
- Start a little gratitude jar: each day, add a slip of paper with one good thing.
- Look through old holiday photos and label who is in them.

Bingo cards: free at aiseniors.app/thanksgiving/bingo



Thanksgiving Word Search 1: Thanksgiving Dinner



Favorite foods from the Thanksgiving table. Circle each word you find.

S	C	I	P	E	C	A	N	P	I	E	T
I	W	R	O	T	H	G	I	U	P	H	K
S	A	E	A	R	J	L	R	M	A	L	P
T	P	T	E	N	O	I	E	A	K	Y	U
U	P	U	D	T	B	L	G	B	V	V	M
F	L	R	K	W	P	E	L	F	W	Y	P
F	E	K	D	W	F	O	R	S	I	I	K
I	C	E	A	G	U	S	T	R	A	T	I
N	I	Y	Y	N	T	A	K	A	Y	E	N
G	D	B	D	A	D	V	C	B	T	R	P
S	E	G	G	F	M	S	D	V	N	O	I
H	R	C	O	R	N	B	R	E	A	D	E

Find these words

☐ TURKEY

☐ GRAVY

☐ PUMPKIN PIE

☐ ROLLS

☐ CORNBREAD

☐ STUFFING

☐ CRANBERRY

☐ SWEET POTATO

☐ PECAN PIE

☐ APPLE CIDER

Words only go left to right, top to bottom, or diagonally down. Words with a space, like PUMPKIN PIE, appear without the space.



Thanksgiving Word Search 2: Giving Thanks



Words about gratitude, family and the holiday. Circle each word you find.

J	N	S	H	H	A	R	V	E	S	T	E
H	N	N	P	M	B	R	A	U	U	H	N
A	V	L	C	A	H	P	J	N	B	L	V
N	E	I	E	F	O	O	T	B	A	L	L
O	R	N	D	T	O	G	E	T	H	E	R
V	B	L	E	S	S	I	N	G	S	G	T
E	F	A	M	I	L	Y	B	F	C	V	D
M	R	B	U	T	H	A	N	K	F	U	L
B	E	K	C	S	R	P	A	R	A	D	E
E	I	H	D	N	F	R	I	E	N	D	S
R	V	W	V	T	K	U	E	A	S	K	A
V	L	I	G	R	A	T	E	F	U	L	Y

Find these words

☐ THANKFUL

☐ FAMILY

☐ HARVEST

☐ NOVEMBER

☐ FOOTBALL

☐ GRATEFUL

☐ FRIENDS

☐ BLESSINGS

☐ PARADE

☐ TOGETHER

Words only go left to right, top to bottom, or diagonally down.

Thanksgiving word search answer keys

1. Thanksgiving Dinner

S	C	I	P	E	C	A	N	P	I	E	T
I	W	R	O	T	H	G	I	U	P	H	K
S	A	E	A	R	J	L	R	M	A	L	P
T	P	T	E	N	O	I	E	A	K	Y	U
U	P	U	D	T	B	L	G	B	V	V	M
F	L	R	K	W	P	E	L	F	W	Y	P
F	E	K	D	W	F	O	R	S	I	I	K
I	C	E	A	G	U	S	T	R	A	T	I
N	I	Y	Y	N	T	A	K	A	Y	E	N
G	D	B	D	A	D	V	C	B	T	R	P
S	E	G	G	F	M	S	D	V	N	O	I
H	R	C	O	R	N	B	R	E	A	D	E

2. Giving Thanks

J	N	S	H	H	A	R	V	E	S	T	E
H	N	N	P	M	B	R	A	U	U	H	N
A	V	L	C	A	H	P	J	N	B	L	V
N	E	I	E	F	O	O	T	B	A	L	L
O	R	N	D	T	O	G	E	T	H	E	R
V	B	L	E	S	S	I	N	G	S	G	T
E	F	A	M	I	L	Y	B	F	C	V	D
M	R	B	U	T	H	A	N	K	F	U	L
B	E	K	C	S	R	P	A	R	A	D	E
E	I	H	D	N	F	R	I	E	N	D	S
R	V	W	V	T	K	U	E	A	S	K	A
V	L	I	G	R	A	T	E	F	U	L	Y

Talk about it

- What dish did your family always have on the Thanksgiving table?
- Who did the cooking when you were young?
- What is one word that sums up Thanksgiving for you?



Thanksgiving Trivia Questions



Circle the best answer. Read them aloud and let the whole room help.

1. Which Pilgrim wrote the only surviving description of the 1621 harvest celebration in Plymouth?

- A) William Bradford B) Edward Winslow
C) Myles Standish

2. About how many days did the 1621 harvest celebration last?

- A) One day B) Three days C) Two weeks

3. Which Wampanoag leader joined the 1621 celebration with about 90 of his men?

- A) Massasoit B) Pocahontas C) Sitting Bull

4. According to Winslow's letter, how many deer did the Wampanoag men bring to the feast?

- A) Two B) Five C) Twenty

5. Which president named November 26, 1789, as the first Thanksgiving under the new Constitution?

- A) George Washington B) John Adams
C) Thomas Jefferson

6. In 1863, which president proclaimed a national day of Thanksgiving on the last Thursday of November?

- A) Abraham Lincoln B) Ulysses S. Grant
C) Andrew Jackson

7. Which writer and magazine editor wrote to President Lincoln in 1863, asking for a national Thanksgiving?

- A) Louisa May Alcott B) Sarah Josepha Hale
C) Harriet Beecher Stowe

8. Sarah Josepha Hale, the "Mother of Thanksgiving," also wrote which nursery rhyme?

- A) "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star"
B) "Mary Had a Little Lamb" C) "Humpty Dumpty"

9. In 1939, which president moved Thanksgiving one week earlier to make the Christmas shopping season longer?

- A) Herbert Hoover B) Franklin D. Roosevelt
C) Harry Truman

10. Since a law signed in December 1941, Thanksgiving in the U.S. falls on which Thursday of November?

- A) The first Thursday B) The fourth Thursday
C) The last Thursday

11. In what year was the first Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade held in New York City?

- A) 1924 B) 1946 C) 1955

12. What was the Macy's parade first called?

- A) The Macy's Christmas Parade B) The Turkey Trot
C) The Big Apple Parade

13. Animals from which zoo marched in the very first Macy's parade?

- A) The Bronx Zoo B) The Central Park Zoo
C) The San Diego Zoo

14. Giant balloons joined the parade in 1927. Which famous cartoon cat was one of the first?

- A) Felix the Cat B) Garfield C) Sylvester

15. Which character has had the most balloons in Macy's parade history?

- A) Mickey Mouse B) Snoopy C) Kermit the Frog

16. Which pro football team has played on Thanksgiving Day since 1934 (except during 1939 to 1944)?

- A) The Detroit Lions B) The Green Bay Packers
C) The New York Giants

17. In a 1784 letter to his daughter, Benjamin Franklin called which bird "a much more respectable bird" than the bald eagle?

- A) The turkey B) The robin C) The owl

18. Which president, in 1989, was the first to use the words "presidential pardon" for the White House turkey?

- A) Ronald Reagan B) George H. W. Bush
C) Bill Clinton

19. What is a grown-up male turkey called?

- A) A tom B) A buck C) A rooster

20. When does Canada celebrate its Thanksgiving Day?

- A) The second Monday in October
B) The first Sunday in November
C) The fourth Thursday in November

Thanksgiving trivia answers

1. B) Edward Winslow
3. A) Massasoit
5. A) George Washington
7. B) Sarah Josepha Hale
9. B) Franklin D. Roosevelt
11. A) 1924
13. B) The Central Park Zoo
15. B) Snoopy
17. A) The turkey
19. A) A tom
2. B) Three days
4. B) Five
6. A) Abraham Lincoln
8. B) "Mary Had a Little Lamb"
10. B) The fourth Thursday
12. A) The Macy's Christmas Parade
14. A) Felix the Cat
16. A) The Detroit Lions
18. B) George H. W. Bush
20. A) The second Monday in October

Did you know?

- Long before the English arrived, Native People held many days of thanksgiving, such as a "Strawberry Thanksgiving" and a "Green Corn Thanksgiving" (Plimoth Patuxet).
- The 1621 gathering happened sometime between September 21 and November 9. It was first called "the First Thanksgiving" in the 1800s.
- Franklin never asked for the turkey to be our national bird. He was joking in a private letter (National Park Service).
- Feeling sleepy after dinner? Turkey has no more tryptophan than chicken. The big meal is more to blame (National Park Service).

Sources (checked October 2026)

- Plimoth Patuxet Museums: Thanksgiving history (with Edward Winslow's 1621 letter): <https://plimoth.org/for-students/homework-help/thanksgiving-history>
- National Archives: Congress Establishes Thanksgiving: <https://www.archives.gov/legislative/features/thanksgiving>
- Library of Congress: The Woman Who Helped Put Thanksgiving on the Calendar: <https://blogs.loc.gov/loc/2024/11/the-woman-who-helped-put-thanksgiving-on-the-calendar/>
- Library of Congress: Macy's Thanksgiving Parade (This Month in Business History): <https://guides.loc.gov/this-month-in-business-history/november/macys-thanksgiving-parade>
- Smithsonian Magazine: The Puppeteer Who Brought Balloons to the Thanksgiving Day Parade: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/the-puppeteer-who-brought-balloons-to-the-thanksgiving-day-parade-180947863/>
- Pro Football Hall of Fame: Thanksgiving and the NFL: <https://www.profootballhof.com/football-history/thanksgiving-and-the-nfl>
- National Archives, Founders Online: Benjamin Franklin to Sarah Bache, 26 January 1784: <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-41-02-0327>
- White House Historical Association: The Origins of the White House Turkey Pardon: <https://www.whitehousehistory.org/good-eatin-mr-president-the-curious-origins-of-the-white-house-turkey-pardon>
- National Park Service: Species Spotlight, Wild Turkey: <https://www.nps.gov/articles/netsn-species-spotlight-wild-turkey.htm>
- Government of Canada: Public holidays: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/public-holidays.html>

Free from aiseniors.app/thanksgiving, copy and share freely.



The Gratitude Circle: A Group Activity

A gentle 30 minute sharing activity for senior centers, libraries and assisted living.



1. **Before (5 minutes):** set chairs in a circle. Put a small basket of autumn leaves, a pumpkin or a pie on a table in the middle. Print the gratitude prompts and the thankful leaves.
2. **Welcome (3 minutes):** say: "Today we will share a few things we are thankful for. Share as much or as little as you like. You can always pass."
3. **Warm-up (5 minutes):** the Gratitude Alphabet. Go around the circle and name something you are thankful for that starts with A, then B, then C. Everyone can help.
4. **Share (10 minutes):** read one prompt at a time and let a few people answer. Start with an easy one.
5. **Thankful tree (5 minutes):** everyone writes on a paper leaf. Tape the leaves to a branch or a paper tree on the wall for the month.
6. **Close (2 minutes):** thank everyone by name. Read a few leaves aloud, with permission.

Gratitude prompts

- What is a small thing that made you smile this week?
- Who is someone you are thankful for, and why?
- What is a favorite Thanksgiving food, and who made it best?
- Tell us about a Thanksgiving you still remember.
- What is a skill someone taught you that you still use?
- What is something about this season you love: a smell, a sound, a sight?
- Who was a kind neighbor or teacher when you were young?
- What would you like to say thank you for today?

For the leader: be kind with memories

- The holidays can bring up missed loved ones. Let people pass, and never press.
- If someone shares a sad memory, thank them and listen. Listening is enough.
- Large print and big markers help everyone join in. Offer to write for anyone who would like help.
- If someone seems very low, check in with them quietly afterward. In the U.S., anyone can call or text **988** (the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline), any time.



Thankful Tree Leaves

Cut out each leaf on the dotted line, write what you are thankful for, and hang it up.

