



November Celebrations

Introduction

The first Tuesday after the first Monday in November is Election Day, but how many Americans vote? The first activity delineates the percentage of Americans who voted in the 1984 and 1988 presidential elections by states. Students will determine whether the percentages went up or down.

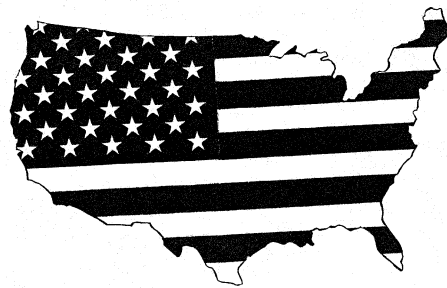
A few weeks later, on the fourth Thursday of November, Americans celebrate Thanksgiving. Legend tells us that the Pilgrims were saved from starvation with the help of the Native Americans. The Native American story “The Legend of How the Woodpecker Came to Be” tells us of the fate of a woman who refused to share her food with a hungry stranger. It is believed that folktales such as this might explain why the natives helped the early settlers.

The Thanksgiving Dinner project is a long-range project that allows students to design a menu, compile the necessary recipes, make a shopping list of foods needed to prepare the recipes, “shop” for the food, calculate the cost per person, and, finally, decide if they wish to eat at home or at a local restaurant. How do they make this decision? After researching the cost of dinner out, students can consider many options, including “best buy.” Projects like these allow teachers to provide all students with substantive mathematics while acknowledging their different abilities.

Mark Twain’s birthday is on November 30. What better way to recognize America’s storyteller than by having our students read “The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County” and by folding origami jumping frogs. Has anyone folded a champion frog? By having a jump-off, students collect and average data to find a class champion.

How Many Americans Vote?

Teacher Page



Areas of study

percent, ratio, reading tables, analyzing data, signed numbers, rounding

Concepts

Students will

- work collaboratively to find the percent of increase or decrease of Americans who voted in the 1984 and 1988 presidential elections
- analyze the data to determine which states had an increase and which states had the greatest decrease in voter turnout

Materials needed

calculators, How Many Americans Vote? worksheet for each student

Procedures

Discuss with students the formula for finding the percent of difference:

$$\text{percent of difference} = \frac{1988 \% - 1984 \%}{1984 \%} \times 100$$

Discuss the outcome of positive results (an increase in voter turnout) and negative results (a decrease in voter turnout). In 1984, the two major candidates were Ronald Reagan and Walter Mondale; in 1988, the major candidates were George Bush and Michael Dukakis. Only three states had an increase in voter turnout in this election.

Students should round their answers to the nearest percent.

Assessment

1. Student products
2. Observation of students

Extension

Have students research and develop the data for the 1992 and 1996 presidential elections.

How Many Americans Vote?

Directions: The following table lists the percentage of Americans who voted in the 1984 and 1988 presidential election by states. Compute the percent of increase or decrease (round to the nearest percent). Then answer the questions following the table. An increase in voting should be indicated with a + sign; a decrease with a – sign. To find the percent of increase (+) or decrease (–), use this formula:

$$\text{percent of difference} = \frac{1988 \% - 1984 \%}{1984 \%} \times 100$$

For example:

$$\text{Alabama} = \frac{46 - 50}{50} = \frac{-4}{50} = -.08 = -8\%; \text{ meaning } 8\% \text{ fewer voted in 1988.}$$

State	1984 %	1988 %	% ±	State	1984 %	1988 %	% ±	State	1984 %	1988 %	% ±
Ala.	50	46	- 8%	Ky.	51	48		N. Dak.	63	62	
Alaska	59	52		La.	55	51		Ohio	58	55	
Ariz.	45	45		Maine	65	62		Okla.	52	48	
Ark.	52	47		Md.	51	49		Oreg.	62	59	
Calif.	50	47		Mass.	58	58		Pa.	54	50	
Colo.	55	55		Mich.	58	54		R.I.	56	53	
Conn.	61	58		Minn.	68	66		S.C.	41	39	
Del.	55	51		Miss.	52	51		S. Dak.	63	61	
D.C.	43	39		Mo.	57	55		Tenn.	49	45	
Fla.	48	45		Mont.	65	62		Texas	47	44	
Ga.	42	39		Nebr.	56	57		Utah	62	60	
Hawaii	44	43		Nev.	41	45		Vt.	60	59	
Idaho	60	58		N.H.	53	55		Va.	51	48	
Ill.	57	53		N.J.	57	52		Wash.	58	55	
Ind.	57	53		N.Mex.	51	47		W. Va	52	47	
Iowa	62	60		N.Y.	51	48		Wis.	63	62	
Kans.	56	54		N.C.	47	43		Wyo.	53	50	

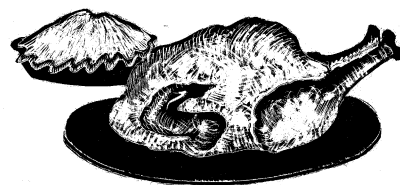
- Only three states had an increase in voter turnout percentage. Which states were they? What were the increases? _____

- Which state(s) had the greatest decrease in their voter turnout percentage? What were the decreases? _____



Thanksgiving Dinner

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Areas of study

problem solving, computation, ratios/proportions, decimals, fractions, data collection

Concepts

Students will

- collect data over a period of time
- relate mathematics to a real-world problem
- convert recipes to serve a required number of people
- analyze and make decisions based upon data collected
- complete a project with multiple steps
- learn how to read and interpret newspaper advertisements

Materials needed

Thanksgiving Dinner instruction sheets for each student, local newspapers, recipes (either from home or from school), calculators

Procedures

Be sure to start this project at least two weeks prior to Thanksgiving. You might want to send a note to parents telling them: (1) what the project is and (2) how they might help their child obtain family recipes. Save newspapers with Thanksgiving advertisements for those students who might not have access to them.

Read through the project and discuss the various chapters with the students. Inform them that you will be grading the project in stages and give them the time limits they have to complete each chapter. The Teacher Checklist may be used as an assessment instrument.

Some students may not celebrate Thanksgiving in a traditional manner or serve traditional dishes. These students should be allowed to prepare a Celebration Dinner for a holiday of their choice.

Included in this unit is the Creek (Muskogee) legend "How the Woodpecker Came to Be," which tells the tale of a seemingly poor, hungry traveler who asks a woman for a little food. It is said that the Native American tradition of feeding hungry travelers is the foundation of the first Thanksgiving dinner.

Assessment

1. Student projects
2. Partial assessment based upon completion of each stage (see Teacher Checklist sheet that follows)
3. Overall quality of report

Extension

Have students prepare one of the dishes in their family meal for a class sampling. Copies of the recipes can be made available to place in a class Thanksgiving feast cookbook.



Thanksgiving Dinner

Teacher Checklist

Name of Student	Designing the Menu	Compiling the Recipes	Shopping List	Cost per Person	Restaurant	Home/ Restaurant



Name _____

The Fourth Thursday of November
Thanksgiving Day

Date _____

Thanksgiving Dinner (page 1)

Six-Part Project

1. Designing a Thanksgiving Day menu for your family
2. Finding the required recipes and adapting them for the number of people you need to feed
3. Compiling a shopping list of all of the items you need to purchase in order to make the dinner and determining the cost of these items
4. Computing the cost per person of the dinner based upon your shopping costs and the dinner you are making
5. Finding an advertisement for Thanksgiving dinner at a local restaurant
6. Determining if you choose to eat at home or out at the restaurant and why

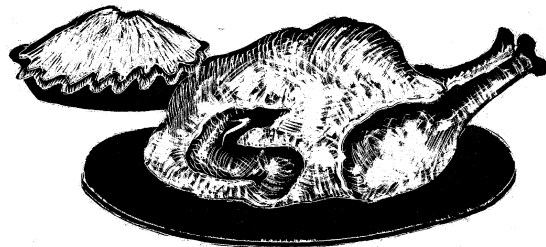
This project is comprised of six “chapters” and must be designed and presented in a report folder. If possible, use a computer for your typing as well as your graphics.

Chapter 1: Designing the Menu

Discuss with someone in your family a typical menu for a Thanksgiving dinner. The menu should include an appetizer, a main dish, vegetables, side dishes, dessert, and beverages. Once you have outlined what you will serve, design a menu. Make it as attractive as you can, like a menu in a restaurant.

Chapter 2: Compiling the Recipes

Put together the recipes you need to complete your menu plans. Design one card for each of the recipes. Be sure to convert the recipes to allow for the number of people who will be at your dinner. For example, your recipe may call for $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of sugar to feed four people. If you have six people coming to dinner, you will need to use $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of sugar. Arrange the recipe cards attractively for presentation in the report folder.



Name _____

Date _____

Thanksgiving Dinner (page 2)

Chapter 3: Your Shopping List

Analyze your recipes and make a list of all the items you need to purchase to cook the meal. You will not need to purchase items if less than $\frac{1}{4}$ cup is needed and if the item would be commonly found in a home. An example might be 1 teaspoon salt.

Once you have made up your shopping list, you are ready to go to the supermarket and find the cost of the items (in the amounts you need) for your dinner. Write the cost next to each item on the list.

Chapter 4: Cost per Person

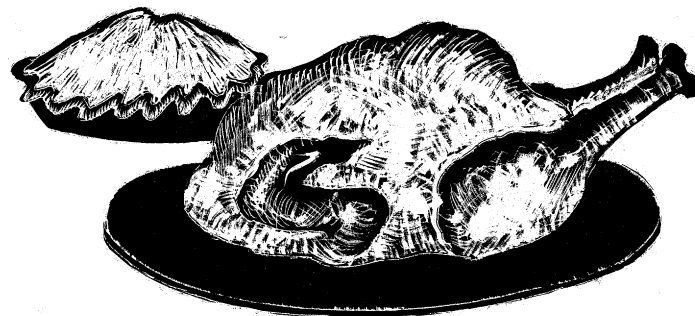
When you total your shopping list costs, you will know the total cost of the dinner. Now you need to find the cost per person.

Chapter 5: Researching a Restaurant

The fifth part of the assignment requires a little bit of research. You need to hunt through the local newspapers (we have some available if you do not have any at home). Find an advertisement for Thanksgiving dinner at a restaurant and neatly cut it out and include it in your report. Find the cost of feeding your family at this restaurant. You can now compare the cost of feeding your family at home to the cost of feeding your family at the restaurant.

Chapter 6: Eat at Home or at the Restaurant?

Carefully write two or three paragraphs that explain whether you think you would prefer to eat out or in, what you based your decision on, and how you feel others might make their decisions. Include any information that you feel is necessary to support the decision you made.



Name _____

The Fourth Thursday of November
Thanksgiving Day

Date _____

The Legend of How the Woodpecker Came to Be

A Story of the Muskogee People

Once upon a time there lived an old woman. Each day she wore a black dress, a white apron, and a red scarf tied around her head. The old woman was known throughout the land for her talent in making bread.

One day an old man came to her house. He was wearing an old coat and was tired and hungry. He said to the old woman, "I have walked many miles and am very tired. May I rest awhile before continuing on my journey?" He also asked, "Do you have some bread and water for this tired and hungry old man?"

The old woman said, "Yes, you may sit for awhile. I will go in and bake some bread so that you can have something to eat."

Then she went in the house, started the fire for the oven, and began to bake the bread. She noticed that she was running low on flour, but she knew she would have enough to make a pan of biscuits. As soon as the oven was hot, she put the biscuits in a pan and placed them in the oven.

The biscuits were soon done. When she took them out, she exclaimed, "These are the most beautiful, perfectly shaped biscuits I have ever made. These are too perfect to give to the old man." And so she kept them for herself.

She fixed another pan, but these were even more exquisite than the first. She decided to keep this batch for herself, as well.

She placed a third batch in the oven. When she removed these she exclaimed, "These are the most beautiful of them all. I can't give any of these to such a dirty old man!" She said, "Why should I give food to strangers, anyway?"

She went outside and told the old man that she had no bread to share with him. The old man knew that she was not telling the truth because he was really the Master of Life and he had been testing her.

He threw off his rags and said, "Something bad is going to happen to you because you would not share your bread." He stomped on the ground with his foot and the woman began to shrink until she was the size of a bird.

Her arms turned into wings . . . her black dress turned into black feathers . . . the white apron turned into white feathers . . . and the red scarf turned into red feathers on her head.

Master of Life said to the old woman, "Because you lied to me, from this day forward, you and all your descendants will have to peck wood to get your food."

Therefore, the elders of the Muskogee tribe say: It is good to share your food with strangers, even though you may have very little.

