
FALL HOLIDAYS

Vocabulary

holiday – a time of rest from work or school

the holiday season – the time from late November through January when several holidays (such as Christmas and New Year's Eve) happen

vacation – a holiday or time spent not working

Halloween – the night of October 31, which is now celebrated by children, who dress in costumes and go from house to house asking for sweets, especially in the US and Canada

costume – a set of clothes worn by a person or by someone to make them look like something such as an animal, famous person

jack-o'-lantern – a pumpkin that has a face cut into it and a candle put inside to shine through the holes

haunted house – a Halloween amusement attraction in which a house is decorated to frighten the people who pass through the attraction

ghost – the spirit of a dead person that some people think they can feel or see in a place

witch – a woman who is supposed to have magic powers, especially to do bad things

candy – a sweet food made from sugar or chocolate

spiderweb – a very fine network of sticky threads made by a spider to catch insects

skeleton – the structure consisting of all the bones in a human or animal body

spider – a small creature with eight legs, which catches insects using a fine network of sticky threads

spooky – strange or frightening in a way that makes you think of ghosts

creepy – making you feel nervous and slightly frightened

frightening – making you feel afraid or nervous

Thanksgiving – a public holiday in the US and in Canada when families have a large meal together to celebrate and be thankful for food, health, families

Thanksgiving meal – a large meal cooked for Thanksgiving, usually a large roasted turkey

stuffing – a mixture of bread, onions and herbs used to stuff turkey, chicken or other meat before cooking

turkey – a bird that looks like a large chicken and is often eaten at Thanksgiving

tradition – a belief, custom, or way of doing something that has existed for a long time, or these beliefs, customs, etc. in general

thankful – grateful and glad about something that has happened, especially because without it the situation would be much worse

pumpkin – a very large orange fruit that grows on the ground

pumpkin pie – a dessert pie with a spiced, pumpkin-based custard filling

Black Friday – the day after Thanksgiving in the US, when stores open early and prices are reduced

indigenous – indigenous people or things have always been in the place where they are, rather than being brought there from somewhere else

Verbs

to celebrate – to take part in special enjoyable activities in order to show that a particular occasion is important

to cook – to prepare food for eating by using heat

to discover – to find someone or something, either by accident or because you were looking for them

to commemorate – to remember officially and give respect to a great person or event

to travel – to go from one place to another, or to several places, especially ones that are far away

to sail – to travel on or across an area of water in a boat or ship

to find – to discover, see, or get something that you have been searching for

to know – to have information about something

Phrases

to dress up – to put on a costume

to live for something – to enjoy something more than anything else that you do

I'm in!/Count me in! – to be willing to become involved in or contribute to something

to hurry up – to do something more quickly

to stop by – to go into a place for a short time especially when you are going somewhere else

to lose one's face – to become less respected by others

Grammar Corner

We use the present perfect tense if we want to describe an event that started in the past and has some connection to the present.

*e.g. I **haven't bought** any presents yet. I need to do it this weekend.*

***Have you ever spent** Thanksgiving with your husband's family? – No, I **haven't**. They live so far away, so it's difficult to take days off that time of the year and go visit them.*

We use the present perfect continuous tense if we want to describe an event that started in the past and has some connection to the present. In addition, we want to highlight its duration (even if we are not mentioning it, e.g. for a year, since 2014, etc.).

e.g. I've been trying to cook the perfect Thanksgiving dinner, but everything is against me this year.

We've been living here for 5 years, but we haven't hosted any dinner parties yet.

Real Life Situations

(P1 – Person 1, P2 – Person 2)

Halloween

P1: Halloween is just around the corner. Do you have a costume?

P2: Really? Are you going to dress up and go trick-or-treating? Isn't that only for kids?

P1: Why are you laughing? I dress up every year! I thought since we're together, we could wear matching costumes like those couples on the internet.

P2: No way, you won't make me wear one of those Mickey and Minnie Mouse costumes!

P1: Hahaha, now this is offensive. Who do you think I am? Every year there is a contest in our campus for the best Halloween costume, and the first place is always mine. Believe me, I am super creative.

P2: Is that supposed to make me trust you now, Ms. the best Halloween campus costume?

P1: Yeah, pretty much! We'll be putting together a haunted house out there, so it's going to be a huge party.

P2: Oh, do you want to go there?

P1: Definitely! I want you to hang out with my college friends.

P2: Will there be drinks and food as well?

P1: It seems food and drinks are the only things you care about at parties.

P2: I mean... talking and all is great, but I won't mind treating myself to something tasty.

P1: Yes, there will be light snacks and drinks. Actually, everyone should bring some snacks decorated for Halloween. Last year I baked some spooky cookies which looked exactly like human fingers.

P2: Did you win the contest for the scariest Halloween meal too?

P1: No, there is no such contest, but if there were, of course, I would win it.

P2: Of course, of course. Do you want me to help you out with cooking?

P1: Yeah, that'd be great. We'll be one of these power couples who do everything together. Like superheroes!

P2: Does it mean that you want us to dress up a couple of superheroes?

P1: Hmm, yeah, that's a great idea, actually.

P2: Just nothing too crazy, please.

Columbus Day

P1: Emmie, what are you doing?

P2: I am reading a book about Christopher Columbus.
P1: Oh, is it for your history class?
P2: Yes, Columbus Day is celebrated on October 12, so our teacher told us to make a report about the history of this holiday.
P1: Oh, how interesting. Tell me!
P2: Well, it says here "this holiday commemorates the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus on October 12, 1492". In many Latin American countries, they have another name for it – *Día de la Raza*.
P1: Day of the Race?
P2: How did you know that?
P1: I just remember that I guess. So what else did you learn about it?
P2: Well, it is a special day for many countries in North, Central, and South America, but for some people, this day represents the invasion of their land by Europeans.
P1: You are right. So what are you going to be writing about exactly?
P2: I don't know. Could you actually help me out with a plan?
P1: Sure. So... first, you will write down what we've just discussed.
P2: Yep. And then what?
P1: How did Christopher Columbus get to America?
P2: Oh, I know that! By ship. At that time many people thought that the world was flat, but Columbus didn't believe that.
P1: Yeah, many people thought that if a ship had sailed to the edge of the world, it would fall off and get lost.
P2: That's really funny.
P1: People didn't have all this technology that we have now, so I can see why some thought that. How did he navigate?
P2: By studying the stars and the moon.
P1: See, you know everything!
P2: Should I mention that some people want it to be changed to Indigenous People's Day.

Thanksgiving

P1: Hey, Pam! How was your Thanksgiving?
P2: Hi, Luke! It was wonderful. I was really happy to spend a few days with my family.
P1: Did you go to your parents' house?
P2: Yeah, we had our traditional family reunion. My sister came with her family, plus our cousins, so the house was extremely overcrowded and loud. My mother cooked the most delicious turkey and stuffing with cranberry sauce, so we just ate, drank, talked, and had fun.
P1: That sounds lovely!
P2: What about you? Did you have a nice time?
P1: Yes, it was great. My stepbrother and his wife came for the whole weekend. Actually, I think you met a couple of years ago, do you remember them?
P2: Sure, back when they only started dating. It is incredible how time flies.

P1: Now they are expecting a baby!

P2: This is awesome news! Tell them my best wishes!

P1: Thank you, I will tell them for sure. The whole family is so excited, especially our parents. They are already in their late 60s, so they have been dreaming about grandchildren for a long time.

P2: No wonder everyone is so happy. So did your father and stepmom come for dinner too?

P1: Yes, they stopped by for dinner on Thursday. I cooked a Thanksgiving meal, and we had a small family dinner.

P2: Did you cook turkey?

P1: To be honest, no. I ordered food delivery. I really tried my best to cook it last year, but I failed miserably, so I decided to make it easier for me this time. Thank God my baking skills are much better, and the pumpkin pie was perfect. Everyone loved it!

P2: Same story here! I am not the best cook, so that's why I love visiting my parents' place for the holidays. I'm just helping out here and there. I've never thought that food delivery works on Thanksgiving.

P1: I was surprised about that too! It's funny though – my stepmother liked the turkey so much, that she started asking me about the recipe. It was so awkward... I had to look it up and give her the first one I found.

P2: Haha, hilarious! Didn't you tell anyone that you ordered it?

P1: No, of course, I didn't. My stepmother is very conservative. She believes that a woman should be good at cooking, so I didn't want to lose my face.

P2: I see now. Well, she doesn't have to know everything, right?

P1: Exactly.