

Canadian Thanksgiving Reading Comprehension

Two reading levels · Questions · Answer keys

Canadian Thanksgiving · Monday 12 October 2026

Passage A · Grades 2 to 3 · reading level 3.1

Passage B · Grades 4 to 6 · reading level 5.6

Measured with Flesch-Kincaid, not estimated

Passage A

Grades 2 to 3 · read it, then answer overleaf

The Long Weekend in October

In Canada, Thanksgiving comes in October. It is always on the second Monday. In 2026 that day is October 12.

Many families eat a big meal. There is often turkey, with squash and potatoes. Pumpkin pie comes at the end.

The holiday is about the harvest. The harvest is the food that farmers pick in the fall. Long ago, people were glad when the food was safe in the barn. Winter was coming. They had a feast to say thank you.

First Nations held harvest feasts here first. They did this long before ships came from Europe.

Some families go for a walk to see the leaves. Red and gold leaves are easy to find in October.

Not everyone gets the day off. In some parts of Canada, people still go to work.

What are you glad about this year?

Name: _____



Passage A Questions

Use the passage to answer

1 On which day of the week is Canadian Thanksgiving always held?

2 What is the harvest?

3 Name two foods people often eat at Thanksgiving.

4 Who held harvest feasts in this land first?

5 Why were people long ago glad when the food was in the barn?

6 Does everyone in Canada get the day off? Explain your answer.

Name: _____



Passage B

Grades 4 to 6 · read it, then answer overleaf

How Thanksgiving Came to Canada

Canadian Thanksgiving falls on the second Monday of October. In 2026 that is Monday, October 12. But the date was not always fixed. The story behind it is older and messier than most people think.

The oldest part of the story belongs to Indigenous peoples. First Nations held feasts to mark the fall harvest. They did this long before any ship came from Europe. Those gatherings are the real beginning of giving thanks for food in this land.

In 1578, an English explorer named Martin Frobisher reached the Eastern Arctic. Today we call that place Nunavut. He and his crew held a service to give thanks. They were glad to be alive after a hard voyage. Some people call this the first Thanksgiving in North America. Historians argue about it. The service had nothing to do with a harvest, and harvest is what Thanksgiving usually means.

For a long time after that, the holiday had no set date. It was held whenever someone decided there was a reason. It became a yearly national holiday on November 6, 1879. Even then the date kept moving. Some years it was in November. Other years it was in October.

At last Parliament settled the question. On January 31, 1957, a proclamation set Thanksgiving on the second Monday of October. It has stayed there ever since.

So why October? You will often read that the harvest comes earlier here because the weather turns cold sooner. It sounds sensible. But the old records do not give a reason. All we know is that the date moved for years until Parliament pinned it down.

One more thing surprises people. Thanksgiving is not a holiday by law everywhere in Canada. In New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador it is optional. Many people there work that Monday.

And you will not find pilgrims in this story. The Mayflower belongs to the American holiday in November.

Name: _____



Passage B Questions

Questions 1 to 4

1 What date is Canadian Thanksgiving in 2026?

2 Who held harvest feasts here before Europeans arrived?

3 Where was Martin Frobisher when his crew held their service of thanks?

4 Why do historians argue about calling that the first Thanksgiving?

Name: _____



Passage B Questions

Questions 5 to 8

5 In which year did Thanksgiving become a yearly national holiday?

6 What did Parliament decide on January 31, 1957?

7 Why can nobody say for certain why Thanksgiving is in October?

8 Name two provinces where Thanksgiving is not a statutory holiday.

Name: _____



Thanksgiving Vocabulary

Draw a line from each word to what it means

harvest

☐☐

something a group has done the same way for a long time

grateful

☐☐

set down in law

proclamation

☐☐

all the food that farmers gather in the fall

statutory

☐☐

an official public announcement

Indigenous

☐☐

feeling thankful for something

tradition

☐☐

belonging to the first peoples of a land

Name: _____



True or False?

Tick one box for each sentence

- | | TRUE | FALSE |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Canadian Thanksgiving is always on the second Monday of October. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2. Canadian Thanksgiving is about pilgrims landing on a boat. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3. Indigenous peoples held harvest feasts here before Europeans arrived. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4. The Mayflower is part of the Canadian Thanksgiving story. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5. Thanksgiving became a yearly national holiday in Canada in 1879. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 6. Parliament fixed the date in 1957. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 7. Everyone in Canada gets Thanksgiving Monday off work. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 8. Martin Frobisher's crew gave thanks for a good harvest. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 9. Canadian Thanksgiving is six weeks before the American one. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 10. We know exactly why Thanksgiving moved to October. | ☐ | ☐ |

Name: _____



Put It in Order

Write each event beside the right date

The events are jumbled at the bottom. Write each one on the correct line.

Long before 1578

1578

1879

1957

2026

The events, in the wrong order:

- Indigenous peoples hold harvest feasts
- Thanksgiving becomes a yearly national holiday
- Parliament fixes it on the second Monday of October
- Canadian Thanksgiving falls on Monday, October 12
- Martin Frobisher's crew give thanks in the Eastern Arctic

Name: _____



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Name: _____



Answer Key

Passages A and B

Passage A

1. The second Monday of October.
2. All the food that farmers pick in the fall.
3. Any two of: turkey, squash, potatoes, pumpkin pie.
4. First Nations, before ships came from Europe.
5. Winter was coming, so they were glad the food was safe.
6. No. In some parts of Canada people still go to work.

Passage B

1. Monday, October 12, 2026.
2. First Nations and other Indigenous peoples.
3. The Eastern Arctic, in what is now Nunavut.
4. Because the service had nothing to do with a harvest.
5. 1879, on November 6.
6. It set Thanksgiving on the second Monday of October.
7. The old records do not give a reason for the date.
8. Any two of: New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Answer Key

Vocabulary, true or false, timeline

Vocabulary

harvest — all the food that farmers gather in the fall

grateful — feeling thankful for something

proclamation — an official public announcement

statutory — set down in law

Indigenous — belonging to the first peoples of a land

tradition — something a group has done the same way for a long time

True or false

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. False
5. True
6. True
7. False
8. False
9. True
10. False

Timeline

Long before 1578	Indigenous peoples hold harvest feasts
1578	Martin Frobisher's crew give thanks in the Eastern Arctic
1879	Thanksgiving becomes a yearly national holiday
1957	Parliament fixes it on the second Monday of October
2026	Canadian Thanksgiving falls on Monday, October 12