

# Let's Talk!

*Volunteers helping newcomers speak English*

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## THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving is a national holiday celebrated each year on the fourth Thursday of November. This year, it **falls** on November 22nd. The holiday dates back to 1621, when the **Pilgrims** (early settlers in this country) gave thanks for the first **bountiful** harvest at Plymouth Rock, in Massachusetts. They celebrated for three days, **feasting** on dried fruits, boiled pumpkin and **venison**. The Native Americans, who gave the Pilgrims seeds to grow food and showed the newcomers how to survive in an unfamiliar land, joined in the festivities.

In 1789, President George Washington **proclaimed** Thanksgiving a national holiday. It became a federal holiday in 1941.

Today Thanksgiving is a holiday of gratitude, celebrating the power of friendship, togetherness and appreciation for all the good things in our lives. Most people have large dinners with their family and friends. The **centerpiece** of the meal is usually a roasted turkey. It is often filled with stuffing made from bread crumbs, spices and other ingredients—some people use chestnuts, others use oysters, but everyone seems to have a special family recipe. Sweet potatoes and cranberry sauce are also common dishes at the Thanksgiving feast, along with pumpkin pie for desert.

In New York City, there's a big parade on Thanksgiving, with **floats** and balloons. If you're not in New York, you can watch the parade on TV.



## Vocabulary

**falls** = happens; takes place

**pilgrim** = someone who journeys for religious reasons; the Pilgrims who came to this country were part of an extreme sect of Puritans from England. They went first to Holland, and then settled in America, where they hoped to practice their religion freely.

**bountiful** = large in quantity; abundant

**feasting** = eating and drinking large quantities

**venison** = meat from a deer

**proclaimed** = announced officially or publicly

**centerpiece** = an item that is the focus of attention

**float** = platform mounted on a truck and carrying a display in a parade

## IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS RELATED TO TIME\*

Practice using these common idioms and expressions in sentences with your conversation partner.

**timely** = punctual; happening at a convenient time

**(just) in the nick of time** = barely in time, but not late

**at times** = sometimes

**from time to time** = sometimes

**all (of) the time** = always

**much of the time** = frequently

**time after time** = again and again; repeatedly

**for the time being** = for now (but not permanently)

**(not) have a good time** = (not) enjoy oneself

**time out** = a short pause in a sporting event when the "game clock" is temporarily stopped

**take time off** = take a vacation

**take one's time** = not hurry

**on time** = arriving at the scheduled time

**in time** = not too late (maybe early, maybe on time, maybe even *after* the scheduled time)

**just in time** = at the time when someone or something is most needed

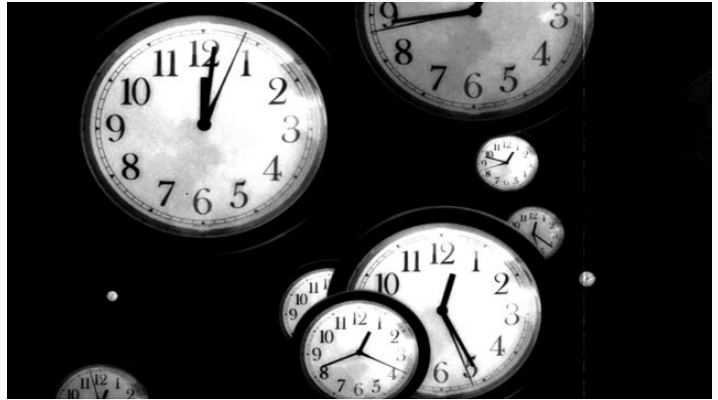
**have the time of one's life** = have an extremely good time

**double time** = twice as fast as the normal speed

**overtime** = time spent in addition to normal working hours; extra time added to a sporting event if the score is tied at the time when the game would normally end

**two-time** = date/have a relationship with two people at the same time (while pretending to be interested in only one person)

**"Once upon a time"** = a traditional way of beginning a story (especially a children's story or a fairy tale)



\* adapted from "Telling Time" by Dennis Oliver at [http://www.eslcafe.com/grammar/telling\\_time06.html](http://www.eslcafe.com/grammar/telling_time06.html)