

Thanks Giving

Katherine Lee Bates, a professor of English literature at Wellesley College, wrote the words to "America the Beautiful" in the summer of 1893, upon her return from her first trip to the summit of Pike's Peak. First printed in a magazine on July 4th, 1895, her words were soon set to music. They have been sung to numerous tunes, but "Materna" by Samuel A. Ward is the bestknown. Like Bates, inspired by America's beauty, Ward wrote the tune spontaneously after a day at the seashore.

Thanksgiving dinners take 18 hours to prepare. They are consumed in 12 minutes. Half-times take 12 minutes. This is not coincidence. **ERMA BOMBECK**

*For the smiles around this table
And the food we are about to eat.
For all the lessons we have
learned:
The questions asked
And still unanswered.
For the freedom to wander
In our minds
And wherever our feet
may carry us.
For the opportunity
to pursue our passions
And the chance to
be changed by them.
For the gift of a government
that belongs to us
And the blessing of a land
whose endless bounty depends
upon our care.
For the chance to offer
our gratitude in our own way,
in our own faith,
In our own time.
Together we say Thank You.*

**A FREEDOM'S FEAST
THANKSGIVING PRAYER**

Together, we sing:

AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

*O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good
With brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!*

Leader: Today Americans everywhere are gathering to celebrate Thanksgiving, our country's most popular national holiday. Why do we give thanks as Americans? Why do we give thanks at all?

Reader: One of the first things we learn as children is how and when to say thank you. We give thanks because we've been blessed with something that we need or want.

Leader asks each person to share one thing for which he or she is grateful, or an American freedom he or she cares about.

★ *See the Appendix, page 43, for alternative suggestions.*

ALL: For these things and more, we are thankful. May we always be aware of our blessings and take the time to share them with others.

S *This is a good time to offer a prayer of Thanksgiving from your faith tradition.*

What is your family's Thanksgiving prayer?

"Keep, ancient lands, your
 storied pomp!" cries she
 With silent lips. "Give me your
 tired, your poor,
 Your huddled masses
 yearning to breathe free,
 The wretched refuse of your
 teeming shore,
 Send these, the homeless,
 tempest-tost to me:
 I lift my lamp beside the
 golden door."

EMMA LAZARUS, FROM "THE NEW
 COLOSSUS" AS IT APPEARS ON A
 PEDESTAL AT THE BASE OF THE
 STATUE OF LIBERTY

We whose names are
 underwritten...do...solemnly...
 combine ourselves into a civil
 body politic, for our better
 ordering and preservation...
 to enact, constitute, and frame,
 [such] just and equal laws,
 ordinances, acts, constitutions,
 and offices...for the general use
 of the colony, unto which we
 promise all due submission
 and obedience.

THE MAYFLOWER COMPACT, 1620

Ultimately, America's answer to
 the intolerant man is diversity,
 the very diversity which our
 heritage of religious freedom has
 inspired. ROBERT F. KENNEDY

Always remember that you are
 absolutely unique. Just like
 everyone else.

MARGARET MEAD

From Plymouth Rock

Together, we sing:

AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

*O beautiful for pilgrim feet
 Whose stern impassioned stress
 A thoroughfare for freedom beat
 Across the wilderness!
 America! America!
 God mend thine every flaw,
 Confirm thy soul
 In self-control,
 Thy liberty in law!*

Leader: Our story as a nation begins with the arrival of the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock in 1620. Listen to The Pilgrim Story in the words of William Bradford, the second governor of Plymouth Plantation.

ALL: DEPARTING.

Reader: The time having come when they must depart...they left that good and pleasant city, which had been their resting place for nearly twelve years; but they knew they were pilgrims, and lifted up their eyes to the heavens, their dearest country, and quieted their spirits.

ALL: LANDING.

Reader: Being brought safely in sight of land, they fell upon their knees and blessed the God of Heaven who had brought them over the vast and furious ocean...they now had no...houses—much less towns—to repair to...it was winter... sharp and severe, and subject to fierce storms...

ALL: SURVIVING.



"God Favors Our Undertaking"

Reader: Squanto stayed with them, and was their interpreter, and became a special instrument sent of God for their good, beyond their expectation. He showed them how to plant their corn, where to take fish and other commodities, and guided them to unknown places, and never left them till he died....

ALL: THANKING.

Reader: Ought not the children of their fathers rightly to say: Our fathers were Englishmen who came over the great ocean, and were ready to perish in this wilderness; but they cried unto the Lord, and He heard their voice, and looked on their adversity....

Together we sing:

MY COUNTRY 'TIS OF THEE

My country 'Tis of thee,

Sweet land of liberty

Of thee I sing:

Land where my fathers died,

Land of the Pilgrims' pride,

From every mountainside

Let freedom ring!

Person with corn at his or her place raises the corn and reads:

Reader: This ear of corn symbolizes the arrival of our ancestors at Plymouth Rock in 1620. Without corn and the native Americans who taught them to grow it, the Pilgrims would not have survived. They ate corn at their first harvest meal together, thanking God. Together they worked without regard for color or creed. Today we are a nation of many millions. Our colors far exceed the number of colors on this ear of corn.

❁ *Child collects corn and puts in the cornucopia basket.*



The Pilgrims, known in England as Separatists, were jailed, fined, and ostracized for rejecting the Church of England. They fled England in 1608 and established a church community in Leyden, Holland. When they decided to come to America, the London Company of Virginia sponsored their passage in exchange for labor and produce from the New World. In 1620 they set sail with 42 men and women from their Leyden congregation, 60 passengers recruited by the London Company, and approximately 30 children. While harbored off Cape Cod, the Pilgrims adopted the Mayflower Compact.

Of the 102 adult voyagers, only 55 survived the first winter. The rest died of exposure, scurvy, and dysentery. Perhaps they all would have died by the next winter had it not been for the help of the local Native Americans, especially English-speaking Squanto, the sole survivor of the Pawtuxent tribe in Plymouth.

The following fall the Pilgrims gathered their abundant harvest. It was during this time that they celebrated, for three days, their first Thanksgiving feast, joined by 90 of their Native American friends.

Coming to America has always been hard...It is foolish to forget where you come from, and that in the case of the United States, is almost always somewhere else. The true authentic American is a pilgrim with a small "p," armed with little more than the phrase, "I wish..." ANNA QUINDLEN

*Speak not when others speak, sit
not when others stand, and walk
not when others stop.*

*Show not yourself glad at the
misfortune of another, though he
were your enemy.*

*Speak no evil of the absent,
for it is unjust.*

*Let your recreations be manful,
not sinful.*

*Labor to keep alive in your breast
that little spark of celestial fire
called conscience.*

**16TH CENTURY FRENCH RULES OF
ETIQUETTE STUDIED BY GEORGE
WASHINGTON AS A YOUTH**

*Until legislators discover that the
only way to make good citizens
and subjects is to nourish them
from infancy; and until parents
shall be convinced that the worst
of men are not the proper teachers
to make the best; mankind
cannot know to what a degree
of perfection society and
government may be carried.*

NOAH WEBSTER 1788

*Immigration is the highest form
of flattery. JACK PAAR*

Born the son of a poor candle maker
in Boston on January 17, 1706,
Benjamin Franklin became one of
the wealthiest and most influential
Americans of the colonial period.
A writer, scientist, businessman,
diplomat, inventor, statesman and
philosopher, his life became a testa-
ment to the American dream that
continues to inspire immigrants to
this day. For over 25 years, beginning
in 1733, he published his *Poor
Richard's Almanack*. It was hugely
successful and sold over 10,000
copies a year. Franklin collected
and edited popular sayings to
entertain Americans, but also to
encourage habits for success, industry
and frugality.

On the Way to Nationhood

Together we sing:

THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND

*This land is your land,
this land is my land
From California to the New York Island
From the Redwood Forest
to the Gulf Stream Water
This land was made for you and me.*

Reader: Waves of immigrants from England followed the Pilgrims. Many came for religious freedom. Some came in search of economic opportunities. Others were drawn by a sense of adventure.

Reader: As the immigrants settled, each colony developed a special character. Strict Puritans lived in Massachusetts while Catholics sought asylum in Maryland and religious dissenters of all kinds ended up in Rhode Island and Pennsylvania. New York (then New Amsterdam) and Virginia were filled with adventurers seeking their fortunes.

Reader: At the same time, a new type of citizen was emerging. Freed from Europe's rigid class system, he was independent, hard-working, well-schooled, multi-talented and adventurous. Most importantly his success depended on his own merit.

Reader: Benjamin Franklin, an example of this new citizen, was one of our oldest Founding Fathers and one of America's early self-made men.

Read the following sayings in succession or pick two or three to discuss.

Reader: From *Poor Richard's Almanack*, by Ben Franklin:

Reader: **Eat to live, and not live to eat.**

Reader: **He that lies down with Dogs, shall rise up with fleas.**

Reader: **Fish and visitors stink in 3 days.**

Reader: **Hear no ill of a Friend, nor speak any of an Enemy.**

Reader: **Little strokes fell great oaks.**

The American Dream

Reader: **No pains, no gains.**

Reader: **Keep your eyes wide open before marriage,
half shut afterwards.**

Reader: **God helps them that help themselves.**

Reader: **Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy,
wealthy, and wise.**

Reader: Franklin's witty sayings teach hard work, discipline and self-reliance—essential traits for a people who want to be independent and free.

When an American says that he loves his country, he means not only that he loves the New England hills, the prairies glistening in the sun, the wide and rising plains, the great mountains, and the sea. He means that he loves an inner air, an inner light in which freedom lives and in which a man can draw the breath of self-respect.

ADLAI STEVENSON

Five Year Immigration Highs and Lows from 1840 to 2008

1991	1,826,595
1990	1,535,872
1907	1,285,349
2006	1,266,129
1914	1,218,480
1934	29,470
1942	28,781
1944	28,551
1943	23,725
1933	23,068

Persons obtaining legal permanent resident status according to the US Department of Homeland Security

The history of every country begins in the heart of a man or a woman. **WILLA SIBERT CATHER**

In reality, there is, perhaps, no one of our national passions so hard to subdue as pride. Disguise it, struggle with it, beat it down, stifle it...it is still alive and will every now and then peep out and show itself...even if I could conceive that I had compleatly overcome it, I should probably be proud of my humility.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, AUTOBIOGRAPHY



The Declaration of Independence

*I say to you today, my friends,
that in spite of the difficulties
and frustration of the moment,
I still have a dream. It is a
dream deeply rooted in the
American dream. I have a dream
that one day this nation will
rise up and live out the true
meaning of its creed: we hold
these truths to be self-evident:
that all men are created equal....*

**MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. FROM "I
HAVE A DREAM" SPEECH ON THE
STEPS OF THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL,
AUGUST 28, 1963**

*We have it in our power to begin
the world over again.*

THOMAS PAINE

*If you can't stand the heat,
get out of the kitchen.*

HARRY S. TRUMAN

*For as much as government can
do and must do, it is ultimately
the faith and determination of
the American people upon which
this nation relies.*

BARACK OBAMA, INAUGURAL ADDRESS

*Put all your eggs in one basket
and—WATCH THAT BASKET!*

ANDREW CARNEGIE

*For every complex problem
there is an answer that is clear,
simple, and wrong.*

H. L. MENCKEN

1775 Demographics

Total population: 2.5 million

Slave population:

20% of all Americans

50% of all Virginians

67% of all South Carolinians

Together we sing:

AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

O beautiful for heroes proved

In liberating strife.

Who more than self

their country loved

And mercy more than life!

America! America!

May God thy gold refine

Till all success

Be nobleness

And every gain divine!

Reader: The Declaration of Independence is the document that Thomas Jefferson wrote and our Founding Fathers adopted on July 4, 1776, to declare a new nation that embraced freedom and justice for all.



ALL: When in the Course of human events,

Reader: **it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another**

Reader: **and to assume among the powers of the earth,**

Reader: **the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them,**

Reader: **a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.**

ALL: We hold these truths to be self-evident

Reader: **that all men are created equal**

Reader: **that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights**

Reader: **that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.**

Reader: **That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed...**

Reader: **it is the Right of the People to... institute new Government...**

Reader: **And for the support of this Declaration**

Reader: **with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence**

ALL: we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

@ *A full copy of the Declaration of Independence can be found at <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>.*

Most nations cannot claim a specific birth date. America can. Abraham Lincoln, in his famous Gettysburg Address of 1863, stated it simply, "Four score and seven years ago, our forefathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

During that hot summer in Philadelphia in 1776, a group of men gathered in the Continental Congress to decide the fate of a nation. The 56 signers of the Declaration included farmers, businessmen, lawyers, doctors, and a clergyman. They all knew that their decision to declare the 13 colonies independent of Great Britain was an act of treason punishable by hanging. Still, they went ahead.

Liberty is that spirit which is not too sure of itself.

JUDGE LEARNED HAND

Adams and Jefferson were appointed to the committee to write the Declaration of Independence. Years later, Adams recalled the discussion they had at the time. Adams insisted that Jefferson be the principal author while Jefferson proposed that Adams write the draft.

A: I will not.

J: Why?

A: Reason enough.

J: What can be your reasons?

A: Reason first—You are a Virginian and a Virginian ought to appear at the head of this business. Reason second—I am obnoxious, suspected and unpopular. You are very much otherwise. Reason third—you can write ten times better than I can.

J: Well, if you are decided I will do as well as I can.

JOHN ADAMS

Avarice, ambition, revenge, or gallantry, would break the strongest cords of our Constitution as a whale goes through a net. Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other.

JOHN ADAMS

...the Constitution is a glorious liberty document. Read its preamble, consider its purposes. Is slavery among them? Is it at the gateway? Or is it in the temple? It is neither. While I do not intend to argue this question on the present occasion, let me ask, if it be not somewhat singular that, if the Constitution were intended to be, by its framers and adopters, a slave-holding instrument, why neither slavery, slaveholding, nor slave can anywhere be found in it.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

We must dare to think "unthinkable" thoughts.

We must learn to explore all the options and possibilities that confront us in a complex and rapidly changing world. We must learn to welcome and not to fear the voices of dissent. We must dare to think about "unthinkable things" because when things become unthinkable, thinking stops and action becomes mindless.

JAMES WILLIAM FULBRIGHT

Thus I consent Sir, to this Constitution because I expect no better, and because I am not sure, that it is not the best. The opinions I have had of its errors, I sacrifice to the public good.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
(AT 81, THE OLDEST DELEGATE AT
THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION)

The Constitution

Together, we sing:

AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

*O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears!
America! America!
God shed His grace on thee
And crown thy good
With brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!*

Leader: The foundation for governing our country is laid down in the Constitution. It is a compact: a binding agreement between the people and those whom we elect to lead us. It guarantees that we will live in a society ruled by the laws that we create through our elected representatives.

Reader: It distributes the powers of government across three branches: the legislative, executive, and judiciary. The system is designed with checks and balances to ensure that all voices are heard in national debate and to prevent any one branch of government from having too much power.

ALL: We the People of the United States

Reader: in Order to form a more perfect Union

Reader: establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense

Reader: promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity

ALL: do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Leader may choose to focus specifically on one Article. Ask a participant to research that article in advance and lead a group discussion or the leader may choose to conduct a group reading of the following simple summaries of the Articles.

@ *A full copy can be found at <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution-transcript>.*

Reader: Article I establishes the legislative branch of government, called the Congress and comprised of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Reader: Article II establishes the executive branch comprised of the President and Vice President of the United States and the cabinet departments. The President signs or vetoes the laws the Congress passes and is the chief commanding officer of the country's armed forces.

Reader: Article III establishes the judiciary branch, or the court system, which sets the Supreme Court as the highest court in the land. The judiciary branch decides whether laws are constitutional and guarantees due process and justice for all when laws have been broken.

Reader: Article IV requires that states respect the laws of other states as long as they do not violate laws of the nation.

This government, the offspring of our own choice uninfluenced and unawed...completely free in its principles...has a just claim to your confidence and your support. Respect for its authority, compliance with its Laws, acquiescence in its measures, are duties enjoined by the fundamental maxims of true Liberty...the Constitution which at any time exists, 'till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole People, is sacredly obligatory upon all.

GEORGE WASHINGTON, FAREWELL ADDRESS

Patriotism in the female Sex is the most disinterested of all virtues. Excluded from honours and from offices, we cannot attach ourselves to the State of Government from having held a place of Eminence....Yet all History and every age exhibit Instances of patriotick virtue in the female Sex; which considering our situation equals the most Heroick of yours.

ABIGAIL ADAMS

Why is the Constitution of the United States so exceptional? Well, the difference is so small that it almost escapes you, but it tells you the whole story in just three words: We the people. Here in America, we the people are in charge.

RONALD REAGAN



The Constitution

Federalists v. Antifederalists

Several delegates thought that the proposed national government had too much power and left the convention without signing the Constitution. Opponents of the Constitution were known as Anti-Federalists, while supporters were called Federalists. The Federalist Papers were a series of essays written by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay. Distributed throughout the colonies, they urged citizens to vote in support of the Constitution.

It has been frequently remarked that it seems to have been reserved to the people of this country, by their conduct and example, to decide the important question, whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend for their political constitutions on accident and force.

ALEXANDER HAMILTON, FEDERALIST PAPER NO. 1

Is it not the glory of the people of America, that whilst they have paid a decent regard to the opinions of former times and other nations, they have not suffered a blind veneration for antiquity, for custom, or for names to overrule the suggestions of their own good sense, the knowledge of their own situation, and the lessons of their own experience?

JAMES MADISON, FEDERALIST PAPER NO. 14

Reader: Article V allows amendments to the Constitution provided that two-thirds of the members of Congress favor the change. But the people have the final say. Through our elected representatives, a majority of the states must approve an amendment in order to make it a permanent addition to the Constitution.

Reader: Article VI guarantees that the United States of America will honor all the debts and treaties the country had entered into before adopting the Constitution.

Reader: Article VII makes the Constitution the law of the land upon ratification by nine state conventions.

Reader: After nine months of fierce public debate, the Constitution, passed by the First Continental Congress, was ratified by nine states on July 21, 1789. The legislators who voted for the Constitution understood that it did not sufficiently protect individual rights, so they used Article V to create the Bill of Rights.

What part of the Constitution or our government were you most grateful for in the past year?



Thanksgiving Becomes a National Holiday, October 3, 1863

Sara Josepha Hale, a prominent writer and women's magazine editor, led a decades-long national campaign to make Thanksgiving a permanent annual national holiday. She even promoted the traditional meal that we eat today. As the Civil War approached, she sensed new urgency and wrote in an 1859 editorial that a national Thanksgiving holiday could give rise to "a renewed pledge of love and loyalty to the Constitution of the United States...."

Shortly after the Battles of Gettysburg and Vicksburg, Lincoln proclaimed the last Thursday in November a national day of Thanksgiving. (Congress later changed it to the fourth Thursday to extend the Christmas shopping season.)

Lincoln hoped that Americans of both North and South would use the occasion to "heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquillity and Union." Lincoln, like Hale, envisioned Thanksgiving Day as a time for all Americans to renew our pledge to the Constitution and rediscover our common purpose.

Whereas both houses of Congress have...requested me "to recommend to the People of the United States a day of public thanks-giving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God, especially by favoring them with an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness...."

GEORGE WASHINGTON, THANKSGIVING PROCLAMATION, OCTOBER 3, 1789, PROCLAIMS THE FIRST DAY OF NATIONAL THANKSGIVING

Somewhere Over the Rainbow

Somewhere over the rainbow
Way up high
There's a place that I heard of
Once in a lullabye

Somewhere over the rainbow
Skies are blue
And the dream that you dare to dream
Really does come true

One day I wish upon a star
And wake up where the clouds are far
 behind me
Where troubles melt like lemondrops
Way upon the chimney tops
That's where you'll find me

Somewhere over the rainbow
Blue birds fly
Birds fly over the rainbow
Why, oh why can't I?
Where troubles melt like lemondrops
Way upon the chimney tops
That's where you'll find me

Somewhere over the rainbow
Blue birds fly
Birds fly over the rainbow
Why, oh why can't I?

God Bless America

You may wish to stand.

God bless America, land that I love
Stand beside her and guide her
Through the night with the light from above
From the mountains to the prairies,
To the ocean white with foam
God bless America,
My home sweet home.
God bless America,
My home sweet home.

Irving Berlin wrote "God Bless America" in 1938 for Kate Smith to sing on her regular radio show. First broadcast November 11, 1938, "God Bless America" quickly became her signature song and one of America's most loved patriotic songs.