Thanksgiving trivia for kids: 15 questions with answers we checked

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Thanksgiving trivia for kids with answers, every one checked at a named source, plus how to run the round at the table with one phone, a buzzer and a scoreboard.

Thanksgiving trivia for kids works best as a short round of ten, at the right age, read out by one grown-up while the turkey rests. Below are fifteen questions with their answers, from turkeys and cranberries to the 1924 parade, and every answer was found on the page of the place we name: the National Archives, the National Park Service, the Smithsonian, the USDA, the FDA and the Library of Congress. To play them as a game, open Peabody's Thanksgiving family round: ten questions at three ages, read aloud, on one phone or a big screen.

Lists of Thanksgiving trivia often disagree with each other. We found two first-page lists in October that gave different years for the first national Thanksgiving. So we only kept a question when we found its answer, in those words, on a page from a museum, an archive or a government office, and we left out anything we couldn't check.

Questions for little ones (about 6 to 8)

1. In the United States, Thanksgiving is on which day of the week? Thursday. By law it is the fourth Thursday in November. (National Archives)
2. What do we call a grown-up boy turkey? A tom. A young boy turkey has its own name too: a jake. (National Park Service)
3. What do we call a grown-up girl turkey? A hen. Boy turkeys are the ones that gobble. (National Park Service)
4. Where do wild turkeys sleep at night? Up in trees. In snowstorms they hold on to strong branches in thick pine trees. (Smithsonian's National Zoo)
5. Cranberries grow on what kind of plant? Low vines. The vines are small and creep along the ground in sandy or wet land. (USDA Forest Service)

Questions for the middle (about 9 to 11)

1. What is a baby turkey called? A poult. Baby turkeys can also simply be called chicks. (National Park Service)
2. Why do cranberries float when a cranberry bed is flooded? They hold tiny pockets of air. Farmers flood the beds so the berries rise to the top and can be gathered. (USDA Forest Service)
3. A cooked turkey is safe to eat when the inside reaches what temperature? 165°F. Stuffing should reach 165°F too. (U.S. Food and Drug Administration)

4. Leftovers should go into the fridge within how many hours after the meal? Two hours. That rule counts for pumpkin pie as well. (U.S. Food and Drug Administration)
5. In what year was the first big New York City Thanksgiving parade? 1924. It was held on Thanksgiving Day, November 27, 1924. (Library of Congress)

Questions for big kids (12 and up)

1. Which writer pushed the government for years to make Thanksgiving one national holiday? Sarah Josepha Hale. Before that, Americans had many different regional days for giving thanks. (National Archives)
2. In 1939, which president moved Thanksgiving one week earlier? Franklin D. Roosevelt. That year the last Thursday of November fell on the very last day of the month. (National Archives)
3. In what year did a federal law fix Thanksgiving on the fourth Thursday in November? 1941. The law was a joint resolution of Congress. (White House Historical Association)
4. Wild turkeys rarely fly far, but how fast can they fly? Up to about 54 miles per hour. They seldom fly more than 100 yards at a time, and they can even swim. (Smithsonian's National Zoo)
5. Giant balloons first joined the big New York City Thanksgiving parade in which year? 1927. That was the parade's fourth year. (Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum)

How to run it at the table

• One reader, teams of animals. A grown-up or an older cousin reads. Split the table into teams called Foxes, Bears, Owls and Frogs, so nobody has to be named or picked last. Mixed ages work best when each team has a little one and a big one.
• Ten questions, then pie. A round of ten takes about fifteen minutes. That's long enough to be a game and short enough that the youngest stays in.
• Three answers to pick from. Peabody's round gives three choices for each question, so a seven-year-old can play against a grandparent. Read all three out loud.
• A buzzer for the loud ones. If two teams always shout at once, put a phone in the middle with Peabody's trivia buzzer: one big pad per team, the first tap locks the others out for two seconds, and nobody argues about who was first.
• A scoreboard that stays on the phone. The trivia scoreboard keeps each team's points, by animal, through a reload. There's no box to type a name into.
• Everybody gets a certificate. At the end of a Peabody round you can print one page per team. The top team gets "Tonight's champions", and every other team gets "Star team". There is no losers' sheet.

Keeping it kind

Pick the age before you start, not halfway through. If one team is far behind, let them answer two in a row, or give the youngest a question from the little ones' list. Peabody's rounds never take a point away, and we'd suggest the same at home. A tie is a fine way to end: two champion teams, two certificates.

Questions grown-ups ask

Where do these questions come from?

From the bank behind Peabody's trivia rounds: 228 questions written in our own words, each one checked against a page from a named source. The phrase that holds each answer was copied from that page and kept, so we can check it again if the page changes.

Is it all about the history of the holiday?

No. Most of it is turkeys, cranberries, pumpkins, potatoes, food safety and the parade, with a little of the calendar: when the day was set and who set it. That keeps it right for any table.

Can we play without a phone at the table?

Yes. Every Peabody round prints: the ten questions on cards, an answer sheet for each team, and the key on its own page to fold back. Open the Thanksgiving family round and tap Print.

More for Thanksgiving

- Thanksgiving game night: six card and dice games for the whole table.
- Thanksgiving games for kids: party games for the table and after dinner.
- How to draw a turkey, step by step, or with your hand.
- Road trip games for the drive there, with an "Are we there yet?" countdown.
- Free stories for kids to read together after the meal.

Peabody is free through the end of 2026, with no ads, and the trivia rounds need no sign-up.

Free at peabody.kids/blog/thanksgiving-trivia-for-kids-with-answers