

# Teacher's Guide for Appleseeds

November 2007

## *Giving Thanks*

1. Most students don't think while they read. This is the major obstacle to comprehension. Students must think about what they are reading. Teachers should model this behavior. First, start out by reading the article. Show the students how you think. For example, read the first paragraph to the students. Make connections, ask questions, and make comments about the reading as you read aloud. For instance you might say, while reading: How did they deal with life without supermarkets, and not having takeout food? You might say, I have grown a small garden, but haven't had to count on it for food.  
Keep reading a few more paragraphs, and have the students write down their thinking. Discuss it; ask them what they wrote down. Now have them try reading and writing their thinking. (Have them write their thinking on a sheet of paper or in the margins of the text.) This keeps the students focused on the article and their reading. When students read the article they can focus on the similarities and the differences of life, now and life in the past.
2. This article also gives your class a writing opportunity. After reading the article, brainstorm with your students the differences and similarities in life now and then. Use this material to write about those differences and similarities. For example, during the Chinese August Moon Festival, kids make wishes on the moon. We make wishes upon a star.
3. The article *Surprises*, addresses the history and tradition of Thanksgiving. Students have their own family history and traditions. Students can research their family history and write a brief essay on this history. It can include family members as well as traditions in their family, for example celebrating birthdays in a particular fashion. Students can include what food the student's family eats. Students can also interview relatives. Instead of writing, students can draw or do artwork to explain their family history; a timeline can be used here. They can also write about memories of their own Thanksgiving celebrations. Students can also brainstorm ideas on other traditions they would like to start. These could be serious or humorous.
4. *A Song of Thanksgiving* gives teachers a chance to write poetry with their students. Create a poem taxonomy. Have the students brainstorm a list of words that are associated with Thanksgiving, for example: pumpkins, turkey, corn, grandmother's house, football, stuffing, fall, Thanksgiving vacation, holiday, family, celebration and harvest. The teacher can write this list on the board as students contribute. Next, give an example of a poem, made from the list.

My family goes to grandmother's house to celebrate Thanksgiving Day.

We eat turkey and my cousins and I play.

The terrific smell of stuffing and pumpkin pie is bold.

The air outside is cold,

It makes my brothers cheeks red as a rose.

Draw some pictures to go with your poems.

5. *Saying Thank you.* Many times we forget that school is more than just a place for children to learn subject material. It should also be a place for them to learn manners, and how to accept others. This article gives teachers a chance to discuss why it is important to say: "Thank you", when someone shows even the slightest kindness to us. Teachers can discuss the proper etiquette for shaking hands, introducing friends and members of your family. Saying, "good morning" and responding by looking that person in the eye and reciprocating. You can even include table manners (speaking of Thanksgiving dinner). What utensils are used, passing the food etc. These are things we take for granted, but they are extremely important for students to learn.

5. *How Thanksgiving Really Became a Holiday*

6. Have students read the article. While reading, have students pay particular attention to why Sarah Hale is called "the mother of the American Thanksgiving." Students can underline or highlight the reasons in the text. For example: She celebrated the holiday in New England, and she thought it should be a special day for everyone. Once they have completed the reading, ask the students why Sarah Hale was called "the mother of the American Thanksgiving"? The students can use the details and examples they noted in the text to help them explain. This gives them practice with taking facts from one text and writing them in their own words. This models the writing that students and adults create daily.