mystery science

Grades K-5
Mini-Lesson: “Do other countries celebrate Thanksgiving?”

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

VIDEO 1

[Video Call]

- Hi, Doug!

- Hi, Jackie!

- I have a question for you. Do other countries celebrate Thanksgiving?

- That's a great question.

In the United States, where I live, we celebrate a lot of different holidays. Some of them help us remember people that have done amazing things, like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, and other holidays are celebrated just for fun, like Halloween. There are even silly holidays you might not even have heard of, like Eat Ice Cream For Breakfast Day—that happens each year on February 6th, and National Nothing Day, where you don't have to celebrate anything at all. But there's only one holiday that's all about being thankful, and that's Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is one of the most popular holidays in the United States, and people celebrate it in all sorts of ways, like turkey bowling or jogging five miles in a turkey costume, like these people do every year. Now, if you celebrate Thanksgiving, you might not celebrate it by dressing up like a turkey, but you might celebrate by hanging out with friends and family, eating a turkey dinner, or maybe

even watching a parade or a football game. How about you? What are some Thanksgiving traditions you've seen or celebrated?

VIDEO 2

Well, no matter how you celebrate, one thing is for sure, Thanksgiving is all about being thankful. And there are plenty of things to be thankful for, like great teachers, awesome pets, and all the amazing people that take care of us. But Americans aren't the only ones who celebrate being thankful. Thankfulness is an everywhere and everyone kind of thing. So, do people in other countries have some sort of Thanksgiving too? Well, yes and no. Though they may not eat turkey, or watch Thanksgiving Day parades like we do, many other countries do celebrate being thankful in their own special ways. In fact, there are Thanksgiving holidays on almost every continent on earth. Consider in Asia, for example. Each year in the country of Japan, people celebrate a holiday called Kinro Kansha no Hi, which means Workers Thanksgiving Day. Children celebrate this day by making gifts and thank you cards to give to community helpers. People like teachers, nurses, and firefighters. And check out these people in the African nation of Ghana. They're celebrating a holiday called Homowo, which means hoot at hunger. Though the Ghanaian people may not eat turkey on their day of giving thanks, they sure eat a lot of yams. That's because Homowo is the day they give thanks for the yam harvest, an important crop. An ancient legend says that yams won't grow if there's too much noise. But on Homowo, the yams are fully grown and ready to pick, so children are allowed to play drums, dance, and make all the noise they want. These thankfulness holidays like those in Japan and Ghana look a lot different than American Thanksgiving, but all of them do seem to have something in common. They happen during the harvest season, the time when crops like rice, and carrots, and potatoes are finally ready to pick and eat. In fact, in the European country of

Germany, they actually call their Thanksgiving Erntedankfest, which literally means harvest thank festival. But while Americans usually spend their Thanksgiving at home with friends and family, the Germans take their Thanksgiving celebrations to the streets with music, parades, and making crafts like these lanterns. The great thing about all these holidays is that each country celebrates giving thanks differently with their own foods, their own games, and their own amazing traditions. And you may have noticed, even the names of these Thanksgiving holidays are totally different from the word Thanksgiving. But are there any places besides the United States that actually call their thankfulness holiday Thanksgiving? Believe it or not, there are. In Canada, they celebrate a holiday called Thanksgiving, but they celebrate in October instead of November. And take a look at this. There's even a tiny island off the coast of Australia that celebrates a holiday called Thanksgiving. A long time ago, an American by the name of Isaac Robinson moved to Norfolk Island to live. He loved American Thanksgiving traditions so much that he wanted to share them with his Australian friends. There were no turkeys on the island, but there were a lot of banana trees. So, he decided to make a feast with chicken, and lots and lots of bananas. The Australians on the island loved Thanksgiving so much, they still celebrate it today. So, in summary, though not everyone celebrates Thanksgiving the way Americans do, people all over the world do celebrate giving thanks in their own special ways. Even though their holidays are different than the ones in America, they still all share one thing in common, they're a time for giving thanks. That's all for this week's question. Thanks, Jackie, for asking it!