

Thankful Hand Turkeys

Beginner Kids Thanksgiving ESL Lesson

Objective: Grammar and writing: "thankful for"

Level: Kids Beginner (ages 6-11)

Length: 45 minutes

Main aim: Students will learn "thankful for" + noun/gerund by making a hand turkey

Sub aim: Students will speak about Thanksgiving

Assumptions: knows subject pronouns, verb "to be" in present tense, some concrete nouns, can hold pencil and form letters

Materials: Image of Norman Rockwell's [Freedom from Want](#) (1943), examples of hand turkeys (saved images from [Meaghan Murphey, "How to Make a Hand Turkey in 7 Easy Steps," Good Housekeeping \(Nov. 6, 2020\)](#) and [Bandita, "Thanksgiving Turkey Drawing," CleanPNG](#), or internet access for [Google Image search](#)), internet access (or saved YouTube file) and speakers for [The Gobble Song](#), board, writing instrument, paper, basic coloring supplies

Classroom type: in-person social distanced/no contact, in-person normal, online; can be done without internet access or computer if photos printed and song is downloaded/burned to CD

Warmer: Norman Rockwell's Freedom from Want (1943) (5 min)



Display photo of Rockwell's *Freedom from Want* (1943)

Ask students what they see in the photo.

Elicit: turkey, family, food. If a student mentions "Thanksgiving", write it on board.

Use this warmer to practice prior language points. This painting is particularly well-suited to practicing vocabulary for family members, household items, and describing pictures (ie. "at the bottom", "on the left" etc.).

Image credit: [Norman Rockwell \(1894-1978\), Freedom from Want, 1943. Oil on canvas, 45 3/4" x 35 1/2". Story illustration for The Saturday Evening Post, March 6, 1943. Norman Rockwell Museum Collections. ©SEPS: Curtis Licensing, Indianapolis, IN.](#)

Introduce Thanksgiving: (5 min)

If students mentioned Thanksgiving in previous activity, go to **Ask 2**.

If no one mentioned Thanksgiving in the previous activity, go to **Ask 1**.

Ask 1: Tell students this is a painting of a famous holiday in the US. Which one?

Students respond.

Write "Thanksgiving" on board

Ask 2: What do you know about Thanksgiving?

Students usually list food, Black Friday, the US

Ask 3: Look at the word "Thanksgiving". Do you see any words you know?

Students usually get "Thank"

Draw a vertical line between "Thanks" and "giving"

Ask 4: What two words make up "Thanksgiving"?

Elicit: "Thanks" and "giving"

Review meaning of "thanks" and "giving"

Ask 5: What is Thanksgiving about?

Elicit: Giving thanks, saying thank you

Teach phrase "I'm thankful for":

(7 min)

Write "I'm thankful for" on board

Say: "I'm thankful for _____, _____, and _____"

Clasp your hands to your chest to express gratitude and convey the meaning of the phrase.

Ask: "What are you thankful for?"

Take answers:

- if nouns, write on one side of board, (feel free to write possessive adjectives if given by student (eg. "my family", "good food"))
- if verbs, write on other side of board but always as gerund (with -ing ending)
- if no response, teach or translate the meaning of thankful.

Teach preposition "for" + noun

"for" + gerund (-ing form functioning as noun)

Ask again: "What are you thankful for?"

Remind students to use nouns or verb-ings.

Do not accept other verb forms, guide student to saying -ing form.

Write any new words on board.

Make sure the list is neat, ordered, and easy for students to see.

Activity: Drawing a Thankful Hand Turkey

(20 min total)

(20 min total: 3 min instructions, 10 min activity, 5-8 min writing extension)

Instructions:

As you give instructions, draw your own thankful hand turkey as an example on the board.

1. Tell students they will make hand turkeys.
2. Draw a vertical rectangle on the board (to represent their papers)
3. Write your name in the top right corner.
4. Trace your hand in the center of the top half of the rectangle
5. Draw a turkey beak, eye, and gobbler on the thumb.
6. Write "I'm thankful for" in the center of the palm.
7. Write what you are thankful for in the fingers.
Remember to use only nouns and gerunds
If you need ideas or help spelling, use this list on the board.
8. Color and decorate your turkey

Social distancing guidelines permitting: students may talk to someone sitting close to them to share supplies, help with spelling, share their artwork.

While students work:

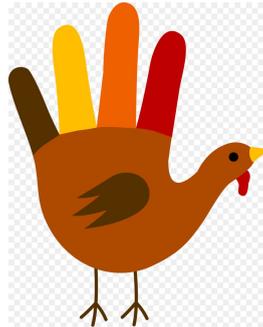
Display [10 minute timer](#)

Display examples of hand turkeys while students work.

[Gallery view](#) from a simple google image search

Previous classes' work

Specific photos:



Left: [Meaghan Murphey, "How to Make a Hand Turkey in 7 Easy Steps." Good Housekeeping \(Nov. 6, 2020\)](#)

Right: [Bandita, "Thanksgiving Turkey Drawing." CleanPNG](#)

Play [Thanksgiving music](#) softly in the background while the kids draw.

Stop music when the [10 minute timer](#) beeps and time is up.

Social distancing guidelines permitting, circulate throughout the classroom monitoring, helping, and giving praise.

Writing thankful sentences (5-8 min)

As you give instructions, create an example using your existing hand turkey on the board.

Instructions:

1. Below the hand turkey, write 4 complete sentence about what they are thankful for, 1 for each of the things listed on their hand turkey fingers.
2. Each sentence must start with:
"I am thankful for _____ because..."

Notes:

Remove this section if learners are too young, or do not have the level to write simple sentences independently.

Depending on students' age and level, you may be able to give the instructions for the writing section at the beginning with how to draw a hand turkey. In this case, remember to add extra time to the timer and give students [15 minutes](#) total for the entire activity.

Discussion: (5 min)

Ask: What are you thankful for?

Listening task: Did anyone else write what you wrote?

What is the most popular response?

Take responses from volunteers.

Display Hand Turkeys: (2 min)

Clean up materials and display hand turkeys.

According to your social distancing guidelines:

- Kids pin, tack, or tape their turkeys up around the classroom
- Teacher collects and posts turkeys
- Kids attach turkeys to side of desk
- Post photo in class webpage

Song: The Gobble Song (5 min total: 3 min gobble, 2 min song)

Ask: What sound do turkeys make?

Students will make all kinds of sounds, say what turkeys say in native language

Tell: In English, turkeys say [make gobble noise]

Write "gobble" on board

Practice pronunciation of "gobble" and gobbling like turkeys.

Instructions:

1. Tell students we are going to sing a Thanksgiving song about turkeys.
2. When the song says "gobble" we must say "gobble" along with the song.
3. Play [The Gobble Song](#) once.
4. Display lyrics as you play, if possible.

Notes:

Kids generally love gobbling to this song. Feel free to play it again if they demand an encore.

If it's a monolingual classroom and you know their native language, translate the lyrics for them. The song has natural pauses so you can do this without pausing the song.