



HOLIDAYS: THANKSGIVING

(PEER-TEACHING, LISTENING AND PROJECT-WORK USING AUDIO-VISUAL INPUT)

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1. Lesson content – Introduction of the topic; Topic and method relation:

In this class we discuss the topic “holidays”, we do a reading task which is followed by an extensive listening comprehension practice using audio-visual input. L2 learners do creative thinking exercises to allow room for idiosyncratic language use. Then as their homework they collect pictures in order to produce a graphic representation or a montage of the Anglo-Saxon and international holidays. Finally, they show their compilation to the class while the others evaluate them. Since listening to authentic spoken English can easily be done by using the Direct Method, this method is significantly used here with the essential support from audio-visual input from excerpts of an episode of Friends, namely Season 5, Episode 8: The One with the Thanksgiving Flashbacks and pictures from the family album and the Internet.

2. Competences to improve:

Personal competences

Self-esteem, confidence, self-control, adaptability to L2 environment, external and internal motivation, fact-finding and analysis, gathering data empirically

Social competences

Empathy, cooperativeness, communicative rationality, team-building, raising cultural awareness

Cognitive competences

Critical thinking, analytical skills, higher order processes of application and evaluation, successful intelligence, cultural adaptability to L2 environment

3. Target group:

Secondary school students. Ages: 15-18. Grades: 9-12.

4. Preliminaries:

Pre-intermediate, intermediate and upper-intermediate groups. (Impossible for beginners.)
(A2; B1; B2; C1)





5. Teaching materials and equipment:

DVD or multimedia player with a Video Display Unit (a TV-set or a projector) a board (or a flipchart or SMART board), plenty of markers, sheets, and handouts.

6. Comments and remarks:

In the case of pre-intermediate L2 learners it is vital to follow the steps in the video. Doing so, the class should be a double lesson, at least. Teachers may opt for tasks or they can omit them. For upper-intermediate L2 learners, however, the listening exercise might be merely a warming-up task and the focus may be shifted onto the project-work and the idiosyncratic language use.

7. Lesson plan

Pre-Tasks



Task 1

What kind of holidays do you know? What is the difference between them? (Warming-up: L2 learners should list different types of holidays.)



Task 2

Write down as many different holidays as you can think of. (T lists the holidays the Ls have collected.)



Task 3

Read the short excerpt. What kind of holiday is it about? (T distributes the handouts. Ls do skimming.)

This is a legal holiday in the U.S., first celebrated in early colonial times in New England. The actual origin, however, is probably the harvest festivals that are traditional in many parts of the world. After the first harvest was completed by the Plymouth colonists in 1621, Governor William Bradford proclaimed this day a day of holiday and prayer, shared by all the colonists and neighbouring Native Americans. In 1623 a day of fasting and prayer during a period of drought was changed to this designation, because the rain came during the prayers. Gradually, the custom prevailed in New England as an annual celebration after the harvest. During the American Revolution a yearly day of national holiday was suggested by the Continental Congress.

In 1817 New York State adopted this day as an annual custom, and by the middle of the 19th century many other states had done the same. In 1863 President Abraham Lincoln appointed a day for this, and since then each president has issued a proclamation of the day, generally designating the fourth Thursday of November as a holiday.



Task 4

Underline the new words. Discuss the new items. (Ls check the new vocabulary items. T writes the proper vocabulary on the board and Ls copy them in their books or on the handouts.)





Tasks



Task 5

Watch a scene of the episode about Thanksgiving. (Ls watch a scene of the episode without pre-reading the task.)



Task 6

Do the short-answer listening comprehension task.

1. What does Phoebe have to do to make the remote work?
2. What kind of game does Rachel suggest that they should play?
3. Who's the king of bad Thanksgivings? Why?
4. What's the problem with Phoebe's bad Thanksgiving?
5. What's Monica's worst Thanksgiving?
6. Why did he do it?
7. How could you have gotten that thing off?
8. Who thinks that "reliving past pain and getting depressed is what Thanksgiving's all about"?
9. What did Chandler dislike?
10. Why should Monica have finished off the pies?
11. When and why did Rachel change her major?
12. What did Monica want to do to Chandler?
13. What was the problem with the last thing that "turned Monica on"?
14. What was in the ice bag?
15. Who came up with "Sir Limps-a-Lot"?

Possible answers:

1. She has to lift it and point.
2. They should all say one thing they are thankful for.
3. Chandler. Because his father left the family on that day. Or Monica cut off his toe on that day.
4. It was not in "this" life.
5. When Joey's head got stuck in the turkey.
6. To scare Chandler.
7. *The students own ideas.*
8. Chandler.
9. Thanksgiving and all the things about it.
10. She was full./She was hurt by Chandler.
11. Because there was never any parking at the Psychology building.
12. To humiliate him.
13. It fell onto Chandler's toe./It cut off Chandler's toe.
14. A cold piece of carrot.
15. Ross





Copy the new vocabulary items in your books or on the handouts.



Task 7

How could you have gotten that thing off? Use Conditional Type 2. (Using the audio-visual input, the Ls should do creative thinking exercises to allow room for idiosyncratic language use. Ls use Conditional Type 2. T always contradicts Ls to make them come up with several new ideas.)



Task 8

Compare the two main characters. Describe their general appearance, physical features, and personality characteristics. List them under the two headings. (Using the audio-visual input, the Ls should compare the two main characters of the episode to allow room for analytical skills and synthesis.)



Task 9

What is happening now? What is going to happen? (T should pause the picture many times to elicit several different responses. Using the audio-visual input, the Ls should predict what is going to happen. This allows room for idiosyncratic language use.)



Task 10

What can the characters do? What could you do? (T should pause the picture many times to elicit several different responses. T always contradicts the to make Ls come up with several new ideas.)



Task 11

Collect pictures of the symbols and features of Thanksgiving and other holidays at home or in the computer lab. Then print them out.



Task 12

Put the pictures onto a sheet to produce your project, which should be a compilation of fact-files and your ideas of the different holidays.

Post-Tasks



Task 13

Show the class your projects and give a short speech on it.



Task 14

Listen to your classmates and write down what you like on the pink cards and what you don't on the green ones. (Evaluate using pink cards for positive agreement and confirmation and green cards for correcting mistakes or to express disagreement.)



Task 15

Stick the little cards on the project to highlight the things you like or you don't.



Task 16

Study the problem points. Discuss them in class.





8. Visuals:



There is a detailed description of the class-work and a closer look at the activities in the video.

9. Evaluation and assessment:

A great way of mastering students' listening skills and enhancing reading skills using semi-authentic material and placing the task itself in a advanced, cultural context while producing projects of their own.

10. Related Works:

1. Buck, G.: Assessing Listening: Cambridge: CUP, 2001.
2. Friends (Season 5, Episode 8): The One with the Thanksgiving Flashbacks . Writ. David Crane and Marta Kauffman. Perf. Jennifer Aniston, Courteney Cox, Lisa Kudrow, Matt LeBlanc, Matthew Perry, David Schwimmer. NBC. (DVD - Warner Bros. Television) November, 1998.
3. Friends: <http://warnervideo.com/friends15/>
4. Friends: The Internet Movie Database. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0108778/>
5. Geddes, M.: The Use of Semi-scripted Simulated Authentic Speech and Listening Comprehension. Audio-Visual Language Journal Issue: XVI/3: Winter, 1978
6. Porter, D and Roberts, J.: Authentic listening activities. ELT Journal Volume 36/1 October 1981.
7. Richards, J.C.: The language teaching matrix. Cambridge: CUP, 1990.
8. Thanksgiving Day. Microsoft® Encarta® 97 Encyclopedia. © 1993-1996 Microsoft Corporation.
9. Widdowson, H.: Aspects of language teaching. Oxford: OUP, 1990.

