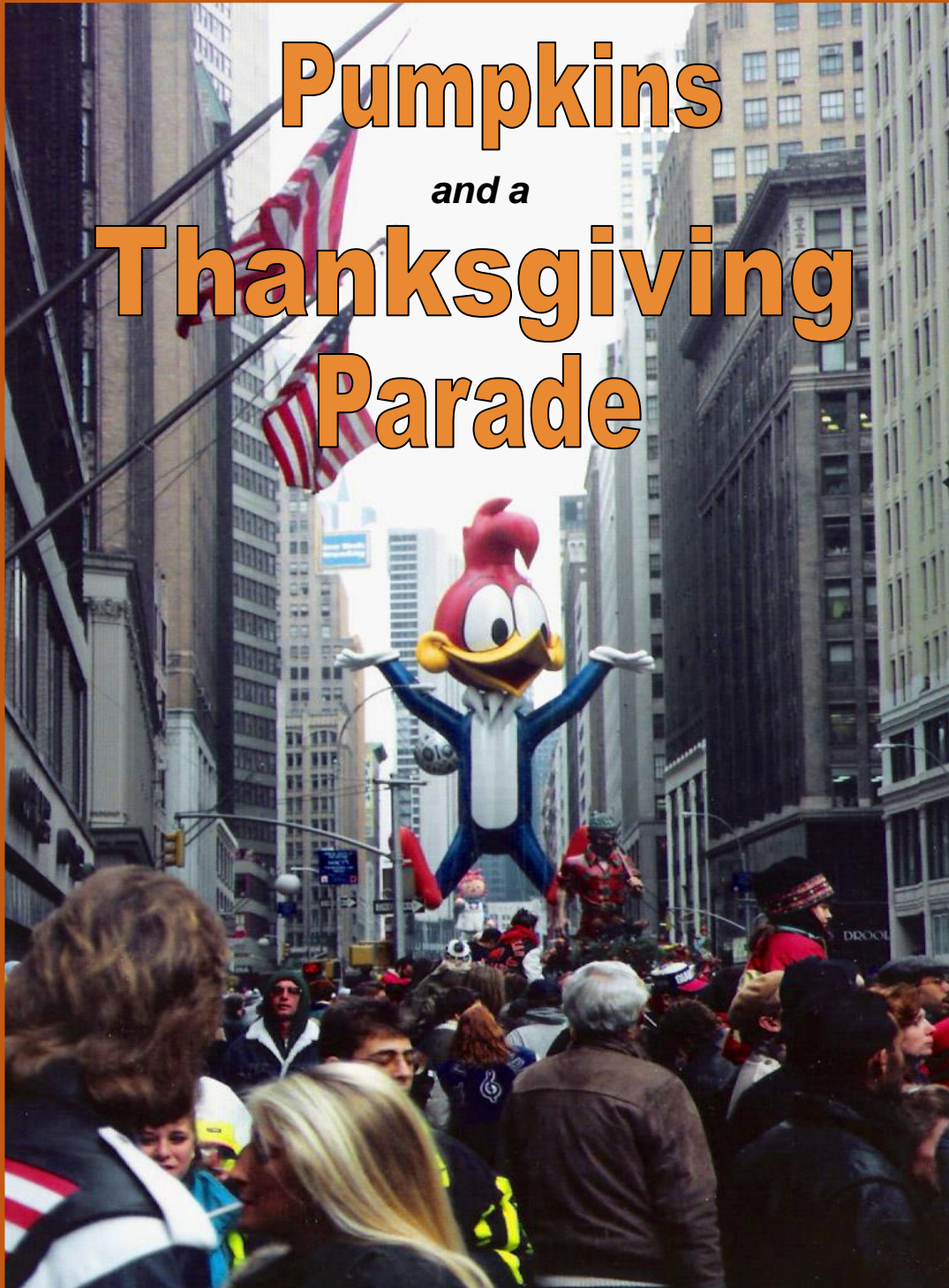


Informational Text Pack for November

by Margaret Whisnant

Pumpkins *and a* Thanksgiving Parade



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Informational Text Pack for November
Pumpkins and a Thanksgiving Parade

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Macey's Thanksgiving Day Parade 2008 View from Empire State Building (Image: [Wikimedia Commons](#))

Pumpkin Surprises

By Margaret Whisnant

To Americans, nothing says Halloween and Thanksgiving like pumpkins. Centuries ago, this humble food source played an important role in our history. Though people have trouble deciding whether they are vegetables or fruits, pumpkins provide the main ingredient in dozens of tasty dishes, sometimes served along side one of their surprising plant relatives. They can't get rid of freckles as once believed, but they are brimming with healthy vitamins and chemical compounds that show promise as disease fighters. Some weigh less than a pound, while others are full-ton hulks. Furthermore, they have their own annual sporting events.



Pumpkins are full of surprises! Even their name throws a curve ball.

Pumpkin History

The ancient Greek word *pepon*, means “large melon,” Around 1300 as a Middle French term, it became *pompon*. Then the English transformed it into *pumpion*. However, neither the Greeks nor the French nor the English knew anything about the orange melons whose name they were creating. They had to wait for them to be discovered along with the rest of North and South America.

Pumpkins are native to Central America and Mexico, dating back to about 5500 BCE. When the Pilgrims showed up 7000 years later, Native American Indians had been growing them for eons as staples in their diets. Without pumpkins and other local resources, the Plymouth colonists would not have survived. Still, linguists think that it was later settlers, probably those from Germany, who changed the spelling from *pumpion* to *pumpkin*. Regardless of who gave the melon its modern name, word of its food value spread quickly to the rest of the world. Today, pumpkins are cultivated on every continent except Antarctica.

Full Text is 3 pages.



Pumpkin Surprises

Questions

Directions: Use the text to answer the following questions. Write your responses in the spaces provided.

1. In the first paragraph, the author made certain introductory statements about pumpkins. For each one listed below, locate an exact quote from the text or summarize textual facts that support the author's initial statement.
- A. **Introductory Statement:** *Centuries ago, this humble food source played an important role in our history.*

Supporting Quote or Summary: _____

- B. **Introductory Statement:** *. . . people have trouble deciding whether they are vegetables or fruits. . .*

Supporting Quote or Summary: _____

- C. **Introductory Statement:** *Some weigh less than a pound, while others are half-ton hulks.*

Supporting Quote or Summary: _____

- D. **Introductory Statement:** *Furthermore, they have their own annual sporting events.*

Supporting Quote or Summary: _____

14 Questions in full product.

Parade in the Sky

by Margaret Whisnant

What appears in public once a year every fourth Thursday in November, requires a team of 50 to 70 trained handlers to keep it under control, and catches the attention of more than 50 million people?

Nope! It isn't the giant hibernating space chicken out to stretch his legs and change his socks before Christmas. It's one of the massive balloons in Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. While bands and floats and celebrities stick to the ground, the towering balloons steal the show with their own parade in the sky.

Watching the huge characters skillfully navigate the skyscraper canyons of New York City, it's hard to imagine that these holiday icons have even engaged in unacceptable behavior, but they have! Some have exploded. A couple hitched airplane rides without permission, and a few really bad eggs have attacked spectators. They are super-expensive, and they get dangerously hyper in the wind and the rain. Still, Thanksgiving Day in the U.S. wouldn't be the same without them. During its first three years, however, the Macy's parade rolled along without the balloons. They had to work their way in.

In 1924, Macy's employees, many of whom were first-generation immigrants proud of their new country and their jobs, staged the very first parade to celebrate Christmas and draw attention to the store. The Macy's Christmas Parade, as it was called that first year, featured workers dressed as clowns, cowboys, and various other characters. There was one marching band. Horses pulled three floats depicting The Old Lady Who Lived in a Shoe, Little Miss Muffet, and Little Red Riding Hood. The store borrowed camels, donkeys, elephants, and goats from the Central Park Zoo and added them to the line-up. Santa Claus appeared gloriously at the end as he has done every year since.



Woody Woodpecker 2004 Parade

Complete Text is 3 pages

Parade in the Sky

Questions

Directions: Use the text to answer the following questions. Write your responses in the spaces provided.

- _____ 1. The first Macy's parade was staged in 1924 by a group of its employees, *many of whom were first-generation immigrants proud of their new country and their jobs.* Based on the italicized information, the term *first-generation immigrants* refers to
- (A) people who were born in a foreign country, immigrated to the U.S., and became working citizens.
 - (B) people whose parents came from another country to be U.S. citizens.
 - (C) people who came to work in the U.S. and then return to their native countries.
 - (D) the first group of immigrants who came to the U.S. in the early 1900's.

2. What character was the first parade balloon in 1928? What three new balloons were added as companion balloons the next year?

- _____ 3. The exploding balloons of 1928 imply that
- (A) they were made of inferior materials.
 - (B) parade officials weren't concerned with safety.
 - (C) parade officials didn't understand the nature and behavior of helium.
 - (D) they were poorly made.

4. Supply the missing *Cause* or *Effect*.

Cause: _____

Effect: A pilot nearly crashed trying to snag one of Macy's released balloons.

15 Questions in full product.

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