



THANKSGIVING

by Ella Wheeler Wilcox

Answer the following questions about “Thanksgiving.” **Sample answers**

1. Label the ideas from the poem with the stanzas in which they are expressed. Use 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

- 2 Our worries can blind us to the joys that are abundant in everyday life.
- 4 There are hidden blessings in the hardships we must endure throughout our lives.
- 1 We often do not notice the wonderful little things that fill our daily lives.
- 5 We should recognize the things we can appreciate in every moment.
- 3 We should celebrate joyful things in the present, not just when recalling them.

2. Write a sentence that describes the poem’s theme.

We should be always aware of and thankful for the joys in everyday life.

3. Describe how the author uses figurative language in lines 9–16 of the poem.

Wilcox emphasizes the strength of cares and worries through personification. She describes them as “bold” and as doing things like “pushing,” “hanging about,” “stealing,” “striving,” and “conquering” our lives if we let them.

4. Reread the following lines from the poem.

Full many a blessing wears the guise
Of worry or of trouble;
Far-seeing is the soul, and wise,
Who knows the mask is double.

What does the author mean by these lines?

- a. A blessing often causes more trouble than it’s worth.
- b.** A blessing can first seem troublesome before we recognize its advantages.
- c. A blessing benefits one person while it brings worry or trouble to another.
- d. A blessing teaches us gratitude and wisdom rather than worry.

5. In lines 33–40 of the poem, to what does the author compare Thanksgiving?

- a. the end of a book that includes notes about an author’s life
- b. a feast that makes the bellies of our souls swell with joy
- c.** the chorus of a song that has been sung throughout the year
- d. a clock that shows how the days and hours have passed by too swiftly

6. How does the author’s use of the first-person plural pronouns *we*, *our*, and *us* contribute to the poem’s meaning? Choose two answers.

- a.** The first-person plural pronouns establish a connection between the author and the reader.
- b. The use of first-person plural pronouns helps the narrator seem more knowledgeable.
- c. The pronouns are used in figurative language, which makes the poem more meaningful.
- d.** The pronouns create a feeling of togetherness that is associated with gathering to give thanks on Thanksgiving.
- e. The first-person plural pronouns show that the poem was written by two authors who share the same feelings.

7. *Internal rhyme* is a kind of rhyme in which two or more words within a line or across multiple lines of a poem rhyme. Provide two examples of internal rhyme in the poem.

- 1. And quite ignore our daily store
- 2. But worry strives to own our lives

8. “Thanksgiving” was published in 1903 in a book of Wilcox’s poems titled *Poems of Power*. Describe how this poem fits into the topic of power.

Wilcox explores the power of cares, worries, and sorrows to distract from the joys in everyday life. She also emphasizes our own power to overcome them by being thankful for daily joys and the hidden blessings that can be found even in the hard times.