

NOVEMBER 2020

VOL. 2

WE NEED TO TALK

An activism-focused, student-run newspaper



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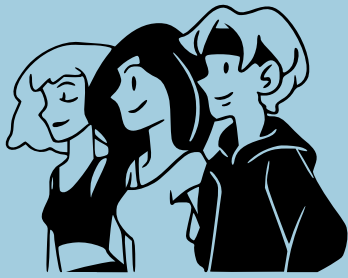
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We Need To Talk



Opinion Piece

By
Vishakha
Singh

A New Perspective on Gender Equality

Since the beginning of our schooling, we have been taught that everyone, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, etc., is equal. We are constantly reminded that girls are no less proficient than boys in any field; that girls and boys are equal. Great minds like Mahatma Gandhi have even suggested that women are, in fact, superior to men.

This sense of equality is instilled into young minds so that they grow up to be self-aware and understand the importance of gender equality.

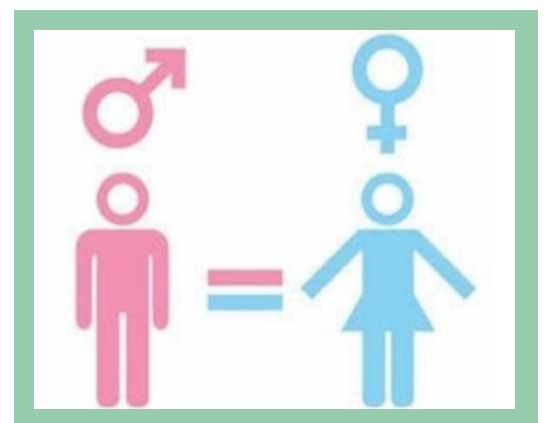
A prominent aspect of equality in our generation is feminism. Most children come across this term at quite a young age from the news or simply by the elders around them using it. But, they need to be taught that there is more to equality than just “Girl Power.”

In our society, feminism is supported but it is also misunderstood.

Firstly, feminism did not start as what it has garnered a reputation for in modern times. It started as a movement for female empowerment; for women to obtain equal rights such as the right to education, to inherit property, their freedom of speech, expression and more.

It is meant to give women a choice about who they want to be, what they want to be and how they want to be recognised in society.

Therefore, a woman who chooses to not be a feminist and a woman who chooses to be a feminist is



Opinion: A New Perspective on Gender Equality

a sign that feminism is being perceived as what it should be. Similarly, a woman who chooses to cover up is just as much a feminist as a woman who chooses to show some skin. That being said, feminism is not reserved for women. Many women aren't feminists and many men are feminists.

Feminists have come a long way as now, women have equal rights in many areas around the world and increased rights in others. They achieve what was once considered impossible, independently. But they still have a long way to go since essential sanitary and clothing products for women are still considered non-essential products and are heavily taxed.

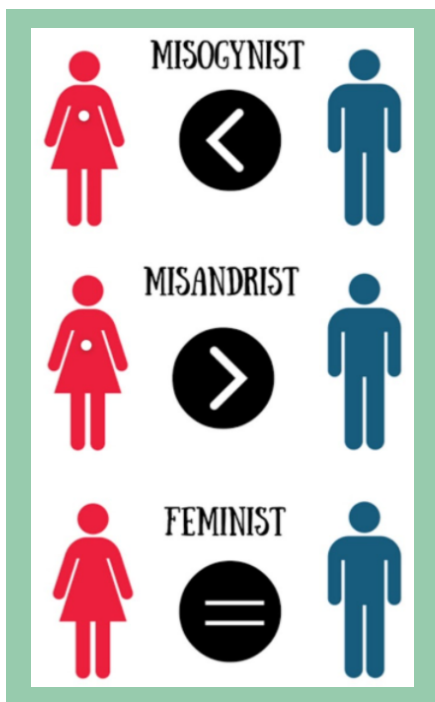
“Feminism is about giving women a choice. Feminism is not a stick to beat other women with. It's about freedom, it's about liberation, it's about equality.”

- Emma Watson

However, modern-feminism has devolved into pseudo-feminism.

This is because of the people who fail to understand feminism and misinterpret it to be a matriarchy or female supremacy. In their drive to prove that women are superior to men, they ignore the fact that people have problems because of the old-fashioned mindset of one being superior to the other. And unintentionally, they carry this toxic mindset on. The pseudo-feminists make it harder for feminism and feminists to be taken seriously.

This is why feminism is often deemed to be synonymous to “man-hating” and genuine, educated feminists are labelled “feminazis.”



Men and women are suppressed by gender-based roles and limitations. Young boys and girls are taught to act a certain way solely because of their gender. This is where the problem starts, we need to look at the bigger picture and understand what it means to be equal. Enter: toxic masculinity.

Toxic masculinity is the idea which dictates what a man needs to be like, to be called masculine. This is where the stereotype of men being aggressive, rough, dominant, laid-back and self-reliant. It might not seem harmful at first and that is exactly why it is toxic.

The fact that most women and even men don't see how toxic it only proves the fact that it has been too deeply embedded in our subconscious. Most of us can't tell when our fathers and brothers are tired of being strong all the time because this is what they have been taught. They are taught that men shouldn't cry; that they shouldn't feel pain.

And it is normalized to the extent that it is dangerous!

Most men don't reach out for help when they are struggling because they have been taught that they shouldn't need help. They refuse to talk about their feelings because “men don't cry.” Toxic masculinity limits men's emotional options other than that of anger. It invalidates the fact that they need emotional support too!

Women tend to have more intimate relationships with their friends, peers and other women which fortifies their mental health. This isn't because women are inherently more expressive

Opinion: A New Perspective on Gender Equality

and compassionate but, rather, because society has not only allowed women to be emotional but encouraged them to have a more open disposition when it comes to their feelings. Male friendships don't usually have this intimacy, which leaves a man none other than his partner to vent out to. When their partner is gone, many find it hard to carry on with their lives because that was one of the few acceptable sources of emotional support they had.

A man can't take care of himself, even over trivial things such as skin-care because it is seen as a form of emasculation. A woman can't be assertive without being called bossy.



“Men weren't the enemy. They were fellow victims suffering from an outmoded masculine mystique that made them feel unnecessarily inadequate when there were no bears to kill.”
- Betty Friedan

Men and women alike have suffered because of the gender-based double standards and stereotypes imposed by a narrow-minded society of the past. Now, as the most educated generation, we need to change that.

Women should be able to express their opinions, thoughts without being called “bossy,” “rude,” or “emotional,” be able to make their decisions, and feel safe walking on a street alone.

Men should be able to express their feelings, take care of their skin, wear whatever they want, and let down their guard without the fear of being judged as “non-masculine” or “weak.”

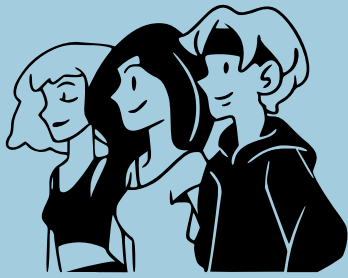
To the pseudo-feminists and female-supremacists:

Matriarchy wherein men suffer is just as inhumane as patriarchy wherein women suffer!

To the sexist people and the male-supremacists:

Misusing your power doesn't make you a man, it makes you a coward afraid of stepping off the throne, in fear of being overthrown!





We Need To Talk



Opinion Piece

By
Sameeksha
Garg

Aftermath of the US Election

The 2020 US presidential election has been a groundbreaking one and has, quite literally, rewritten history. The US now has its first female Black and South Asian vice-president-elect in history, Kamala Harris. As a person with Indian heritage myself, the increased diversity and representation in politics is extremely encouraging and provides hope for much-needed change.

Additionally, despite the pandemic, the 2020 election had a historic voter turnout rate. Around 160 million votes were cast in this election, both by mail and in-person, yielding a voter turnout of about 66.8%. According to CNBC, this is the highest rate since 1900, which saw a 73.7% turnout of eligible, mostly white male voters, as women had not yet won the right to vote and Black American votes were greatly suppressed. Thus, this year has seen the highest voter turnout since every American citizen over the age of 18 gained the right to vote.

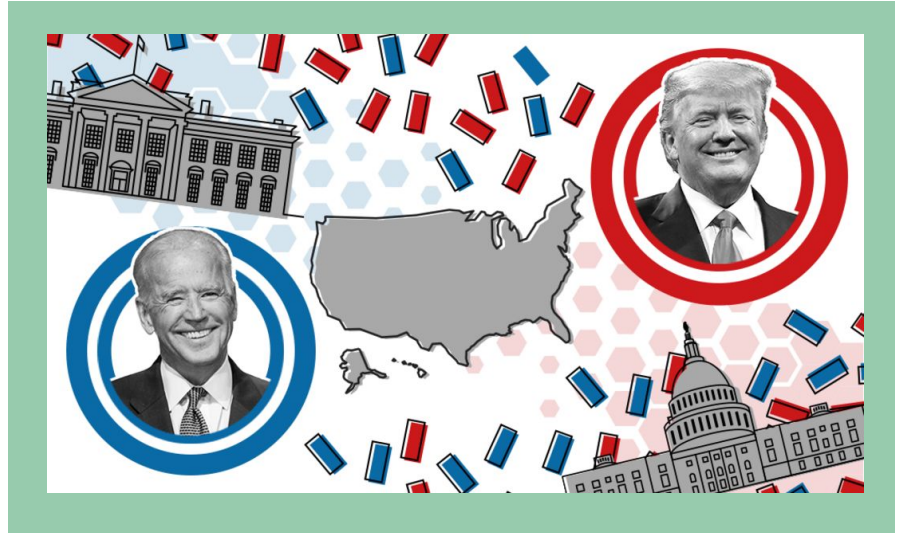
Although this election marked great improvements for the US, there were many issues with polling, especially prominent in the inconsistencies of vote-by-mail procedures between states. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many states allowed all voters to mail in their vote without requiring an excuse, while others permitted citing fear of COVID-19 as a valid excuse. (Typically, about a third of the US states require voters to give an excuse, like being ill or out-of-county on Election Day, in order to vote absentee). A handful of states, notably Nevada, decided to mail ballots to all registered voters.

While vote-by-mail is undoubtedly a much safer option to in-person voting, the problem stemmed from each state having different procedures. Many states accepted mail-in ballots up to a week or even 10 days after Election Day, so they could ensure that everyone's vote was counted. This led to a huge delay in vote-counting and getting an accurate count, especially important in an election as charged as this one.

Opinion: 2020 US Presidential Election

Many states also only started counting ballots after polls closed on Election Day (Nov. 3, 2020), and received them as late as Nov. 23, causing a massive delay in vote counting and certification, as in the case of Nevada.

Despite the clear contributions of vote-by-mail in slowing the spread of COVID-19, vote-by-mail procedures raised concerns about ballot security. As early as May, before Nevada's June 9 primary election, where Nevada also mailed ballots to all registered voters, Republicans used sparse accounts of seemingly discarded ballots in Las Vegas as an argument that mailing ballots to all voters would lead to massive election fraud that would benefit Democrats. The Republican National Committee (RNC) sued to block states from mailing ballots to voters, citing the events in Nevada as proof.

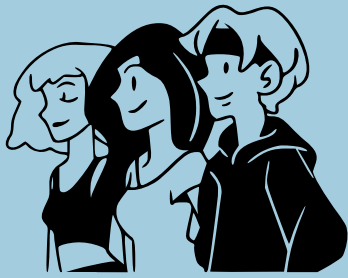


Source: BBC

These viewpoints completely disregarded the fact that there are stringent security measures in place to prevent mail voter fraud, like matching signatures on ballots with those in state records, unique barcodes to track ballots, and the prohibition of ballots being returned by third parties. In fact, because of these measures, ballot fraud is extremely rare, and the RNC's reaction reads as misguided and could even be considered as panic-mongering. As most citizens rely on secondhand information from party leaders and voter interest groups, the rumors about voter fraud on such a widespread scale, to the point of full-fledged lawsuits, were likely to lower confidence in the mail-in voting system, when voter turnout numbers are already low as it is.

These concerns of voter fraud resulted in many protests around the country, touting the slogan "Stop the Steal," in an effort to have states that declared a Biden win recount their votes. Protestors not only cited absentee ballot fraud but also accused the company Dominion Voting Systems, which creates software used by many local governments to run elections, of deleting Republican votes in Michigan and Georgia. While two counties in Michigan and three counties in Georgia did have problems during the election, there was an explanation in each instance. Only one county in Michigan used Dominion software, but the inaccuracies in both cases were due to human error. All three Georgia counties had problems relating to software, but only one county used Dominion software and none of the vote counts were affected.

Even though Biden surpassed the goal of 270 electoral votes by a large margin, if Trump had won some key battleground states (swing states like Florida, North Carolina, and Georgia), it could have taken days or weeks until the election yielded definitive results. However, considering the high voter turnout in 2020, and state efforts to make voting accessible to everyone, it's only looking up from here.



We Need To Talk



People of all ages, from elementary school students to young adults, participated in a September 2019 climate strike organized by BSCAPE. Photo courtesy of bscape.org.

Spotlight

By Rachel
Lewis

Lily Mandel: climate change affects everyone

Most 4-year-olds spend their days playing with trains and complaining to parents about friends stealing their stuffed animals, but when Lily Mandel was little, she was wondering why not everyone was allowed to marry the person they loved. Now a high school senior at Central Bucks High School in a somewhat rural area of eastern Pennsylvania, USA, Mandel speaks up for LGBTQ+ rights, racial justice, and other social justice issues. However, her number one priority is the environment.

“The environment is the one thing that we physically cannot live without,” Mandel said. “We’re not going to die if the economy fails.”

Mandel has felt a special connection with nature ever since she was a child.

“When I was little I did a lot of stuff outdoors. I went to summer camp my whole life, in Maine, outside in the woods... Whenever I would see something man made that would ruin the natural world for me, I would be upset,” Mandel said. “Over time, I started to develop this philosophy that I wanted to preserve nature as much as possible, and keep human activity from destroying what I saw [as] the most important thing... in the world.”

By the summer before her junior year of high school, Mandel was involved in multiple environment and climate action organizations, but it wasn’t enough. In August 2019, she founded Bucks Students for Climate Action and Protection of the Environment (BSCAPE), an organization promoting youth involvement in climate activism. On Sept. 22, 2019, students, teachers, parents, and other members of the community marched from Central Bucks West High School to the Bucks County Courthouse, demanding that legislators at all levels of government enact policies that reduce the severity of future climate change.

Spotlight: Lily Mandel

You'll hear people who are older talk about change, but when they talk about change, they talk about passing bills and policies and everything," Mandel said. "We're talking about real systemic change... [returning] lands to indigenous communities, community organizing, emphasis on justice and equality, community farming. We are talking about real people movements here, and not just handing things to the existing system, existing government, and capitalism."

Although Mandel devotes many hours each week to environmental and social justice activism, she maintains a rigorous and interdisciplinary course load that she believes has helped her better communicate the need for action on climate change.

"In [English] classes, you learn how to... make an effective argument. [They] also [teach] you to be able to analyze people's rhetoric, so I can analyze the way someone's speaking about a topic... and I can kind of pick out what is genuinely true," Mandel said. "It helps me understand how to better reach different audiences, and what really sticks with people, which is something that I've been able to use when I try to make a convincing argument about climate change."

Mandel also finds that her advanced social studies classes inform her knowledge of positions on climate change that differ from her own.

"Last year, I took a macroeconomics class, and an AP comparative government class. Those two really helped me understand the statistical, economic, and government side of things, so that I can know what the alternative is like. I know what the arguments about the economy are [as] it relates to climate change and I can keep up with them," Mandel said.

School is important for Mandel, but sometimes her grades and homework take a backseat to her social justice and climate change activism.



Lily Mandel and another young student activist take off school to protest lack of political action to reduce the harmful effects of climate change. Photo courtesy of bscape.org



Lily Mandel poses with fellow teen climate activists in front of her the courthouse in her home of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, USA. Photo courtesy of bscape.org

"I could read this book in [AP English Literature] anytime. I could study this thing for astronomy anytime. But I'm not going to be able to learn on a dead planet," Mandel said. "I am learning things in school to be able to have a job and do things in worlds that I won't be able to do without access to this Earth and rights."

Through her experience as an environmental activist, Mandel has realized that there is a strong connection between the environment and social justice. Since everyone is affected by the environment, she believes that it is the issue that ties all other issues together.

"To me, climate justice is intersectional. You can't be an environmental and climate activist without also being a

Spotlight: Lily Mandel

racial justice activist, without also being pro-LGBTQ, without being a feminist, without being anti-capitalist, all of that stuff. You can't truly be an environmental activist because discrimination harms the environment," Mandel said. "When you prevent people of a certain demographic from reaching their potential, when you put the interests of the rich and white over the interests of the diverse community, you harm the environment, and you choose profit over people."

There are countless opportunities in students' local areas if they want to pursue environmental activism or speak up about other issues.

"Every single state in the country has designated state parks and national parks. It's easy to find places that offer environmental education, whether it's [the] Audubon Society or a nature trail," Mandel said. "It's [also] really good to find your local sunrise. The Sunrise Movement is a national youth climate justice organization. There are hubs in every state across the country; all the major cities have them. They say any group of three or more people can represent sunrise." At the end of the day, Mandel emphasizes that we're all in this together.

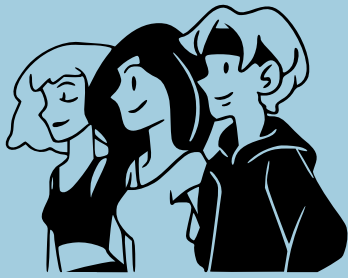
"We all live on the same planet, we all share the same space and the same resources," Mandel said. "If we treated the earth better, and we made our priorities helping the earth and not worrying so much about trivial parts of human society and our differences, we would be so much better off."



Source: Grist



Source: Vox



We Need To Talk



TOWARD A NEW
GLOBAL PUBLIC
HEALTH CONVENTION

Current Events

By Ishika
Jain

Global Public Health

“For he who has health has hope; and he who has hope, has everything.”- Owen Arthur

The year 2020 has been all about the global pandemic of novel coronavirus. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), globally there are 52,487,476 confirmed cases out of which 1,290,653 have already died (as of 13 November 2020, 08:44 pm GMT+5:30). Effects of this have been realised by every individual in terms of health and economic issues, as well as greater consideration of health infrastructures and medicare programs. Although there were health issues like measles, polio, HIV, and heart disease before this pandemic, we have come to realise the importance of public health through COVID-19; we need to talk about the pressing issue of public health systems right now.

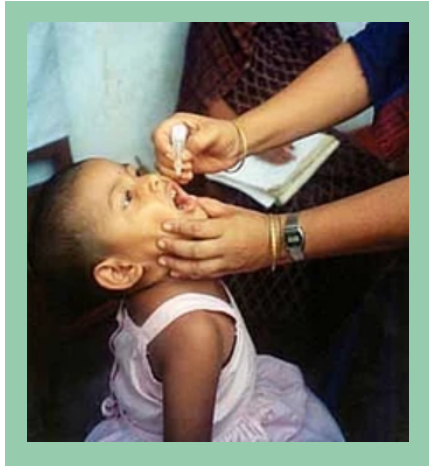
According to research presented by the WHO, more than 50% of the deaths every year are due to Ischaemic heart disease and stroke, accounting for a combined 15.2 million deaths in 2016. These diseases have remained the leading causes of death globally in the last 15 years. Meanwhile, vaccine-preventable diseases, such as measles, continue to remain deadly, taking 140,000 lives in 2019, with many of the victims being children. Additionally, although polio has been driven to the brink of eradication, there were 156 cases of wild poliovirus last year, the most since 2014.

Air pollution kills an estimated 7 million people every year, while climate change causes more extreme weather events, exacerbates malnutrition, and fuels the spread of infectious diseases such as malaria.

More than 1 million adolescents aged 10-19 years die every year. The leading causes of death in this age group are road injury, HIV, suicide, lower respiratory infections, and interpersonal violence. Harmful use of alcohol, tobacco and drug use, lack of physical activity, unprotected sex, and previous exposure to child maltreatment all increase the risks for these causes of death.

Current Events: Global Public Health

Infectious diseases like HIV, tuberculosis, viral hepatitis, malaria, neglected tropical diseases and sexually-transmitted infections will kill an estimated 4 million people in 2020, most of them poor.



Child receiving polio vaccine (Source: wikipedia)



Vaping youth (Source: shutterstock)



Hospital conditions (Source: daily mail.co.uk)



Malnourished child (Source: unicefusa.org)

During this pandemic the roles of several communities have emerged very well to deal with this issue:

1. Health Ministry

The government should make national policies. Only 34% of 145 countries have a health technology national policy that is part of the national health programme and 9% of 145 countries have an independent health technology national policy. If the policies are put in place then it is the government's responsibility to enforce and implement the policies in such a way that it should be a requisite for the people. They should raise the awareness of the importance of developing and implementing health technology policies – comprising regulatory, health technology management, and health technology assessment components – within the context of a national health plan.

There should also be investments made into this sector. We need to realize that health is an investment in the future. Countries invest heavily in protecting their people from terrorist attacks, but not against the attack of a virus, which could be far more deadly, and far more damaging economically and socially. A pandemic could bring economies and nations to their

knees. Public health is ultimately a political choice. The root causes are insufficient levels of financing and the weakness of health systems in endemic countries, coupled with a lack of commitment from wealthy countries.

There should also be investments made into this sector. We need to realize that health is an investment in the future. Countries invest heavily in protecting their people from terrorist attacks, but not against the attack of a virus, which could be far more deadly, and far more damaging economically and socially. A pandemic could bring economies and nations to their knees. Public health is ultimately a political choice. The root causes are insufficient levels of financing and the weakness of health systems in endemic countries, coupled with a lack of commitment from wealthy countries.

They should ensure access to safe, effective, and high-quality medical devices that prevent, diagnose, and treat diseases and injuries, along with assisting patients in their rehabilitation. They could make separate teams for providing relief to the people in distress like we have National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams for disaster management. They should be ready with plans for any kind of outbreak of disease.

“Public health service should be as fully organized and as universally incorporated into our governmental system as is public education. The returns are a thousand fold in economic benefits, and infinitely more in reduction of suffering and promotion of human happiness.”

- Herbert Hoover

2. Healthcare Providers

They play a central and critical role in improving access and quality health care for the population. They provide essential services that promote health, prevent diseases and deliver health care services to individuals, families, and communities based on the primary health care approach. The state of art facilities should be done beforehand. They should make the insurance policies more accessible and affordable for the people. Drug manufacturers should manufacture drugs and medicines in sufficient quantities, also be ready for a situation if there is an outbreak of any disease.

“We live in a world at constant risk of public health emergencies. In our increasingly interconnected world, public health emergencies can affect anyone, anywhere.”

- Tedros Adhanom

3. Consumer/General Public

They should take all the precautions from their side. There is a line between sensitised and panic and the general public should maintain that neutrality. They should adhere to the guidelines put down by the government. They should provide complete information to the best of their knowledge to the healthcare providers about their past illness, medications, and other matters related to their health. They should also maintain a healthy lifestyle. An individual's health is largely determined by the social, economic, cultural and physical environments we live

in – everything from where we work and live to our level of education and our access to healthy food and water.

“And I believe that the best buy in public health today must be a combination of regular physical exercise and a healthy diet.”
- Julie Bishop

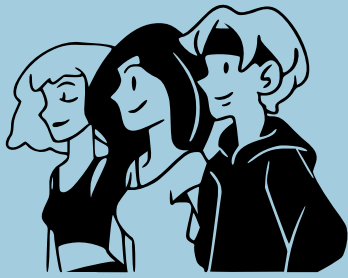
4. Global Organizations

They can strengthen the public health system by suggesting some preventive and protective measures, the government should take. They could help in communication and sharing experiences and knowledge across the whole world. They should promote research from all over the world.

Non-governmental organizations (NGO) are real frontline forces. They can provide medicare services and relief even in the interiors of the country. They are more accessible for the people and can spread more awareness and create a huge impact. Research centers and universities should do more and more research.

“We need to be as well prepared to defend ourselves against public health dangers as we should be to defend ourselves against any foreign danger.”
- Hillary Clinton





We Need To Talk



Thanksgiving Throughout History

Thanksgiving is a day meant for giving thanks, whether it be to family, friends, or God.

Throughout our young lives, we have been learning about the Pilgrims and the origins of Thanksgiving. The first record of this feast was known as the “First Thanksgiving” as it was the first celebration of a holiday that would be celebrated for years to come. Now, on the fourth Thursday of November, Thanksgiving is celebrated every year. Since Thanksgiving has been celebrated since the 1600s, modifications have been made over time.

Although the authentic aspects of the well known holiday remain the same, factors like the food have been changed for the liking of society, such as the addition of mashed potatoes.

Thanksgiving’s importance has not changed significantly, but the customs performed are adjusted primarily because of cultural relevance.

Thanksgiving is a holiday that holds an abundance of meaning and though it is celebrated worldwide, some cultures place more of an emphasis than others. In 1621, the First Thanksgiving took place after the Wampanoag tribe and Pilgrims had a successful harvest in Plymouth. During this celebration, the Pilgrims fired guns and cannons, alarming the Wampanoags, which indirectly led to a shared meal with the Pilgrims.

What was actually served at the first Thanksgiving is still quite different from the turkey, mashed potatoes, and stuffing that are displayed at many seasonal dinners today, which



traditionally includes turkey, gravy, cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, stuffing and sweet potatoes. Indigenous communities experience a variety of thanksgivings during the year, at occasions including when some crops move in or a specific fish returns to spawning.

History

By Sanjana
Mittal

History: History of Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is a significant component of the religious practice of the Wampanoag community. The second holiday of Thanksgiving occurred in 1623, also held by the Pilgrims who fasted to have enough food for the feast. After this event, Thanksgiving became a recurring holiday and throughout the American Revolution, many states started to adopt this tradition as their own. New York was the first state to adopt this tradition in 1817 and shortly after, more states started to celebrate Thanksgiving as well, each on different days. Finally in 1863, during the peak of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln scheduled the date for Thanksgiving as the final Thursday of November.

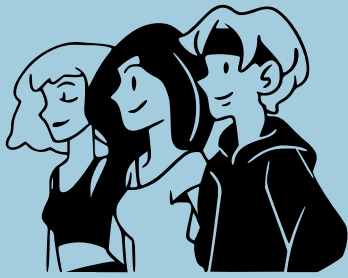


Thanksgiving, being a traditional holiday, isn't easily modified, making food the main and one of the only components that are adjusted. Everyone knows the main dish remains as a turkey, but traditionally, duck and other animals were also served with the cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie. Because times have changed, so have the rituals. Today, 90 percent of Americans eat the turkey and some even volunteer, as a common Thanksgiving Day activity, to give to the less fortunate.

Another tradition celebrated on modern Thanksgiving includes the parades that occur. The parade generally includes marching bands, performers, and floats. In modern times in America, Black Friday occurs the day after this special day, which is a fun and exciting way to end the break.

Thanksgiving is a great way to spend time with your family and be grateful for all the things you have in life. Through food, games, and a family dinner, the holiday brings the close ones closer and brings the appreciation for people or things higher. Through different eras, the holiday lost a lot of its original religious importance, but new traditions were put in place to continue to celebrate the auspicious holiday. Although there are many differences between how Thanksgiving was celebrated at different points in time, Thanksgiving continues to be an unforgettable event that everyone can take part of. No matter what period in time, Thanksgiving is a day for appreciation and continues to be every single year.





We Need To Talk



Leadership and Activism in Africa

Throughout African history, the prominence of the link between effective activism and strong leadership is blatantly obvious. Studies conducted on women's activism in Ethiopia and political activism in Ghana, as well as in various other African countries prove the same. Observing the example of the tightly interwoven history of politics and women's activism in Ethiopia, one can understand the prevalence of this connection by themselves.

Women's activism first emerged in Ethiopia with the formation of the Ethiopian Women's Welfare Association by Empress Menen in 1935. Though credited for being the first legal Ethiopian movement focused on empowering women, this association and others that came in the first few decades after it, were elitist, exclusive, and lacking "both the capacity or structure to mobilize the majority of Ethiopian women" according to a 2013 study conducted by Lund University.

After the coming of the military communist Derg government in 1974, these organizations were dismantled, and their funds confiscated and nationalized. Newer and more inclusive women's

History

By
Bruktawit
Fisseha



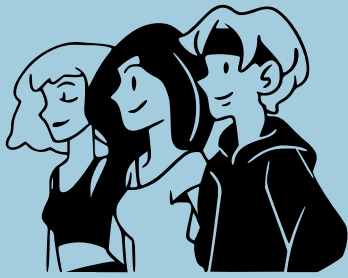
History: Leadership and Activism in Africa

movements such as the Revolutionary Ethiopian Women's Association were formed. Yet the movements in this era were reported to be largely a method of exploiting women by forcing them to serve the Derg government's oppressive and non-beneficial policies. The previously stated Lund University research indicates that experience in these institutions installed trauma and a sense of distrust of governmental organizations in the women.

After the overthrowing and replacement of Derg by EPRDF in 1991, Ethiopian women's activism relatively flourished in the period 1991-2005, and strong and impactful movements like the Ethiopian Women's Lawyer Association came into play. However, in 2005, EPRDF refused a peaceful transition of power after losing the nationwide election. And from 2005 to 2018, the political norm for Ethiopia lapsed back into undemocratic oppression, with a distinct underlying suppression of activism.

This caused a standstill in activism as a source of change for women, as well as several other societal groups. Similarly, a thorough viewing of Ghanaian activism confirms the major influence of leadership in its proceedings. A study conducted in 2008 shows that, since the instalment of the second term of the socialist party, the Provisional National Defense Council on Dec. 31, 1981, many activists are reported to have fled the country fearing for their lives. This caused a notable decrease in their influence. However, after democracy re-emerged in 1992, activism has grown and caused several progressive reforms. Activist organizations such as the National Union of Ghana Students to grow and develop. Case studies in Malawi and Lesotho reveal this redundant pattern as well. Summarily, the relevance of strong leadership for successful activism in Africa is undeniable.





We Need To Talk



History

By Barsha
Parajuli

Fourth Wave of Feminism

An Introduction:

“I raise up my voice—not so that I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard... We cannot all succeed when half of us are held back.” The youngest Nobel Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai, a remarkable



woman who most certainly will go down in history, spoke these words.

For years, the fight of gender equality and the growth of reduced inequalities in the US is one that is considered linear. But keep in mind that while these women fought for their rights and we revere them today, in their time, they were considered radical, socialist, and demented. However, in present times, don't let that scared rhetoric push your voice down.

There is nothing wrong about you fighting for what you believe in regardless of what those around you think of you, because that's how you make history.

The First Wave:

“If particular care and attention is not paid to the Ladies we are determined to foment a Rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice.” These words were written in a letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams. She saw access to education, property and the ballot as critical to women's equality, and she was right.

The 19th century gender roles made the clear distinction between the niches of women and men in a society. Men dominated the public sphere by controlling most work, votes, and participation in politics. Women mostly had unpaid domestic duties: cooking, cleaning, and raising children.

But that rebellion started in the beginning of the 19th century, and it started as calls for greater freedom as women

History: Fourth Wave of Feminism

joined the voices of those demanding the end of slavery, and discovered an unsettling irony advocating for African American rights that they themselves could not enjoy.

The feminist movement was first stirred by a gathering known as 1848 Seneca Falls Convention that was driven by the Quakers, a group of women advocating and fighting for equality for all peoples. They invited Elizabeth Cady Stanton to a small gathering, where she

encountered Lucretia Mott, whom she had met years prior at a anti-slavery convention in London, but they were denied entry because of their gender. This shared outrage of being silenced was what sparked the idea of holding a convention that would address the inequality of the genders and call for the social, civil, and religious rights of women – the first of its kind in the United States. There, they read out the Declaration of Sentiments that proclaimed “We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men and women are created equal,” and demanded the right to vote, sparking a controversial debate of human rights in the nation. Many attendees thought voting rights for women was beyond acceptable, but were swayed when Frederick Douglass argued that he could not accept the right to vote as a black



man if women could not also claim that right. And so the suffrage movement began.

Slowly, suffragettes began to claim some successes: In 1893, New Zealand became the first sovereign state giving women the right to vote, followed by Australia in 1902 and Finland in 1906. In a limited victory, the United Kingdom granted suffrage to women over 30 in 1918.



Progress wasn't linear though, and they met harsh resistance. Opponents heckled, jailed, and sometimes physically abused those standing up for justice. Finally, in the United States, women's participation in World War I proved to many that they were deserving of equal representation, though it should have not been “something to prove,” an enduring opinion that reinforces the double standards put on women even up until now. The fact that women have to prove themselves capable and deserving of basic rights, by working and fighting for them while men are universally, symbolically, and constitutionally given those rights is utterly demeaning. But women are still persevering. The first wave came to a close as the 19th Amendment was passed by Congress and ratified by the states. As the movement began to unfold, women simultaneously embarked on another journey, the equality of women in the workplace.

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The Second Wave:

The second wave included awareness of numerous inequalities against women. It documented pattern of employment discrimination, unequal pay, legal inequality, and meager support services for working women that needed to be corrected through legislative guarantees of equal pay for equal work, equal job opportunities, and expanded child-care services. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 offered the first guarantee, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was amended to bar employers

from discriminating on the basis of sex. But women still had more needs to be fought for. These measures were insufficient in a country where classified advertisements still segregated job openings by sex, state laws restricted women's access to contraception, and incidences of rape and domestic violence remained undisclosed.

As a result, the Equal Rights Amendment, which sought legal equality for women and banned discrimination on the basis of sex, was passed by Congress in 1972. However, following a conservative backlash, it was never ratified by enough states to become law. A year later, feminists celebrated the Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark ruling that guaranteed a woman's right to choose an abortion.

The Third (and possibly Fourth) Wave:

Intersectional Feminism is defined as "A movement recognizing that barriers to gender equality vary according to other aspects of a woman's identity, including age, race, ethnicity, class, and religion, and striving to address a diverse spectrum of women's issues." Intersectional feminism also includes the equality of ALL genders: men, women, and LGBTQ+ peoples. People from the third wave questioned who feminism really benefitted, because although feminism was the equality of genders, women part of racial minorities were slower to progress from these benefits than white and even Asian women. This may include the average pay gap, opportunities, discrimination in the workplace and representation.

Another major goal of this era was to break the boundaries and stereotypes surrounding women. Erasing the gender roles that women had to play into, show that women were capable of being emotional and caring, while also being strong and assertive of their needs and wants, and double standards that reinforce the idea that women need to prove themselves worthy of things that men are easily given. They successfully asserted that women themselves are people, people who have value, personalities, and services beyond their relation to a man.

A major rise in this wave includes the #MeToo movement. This movement included the very uncomfortable and embarrassing moment for America's judicial process, the testimony of Anita Hill. In 1991 when she testified in front of the Senate judicial committee, claiming that Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas had sexually harassed her at work and the committee failed to recognize the prevalent wrongdoing truly shed a light on the normalization of violence against women. Yet, Thomas made his way to the Supreme Court anyway, but Hill's testimony sparked an

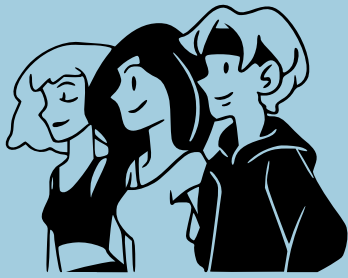


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avalanche of sexual harassment complaints. However, the movement itself, aimed at holding men accountable for the crimes they perpetrated towards the women in their lives, is still a continuing uphill battle. The election of President Donald Trump and the confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court shows the ongoing battle of the third wave that we are still in need of combatting up for equal rights until this day.

However, speculators contend to a fourth wave. Why? Record members of women of all ethnicities and cultures have been elected to multiple branches of legislatures, finally getting one step closer to the representation they deserve. Maybe the fourth wave is online. Whatever the case, the fight for women's equality on a societal stage won't stop until women get the respect they have deserved for so long.





We Need To Talk



The New Age of Reading and Writing

My father is an avid reader. For as long as I can remember, I have seen him read books, short stories, analytical and creative write-ups, classics, and more. He has always encouraged me to read, write, and explore. That's one of the reasons why I joined this newspaper.

Since a young age, I have been intrigued by stories. I would read the "Geronimo Stilton" series from my school libraries in second grade. Sometimes I would attempt to read the newspaper as well, although I could only attempt. I gradually became more drawn to reading than watching TV shows and movies because I wasn't satisfied with what they delivered.

From then on, I grew into reading novels with heavy world-building like "Harry Potter" and the "Demi-God Series," Young Adult (YA) novels like "The Fault in our Stars," the classic short stories such as "Model Millionaire," as well as analytical essays and articles.

In the last few years, I discovered rather unconventional mediums of storytelling such as web-comics. The first time I read a comic was when I was in third grade; I had a comic called "Tinkle" to keep myself busy during long train journeys. However, the more I discovered, the more I wondered why this medium of storytelling is still so unconventional and underrated.

It did not take me much time to find something I liked — a web-comic book. I binge-read it all day the same way my brother binge-read (and finished) one of Agatha Christie novels. But I was not appreciated for finishing the comic the way my brother was for reading "The Murder of Roger Ackroyd." And I found it very



Source: IMDb

Art

By Vishakha
Singh

unfair.

Unfortunately, it was because Agatha Christie's books are considered classics and comics are considered childish and immature.

I found that unfair too, for reasons that I deemed fair enough; the comic I read, although not comparable to a classic masterpiece, was still an amazing story involving great characters in an intriguing plot with a realistic development. The comic reflected life in an interesting way. It deserved its due credit.

The problem here is not that the classics are more credible, it is the misconception that comics are childish and immature.

Comics and web-comics are considered 'childish' and 'immature' because they are widely associated with children's cartoons, which do not inherently have a reputation to showcase and reflect real-life problems.

And, indeed, many comics such as "Calvin and Hobbes" and illustrative books like "Diary of a Wimpy Kid" are meant for the sole purpose of keeping kids busy and entertained, rather than showing them the realities of the world. That being said, it is still unfair for all the comics to be judged the same way.

There are many comics which touch mature and serious social issues and concerns such as sexual assault, human trafficking, unjust social hierarchy, mental and eating disorders etc. Some comics touching such issues are:

"unORDINARY" by Uru-Chan

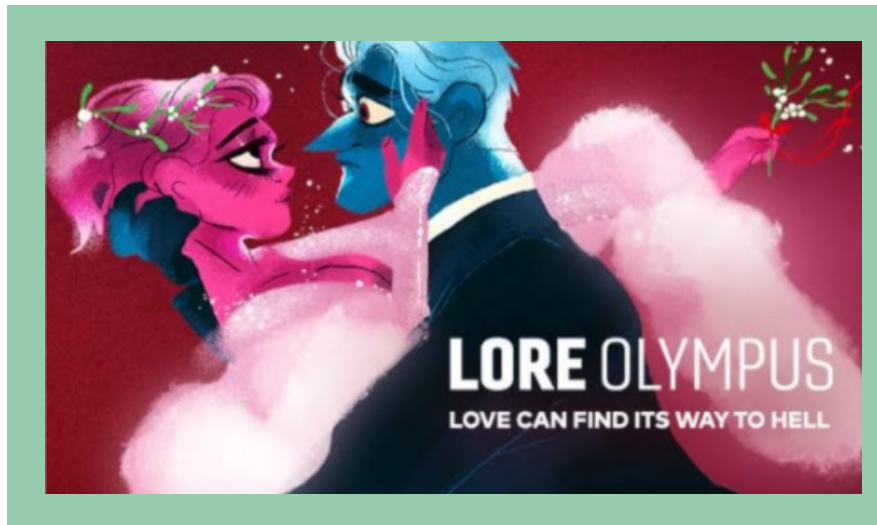
This web-comic, published on Webtoon, shows the unjust hierarchy we often see in our society. It shows how sometimes, strict hierarchy does not guarantee order but only causes an outburst of anger wherein the weak, having gained power, turns into the oppressor himself.



"unORDINARY" by Uru-Chan

“Lore Olympus” by Rachel Smythe and “My Deepest Secret” by Hanza Art

Both of these comics touch on issues of inner turmoil, trauma and draw a much-needed line between a healthy and a toxic relationship. While “Lore Olympus” has a fantasy and Greek mythology theme, “My Deepest Secret” is easy to understand as it is set in a fictitious world with no world-building elements in it. I believe that these comics should be read by teenagers especially since the mainstream media often glorifies toxic relationships.



“Lore Olympus” by Rachel Smythe



“My Deepest Secret” by Hanza Art

“Lookism” by Taejoon Park

This comic uses a unique element to explain our society’s obsession with appearances and visual beauty in an action-packed thriller and drama plot. It provides an insight into different ways people could be judgmental and ignorant after taking only a glance at one’s appearance.



"Lookism" by Taejoon Park

"Lost in Translation" by Jjolee

The comic follows a celebrity and his misfortunes of being misunderstood on multiple occasions, thus leaving him a bad reputation and suffering. It shows the struggles of fame, the suffering of misunderstanding, and the kind of people we all may have to deal with once we step out into the real world.



"Lost in Translation" by Jjolee

Everyone has different capacities of writing and reading. Comics are meant for, though not limited to, authors who want to illustrate their ideas, messages, and metaphors, and those who want to experience illustrative storytelling.

Besides, not everyone has the same way of expression nor taste. Thus, it is only natural for some to love reading classics, others to binge comics, and someone else to indulge in fantasy novels.

Moreover, the expression is not the only perk of comics and illustrative literature.

Art: The New Age of Reading and Writing

Some readers tend to not have enough time to dedicate long hours of reading. Web-comics are released episodically and updated weekly. This makes it easier for readers to keep up with the story in case they lose their reading momentum.

Secondly, for impatient readers and art appreciative readers (like me), it is a treat. Most stories in this medium do not make a franchise. Thus, impatient readers who want to read several different stories do not have to wait until one is over to start another.

The art of a comic also gives a more in-depth insight and adds an interpretative personality to the story. This is often hard to portray in traditional literature since it leads to boring word-vomit.

And lastly, when you think about it; movies could be written as novels and all novels could be written as comics. At the end of the day, what matters is how the story is and how well it is told in the given medium.

Comics are nothing but a medium of expression and a choice of enjoyment.

Whether to read traditional literature, unconventional forms of storytelling, or anything in between, it is a choice. And there is not anything inherently wrong with a teenager reading web-comics with a vibrant illustration. I believe that it helps to be more open-minded and explore one's creativity in a way that is not dictated by mainstream media.

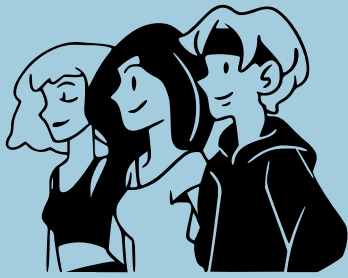
Reading and writing have been a huge part of the growth of humanity since the beginning of time. The manner of language, communication, expression and creation has evolved greatly from cave paintings to the languages we have today. This evolution for convenience has brought us the medium of web-comics.

It provides stories of quality involving clever use of metaphors and symbolism with human-like characters who are relatable. Thus, even if comics are not comparable to classics like "To Kill A Mockingbird," they do not deserve to be downgraded to being childish and immature.

Of course, the traditional literature will not fade out of existence any time soon; however, it is important to understand that changes are not always destructive or immature.

In conclusion, comics are not for everyone, but they have their place in the world. And it highly depends on the content of the comic to decide whether they are childish or childlike. After all, that is a huge difference.





We Need To Talk

What A Woman Is: Feminine

Art

By
Vishakha
Singh



“Don’t talk loud, don’t talk back,
Speak softly, sit straight,
Be poised,
Eat less.

Why don’t you understand?
There’s a difference between a woman and a man!
You can’t!
Even if he can.”

This is what I’ve heard,
And here’s what I want to say;

I will talk,
Loud and clear,
Because there are things that need to be said,
Things you need to hear.

Art: What A Woman Is: Feminine

Yes, there is a difference between a man and a woman,
But to discriminate between them,
Is a sin.

I can,
Not because he can,
But because
I want to.

I indeed have a choice,
To marry a rich man,
But since I have a choice,
I choose to be rich myself.

I need to speak without a filter,
To tell those who have been sheltered,
To those who have been lied to,
The truth.

I am a human,
Before a woman.
I'm not a puppet you control,
I'm not a product you own.

“You're a girl! Be feminine”
Boy, please!
I sew the words together,
Into a glamorous gown of poetry,
That appeals not the eyes,
But to the heart,
Not to the lies,
But to the shattered self-esteem,
Of those who “tried too hard”
or “just not enough”

This gown,
That displays scars and mistakes,
That displays the pain and the stakes,
That I carry every day with grace,
Is feminine enough for me.

What's wrong with me?
I have to admit,
There's a lot wrong with me.

Art: What A Woman Is: Feminine

But being who I am, being a woman,
Is not a part of the list.

Grandma, I understand,
You too were a rebel,
Who wanted to rebel,
You wanted to take a stand.

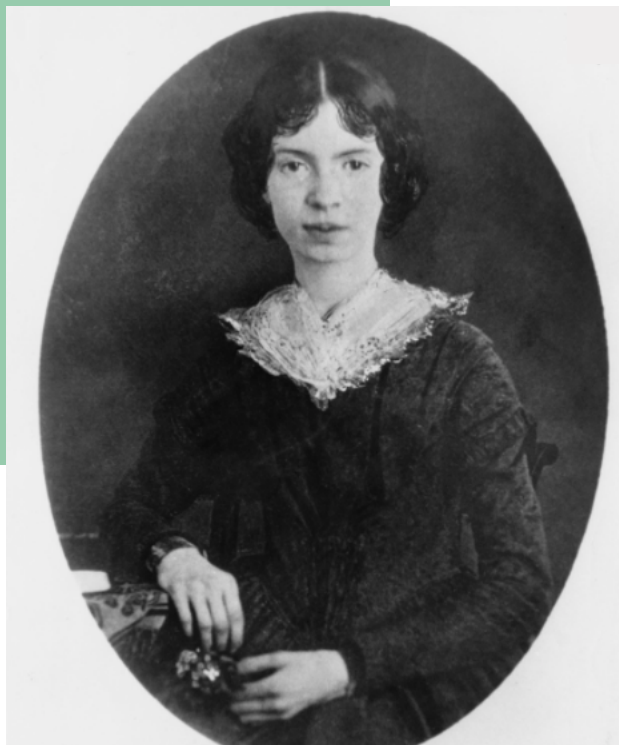
But you couldn't,
Not because you were weak,
But because they were too afraid,
Afraid of losing their throne to a Queen.

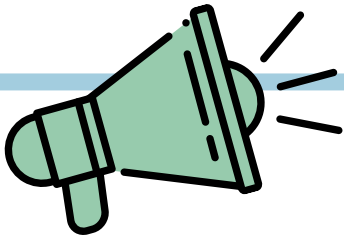
Thus poetry is heavily inspired by Emily Dickinson, whose poetry speaks to me. Still, It is dedicated to all those women who are challenging their circumstances, the society's stereotypes and are fighting for what they deserve against all odds.

The illustration is the concept art for this poem, on the theme of the same.

The words that cover her face and her neck are what a woman is described as throughout her life, both positively and negatively. It is to show how differently the same woman could be viewed by different people: Pride, Joy, Liability, Obnoxious and more.

On top is written, "I am a human before I am a woman," this implies that we need not respect her simply because she is a woman. Rather, we should learn to respect the human being in front of us, not the gender we see.





Call to Action

1 <https://marchforourlives.com/sign-the-petition/>

This link will take you to the March For Our Lives petition for strict gun laws in the US to prevent gun violence and mass shootings. The aim of this petition is for apt gun control laws to be passed in the government.

2 <https://arab.org/>

This link allows you to donate to various causes and organizations with just a click! A great way to contribute if you don't have money to donate.

3 <https://www.sunrisemovement.org/hubs>

Here, you can find the location and contact information to engage with local "hubs" of a national youth-led movement in the United States, called the Sunrise Movement, which calls for legislative policy to stop climate change.

4 <https://www.earthguardians.org/crews>

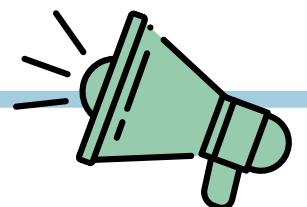
Earth Guardians is an international organization of young climate activists. This link takes you to a page with a map of all the regional "crews" and their contact information.

5 <https://www.history.com/topics/thanksgiving/history-of-thanksgiving>

In this website you will find extra information on the history of thanksgiving and how the famous holiday originated, with details on the attributes included such as food and how they impact people differently.

6 <https://www.voanews.com/usa/all-about-america/what-really-happened-1st-thanksgiving>

This website includes extra information on the first ever Thanksgiving and the specific events that occurred in the duration of the holiday. The first Thanksgiving started with a huge feast that is explained in a detailed manner from this website.





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