

## Talking Turkey



The turkey is one of the most famous birds in North America. In fact, Benjamin Franklin wanted to make the wild turkey, not the Bald Eagle, the national bird of the United States! The turkey's popularity comes from the American people's love of eating the bird for special holidays.



### Turkey Talk



A male turkey is called a **tom**. The female turkey is called a **hen** and the baby turkey is called a **poult**. Turkey eggs are about twice as large as chicken eggs. They have a pale creamy tan color, speckled with brown. It takes 28 days for a turkey egg to hatch.

### Domestic and Wild Turkeys

There are two different kinds of turkeys - domestic and wild turkeys. **Domestic turkeys** are raised on a turkey farm to be sold. These turkeys are fed a balanced diet of corn and soybean meal mixed with vitamins and minerals. Farm turkeys are bred to have a large breast (for people who like white meat), meatier thighs and thicker drumsticks. Small turkeys weigh about 5-9 pounds while heavier turkeys weighing as much as 30 pounds are usually sold around Thanksgiving and Christmas. Most domestic turkeys are so heavy they are unable to fly.

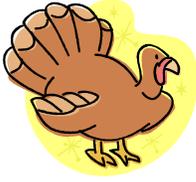


**Wild turkeys** live in the woods in parts of North America and are the largest game birds found in this part of the world. They spend their days foraging for food like acorns, seeds, small insects and wild berries. They spend their nights in low branches of trees. Yes, wild turkeys can fly! Wild turkeys are covered with dark feathers that help them blend in.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



### Talking Turkey - Reading Passage

Directions: Read each question and fill in the best answer

1. What bird did Benjamin Franklin want for the national bird?

- A. Turkey
- B. Peacock
- C. Eagle
- D. Pheasant

2. How long does it take for a turkey egg to hatch?

- A. 5-9 days
- B. 3,500 days
- C. 30 days
- D. 28 days

3. According to the article, domestic turkeys eat

- A. corn and soybean meal, vitamins and minerals
- B. acorns and seeds
- C. wild berries
- D. small insects

4. Domestic turkeys can't fly because they

- A. live in the woods
- B. live in a barn
- C. weigh too much
- D. don't like to fly

5. This article is an example of which genre?

- A. Science Fiction
- B. Biography
- C. Fiction
- D. Nonfiction

6. In the article, poult means

- A. a male turkey
- B. a hen
- C. to frown
- D. a baby turkey

### Extended Response

Someone asks you two questions:

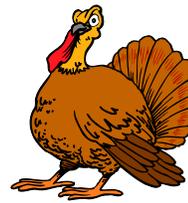
1. What is the difference between a wild turkey and a domestic turkey?
2. Which kind of turkey would you rather eat?"

Answer these 2 questions. Be sure to include supporting details.

### Just for Fun! ~ Turkey Feathers and Fluff

It's estimated that turkeys have 3,500 feathers at maturity. The bulk of turkey feathers are *composted* or otherwise disposed of. However, some feathers may be used for special purposes. For instance, dyed feathers are used to make American Indian costumes or as quills for pens. The costume that "Big Bird" wears on "Sesame Street" is rumored to be made of turkey feathers. *Turkey feather down* has been used to make pillows. For commercial use, *turkey skins* are tanned and used to make items like cowboy boots, belts or other accessories.

A Fun Science Experiment for You to TRY...



## KNOTTED BONES



What makes our bones hard? Calcium carbonate -- the same thing that makes egg shells hard.

Take some thin chicken or turkey bones and drop them in vinegar for a day. Take them out and see how their properties have changed.



Now you can tie them in a knot, just like a piece of string. Leave them sitting out on the table and they'll get hard again! Take them to school for sharing time and see if your classmates can figure out how you did it (or do this at school and take them home to stump mom and dad!)



Check out these books:



**One Tough Turkey** by Steven Kroll

When the Pilgrims decide to have turkey for their first Thanksgiving dinner, Solomon - one tough turkey - is not about to let them succeed.

**A Turkey for Thanksgiving** by Eve Bunting

Mr. and Mrs. Moose invite all their animal friends for Thanksgiving dinner and the only one missing is Turkey. When they set out to find him, Turkey is quaking with fear because he doesn't realize that his hosts want him at their table, not on it.



**Gus, the Pilgrim Turkey** by Teresa Bateman

Gus loves being a turkey, that is, until his friends tell him about Thanksgiving. Pilgrims--no problem; feast--NO WAY! So Gus heads south, the way birds do, to escape being part of someone's dinner.

