

A2 Reading

Vocabulary:

- to draw: *attract (someone) to come to a place or an event.*
produce an image.
- to enthrone: install a monarch on a throne during a ceremony.
- borough: a *town* or *district* that is an administrative unit.
- to burst: break suddenly and violently apart, typically as a result of an impact or internal pressure.

The Macy's Thanksgiving Parade

The Macy's Thanksgiving parade *draws* millions of spectators to New York City to watch enormous balloons, floats, marchers and Broadway performers go by.

What is Macy 's?

Macy's is a chain of department stores. It sells clothes, shoes, beds, furniture, jewels, cosmetics, housewares... Its headquarters are in NYC.

It produces the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and sponsors the city's annual Fourth of July fireworks display.



A little history

Macy's employees decided to create the parade in November 1924. They were first generation immigrants. They were very proud of being American and wanted to celebrate Thanksgiving with the type of festival their parents had loved in Europe. At the beginning people called it "The Macy's Christmas parade".

In 1924, the department store staged the inaugural parade. Employees and professional entertainers marched from 145th Street in Harlem to Macy's flagship store on 34th Street dressed in vibrant costumes. There were floats, professional bands and live animals borrowed from the Central Park Zoo. At the end of that first parade, as has been the case with every parade since, Santa Claus was

welcomed into Herald Square. At this first parade, however, the Jolly Old elf was *enthroned* on the Macy's balcony at the 34th Street store entrance, where he was then crowned "King of the Kiddies". The parade has always taken place in Manhattan, one of the five *Boroughs* that make up New York City.

Balloons

Large animal-shaped balloons, produced by the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company in Akron, Ohio, replaced the live animals in 1927 when the Felix the Cat balloon made its debut. Felix was filled with air, but by the next year, helium was used to fill the expanding cast of balloons.



At the finale of the 1928 parade, the balloons were released into the sky where they unexpectedly **burst**. The following year they were redesigned with safety valves to allow them to float for a few days. Address labels were sewn into them, so that whoever found and mailed back the discarded balloon received a gift from Macy's.

More than 44 million people watch the parade on television each year. NBC has been the official broadcaster of the event since 1955. Every year the

parade has different celebrities.



The route

A new route was established for the 2009 parade. From 77th Street and Central Park West, the route goes south along Central Park to Columbus Circle, then goes east along Central Park South. The parade then makes a right turn at 7th Avenue and goes south to Times Square. At 42nd Street the parade turns left and goes east then at 6th Avenue, the parade turns right again at Bryan Park. Heading south on 6th Avenue the parade turns right at 34th Street (Herald Square) and proceeds West to the terminating point at 7th Avenue where the floats are taken down. The 2009 route change eliminated Broadway completely where the parade has traveled down for decades. The city of New York said that the new route will provide more space for the parade, and more viewing space for spectators. Another reason for implementing the route change is a city's plan to turn Broadway into a pedestrian-only zone at Times Square.

Tips

In order to get a good viewing spot, many people arrive before 6:30 a.m. the morning of the parade to stake out space along the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade route. Be sure to wear plenty of warm clothes and bring a thermos full of coffee or hot chocolate, as it can be quite cold. The duration of the parade depends on where you view it from - near the beginning of the route, it will last about one and a half hours, closer to Macy's the parade will last close to 3 hours.



If you'd like to get a chance to see the balloons as they get blown up, you can observe the inflation of the balloons from three to ten p.m. near the American Museum of Natural History just off Central Park West.



So... join the crowd and have fun in the parade!!