

Conversation 1: Thanksgiving Chat

Chris: Before we **wrap things up**, can I just confirm **the revised** schedule for next week to double-check that **we're on the same page**?

Penny: Of course, I almost forgot. It's holiday season for you. Is Thanksgiving this coming Thursday or the one after? I can never remember.

Chris: It's this coming Thursday. It always falls on the fourth Thursday of November, so the exact date varies from year to year. This year it's earlier than usual. It means next week's TC will be cancelled and we'll need you to **ship out** this week's compounds a day earlier.

Penny: Sure, that won't be a problem. We'll **adjust our plans accordingly**. How many days do you get off for Thanksgiving?

Chris: Officially, it's just a four-day weekend, but many people take off earlier, especially those who need to travel out of state. In fact, it's already getting quiet around here. We've got one or two **loose ends to tie up**, but things are starting to wind down now.

Penny: How are you planning to spend the Thanksgiving break?

Chris: **Originally**, we'd planned the usual family get-together. We usually host. My wife's side of the family all live close by, so they join us every year for Thanksgiving lunch, but this year, my parents and my brother's family will all be flying over from the East Coast to join us too.

Penny: That sounds lovely. It's always nice to get together with family.

Chris: Yes, it'll be great to see them and catch up, but I'm a bit worried we won't have space to **accommodate** everyone. It's **double the usual** number of people. I had to **run the numbers** just to make sure we had **sufficient** chairs to seat everyone for lunch.

Penny: Haha, I'm sure you'll cope. I'm curious, what kinds of things do people do to celebrate? I know Thanksgiving Dinner is a big part of it.

Chris: That's right. Putting on a feast and sitting down together as a family for Thanksgiving lunch is the main event. Most families even start preparing that a day or two in advance. It's a lot of work.

Penny: It sounds like it. What do you eat besides Turkey? Are there other traditional dishes?

Chris: Oh yes. Turkey is a must, but there's a whole load of traditional side dishes too—I'd say at least a dozen or so in total: Mashed potato and green beans are both Thanksgiving staples...and pumpkin pie, of course.

Penny: Do you do the cooking yourself?

Chris: No, my wife and her mother **handle** all the menu-planning and cooking. I tried to help out one year but I got kicked out of the kitchen. I'm **in charge of** cleaning the house and keeping the kids occupied...and doing the dishes afterwards.

Penny: You have to clean the house too? That sounds a bit like our Chinese Spring Festival.

Chris: Yes, it's important the house is spotless before the first guests arrive. I've no idea where the tradition originates from—I guess it's just because we're having guests around.

Penny: Do you do anything special on the other days?

Chris: Not a whole lot to be honest. Most people spend **the remaining time** recovering from all the overeating, haha.

Penny: It's good to indulge once in a while on special occasions.

Chris: Exactly, but joking aside, the most important thing is to spend some quality time with family—watching Thanksgiving movies, playing games together, that sort of thing.

Penny: It must be a joyous time. Happy Thanksgiving! Enjoy the time with your family.

Chris: Thanks. I will do.

Conversation 2: Christmas Plans Throughout the Office

Sarah: So, I think that's everything. Shall we **wrap things up** here?

Alex: Yes, I think we've **tied up a lot of loose ends** just in time for the holidays. It's **been a very productive** meeting. I feel a lot more confident going into this two-week break now.

Sarah: Yes, I think everything is **handled** until after the new year.

Alex: It looks like I'll be able to be early for the office Christmas dinner after all.

Sarah: Is that something you do every year?

Alex: This is our second year as we didn't really **have a sufficient number** of people before that to justify having one. However, after discussing it internally, everyone was in favour of it. I hope we can continue this tradition for a long time. It's a great opportunity to do something festive with our colleagues.

Sarah: Where are you holding the dinner?

Alex: We've rented out a local restaurant.

Sarah: What's the difference between 'rented out' and 'booked'?

Alex: Oh, 'rented out' means that we'll be the only group in the restaurant.

Sarah: Oh I see! This **must be** a pretty big event then?

Alex: Yes, everyone **is allowed to** bring their family and we **even have a separate area for the kids**. **Fortunately**, the restaurant has the capacity for all of us.

Sarah: Will there be any activities?

Alex: I think so, but I wasn't in charge of arranging anything. I know there will be a raffle but **I haven't had time to discuss the evening's event program** with anyone.

Sarah: We **occasionally** do a Secret Santa with some of our overseas colleagues here.

Alex: Ah, that's a good one. Though I often feel at a loss for what to buy within the money limits that we set.

Sarah: True. What's a raffle, **by the way**?

Alex: It's a competition where people buy one or more tickets, which are then put in a container and randomly picked out. If your ticket is picked, you win a prize.

Sarah: Ah, I see, like a lucky draw! We do that too, but I have terrible luck – I never win anything. What kind of prizes are on offer?

Alex: I think the biggest prize this year is a top-of-the-range BBQ grill worth a few hundred dollars.

Sarah: Interesting. I don't think that'll get much use unless someone takes it on holiday to somewhere hot.

Alex: Haha! **You have a point there**. I do know that some of my colleagues are going to warmer places for the holiday, but most plan to either stay at home or spend it with relatives. Most of them have young kids, so Christmas is a big deal.

Sarah: What are your plans? Are you travelling?

Alex: Me? No, my wife loves spending Christmas at home. She's spent a small fortune on Christmas decorations. I don't dare **run the numbers** on the total. Also, we're hosting a lot of family and friends throughout the holiday period.

Sarah: **That sounds busy**. Will you get any time to yourself?

Alex: I imagine I'll spend **the remaining time** watching Christmas movies with the family.

Sarah: OK. I won't keep you from that. Have a great holiday, and I'll see you in January.

Alex: Thanks, Sarah. See you then.