

Halloween

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. When is Halloween?
2. Do you like dressing up in costumes?
Why or why not?
3. How many Halloween symbols can you name?
4. What dangers exist on Halloween night?



B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.

Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|--|
| h | 1. disguise | a) usual |
| h | 2. mask | b) to yell |
| K | 3. neighbourhood | c) frightening |
| S | 4. shout | d) a driver |
| L | 5. collect | e) candy, something special |
| L | 6. variety | f) to make beautiful by adding something |
| L | 7. treat | g) to gather into one place |
| M | 8. common | h) to cut using a knife |
| M | 9. look forward to | i) a covering for the face |
| O | 10. outfit | j) to move up or down |
| O | 11. bob | k) a district or area where people live |
| H | 12. carve | l) a number of different things |
| J | 13. scary | m) to wait for something with happiness and excitement |
| J | 14. decorate | n) to change your appearance to hide your identity |
| A | 15. motorist | o) several pieces of clothing that go together |



Reading

1. October 31 is Halloween. This is not a holiday, but it is a very special day for children in Canada and the United States. On Halloween, children dress up in costumes to **disguise** themselves. Some wear **masks** and others wear makeup. In the evening, they walk around their **neighbourhoods** and go from door to door **shouting** "Trick or treat!" Children carry bags to **collect a variety** of **treats** from their neighbours. People give out many different kinds of treats, such as candy, chocolates, gum, popcorn, etc. In the past, it was also very **common** to give children apples on Halloween. Children usually collect many, many treats on this evening, and the treats often last for several weeks.
2. Children **look forward to** Halloween for a long time before the day actually arrives. They have fun deciding what special disguises they will choose for Halloween and planning their costumes. Will they be ghosts or witches, pumpkins or princesses, pirates or monsters, or perhaps a famous cartoon character or movie star this year? While some children wear store-bought costumes, others like to help their parents with the sewing or preparation of their own special **outfit**. Many elementary schools hold parties and celebrations on Halloween. Children have fun **bobbing** for apples, carving pumpkins, and sharing **scary** ghost stories.
3. Adults sometimes celebrate Halloween too. They have special Halloween parties and dress up in costumes. One traditional custom of Halloween is to put a jack-o'-lantern in the window. To make a jack-o'-lantern, clean out the inside of a pumpkin, **carve** out a face, and put a candle inside. People often **decorate** their homes with pictures of black cats, spiders, witches, bats, and ghosts. Because the traditional colours of Halloween are black and orange, you can see many stores filled with products in these colours. Bakeries sell cakes and cookies decorated for Halloween and grocery stores are filled with large bags of Halloween treats.
4. Because Halloween is such a special day for children, it is important for parents to make sure their children are safe on this day. Children should wear bright or light costumes so **motorists** can see them easily. If children wear masks, the eye holes must be big enough for the children to see out of clearly. Small children should not go out trick-or-treating alone. A parent or older brother or sister should accompany them. Before children eat their treats, parents should examine them carefully. Unfortunately, a cruel person might put something dangerous into the children's bags. This, of course, does not happen very often, but it is better to be safe than sorry.
5. Have a safe and happy Halloween!



Vocabulary Review

Choose the correct word or phrase from the vocabulary on page 1 to complete the following sentences. (You may have to change the verb tense.)

1. After the long, cold winter, I am _____ to spring.
2. She couldn't sleep last night because she had seen a very _____ movie.
3. The thief wore a _____ during the bank robbery.
4. She bought a beautiful, new _____ to wear to the party.
5. Many families gather together to _____ a tree at Christmas.
6. You need a black pointy hat to complete your _____ .
7. That bakery has a large _____ of cakes and cookies every day.
8. He doesn't want to move to a new apartment because right now he lives in a very quiet, safe _____ .
9. Many children like to _____ for apples at Halloween parties.
10. She wore a long wig and dark glasses to _____ her appearance.

Comprehension

Practise asking and answering the following questions with your partner. Then write your answers in your notebook.

1. When is Halloween?
2. Do people have to go to work on Halloween?
3. What do children wear on Halloween?
4. What do children do on Halloween?
5. What do you usually see in people's windows on Halloween?
6. What kind of costumes do children wear on Halloween?
7. How do you make a jack-o'-lantern?
8. What are the traditional colours of Halloween?
9. List four things parents and children can do to make Halloween a safe and fun evening.
10. Explain the expression: "It's better to be safe than sorry." Give an example.



Jack-o'-Lanterns

A. Put in Order

The instructions below are in the wrong order.
Read the sentences and try to put them in the correct order.

How to Carve a Jack-o'-Lantern

- _____ Use a sharp knife and carve the pumpkin, following your drawing.
- _____ Spread newspapers on a table and place the pumpkin on top.
- _____ Light a candle and drip some wax into the bottom of the pumpkin.
- _____ Draw a face on the pumpkin with a pen or pencil.
- _____ Cut a circle on the top of the pumpkin for a lid.
- _____ Blow the candle out and hold it firmly in the melted wax until the wax hardens.
- _____ Buy a pumpkin with at least one good side.
- _____ Put the seeds on a cookie sheet, add salt, and bake in a warm oven till brown.
- _____ Get a pen or pencil, some newspaper, a spoon, a sharp knife, a pumpkin, a candle, a cookie sheet, and some salt.
- _____ Scrape out the inside (seeds and membrane) of the pumpkin with a spoon.
- _____ On Halloween evening, light the candle, put on the lid, and place in your front window.
- _____ Eat your delicious pumpkin seeds!



Jack-o'-Lanterns cont.

B. Complete the Story

Choose the correct word from the list on the right to fill in the blanks.

The Custom of Carving Jack-o'-Lanterns

The custom of _____ 1. jack-o'-lanterns comes from an old

Irish folk _____ 2. about a man named Jack. According to the story,

Jack always liked to play _____ 3. on people, and one time he played

a trick on the Devil. When Jack died, he couldn't go to Heaven because he had done

many bad things in his life. He couldn't go to Hell either because he had played a

trick on the Devil. Since then, Jack has been _____ 4. around

the earth looking for a final _____ 5. place. He carries a

_____ 6. to light his way in the darkness. Jack made his lantern

by putting a _____ 7. piece of coal inside a pumpkin.

The colours of Halloween, orange and black, _____ 8.

the colours of pumpkins and the darkness of the night.

Word List:

- lantern
- represent
- tale
- resting
- wandering
- tricks
- carving
- burning



Pair Work (Student A)

A. Sharing Information

You and your partner each have some information about the origins of Halloween. Read your story and share your information with your partner.

The Origins of Halloween

The customs of Halloween come from several different cultures. The early Celtic people of Great Britain and northern France, the Romans, and the early Christians all had festivals that influenced the celebration of Halloween as we know it today.

The Celtic Origins of Halloween

Two thousand years ago in northern Europe, the Celtic people worshipped nature and had many gods. The Celts celebrated their New Year on November 1. This festival marked the end of their season of light and the beginning of the season of cold and darkness. On October 31, their New Year's Eve, they gathered together to honour the dead in a festival known as Samhain (pronounced sow-en). The Celts believed that the spirits of dead people came to life and wandered around outside at this time of year. The Celtic people did not want to be hurt by the spirits, so they dressed in costumes to disguise themselves if they had to go outside. They also put candles in their windows to help the spirits find their way and they left offerings of food outside their homes so the spirits would treat them kindly. This might explain our modern custom of giving treats on Halloween.

B. Ask & Answer

You and your partner have the same set of questions. Answer the questions that go with your reading, and ask the questions that relate to your partner's reading.

1. Where did the Celtic people live?
2. When did they celebrate New Year's Eve?
3. What was Samhain?
4. Why did the Celts dress in costumes on October 31st?
5. Explain the modern custom of giving treats on Halloween.
6. What festival did the Romans celebrate around the end of October?
7. Where did the custom of bobbing for apples originate?
8. What holiday did the Christians celebrate on November 1st?
9. How did the Christians celebrate All Souls' Day?
10. Explain the name *Halloween*.



Pair Work (Student B)

A. Sharing Information

You and your partner each have some information about the origins of Halloween. Read your story and share your information with your partner.

The Origins of Halloween

The customs of Halloween come from several different cultures. The early Celtic people of Great Britain and Northern France, the Romans, and the early Christians all had festivals that influenced the celebration of Halloween as we know it today.

The Roman and Christian Origins of Halloween

When the Romans invaded Britain, they brought many of their customs and festivals with them. One of these festivals, Pomona Day, took place around the end of October and honoured Pomona, the Roman goddess of fruit and trees. The symbol of Pomona was the apple, which might explain the origin of our modern custom of bobbing for apples. After hundreds of years, the festivals of the Celts and the Romans combined to form one major fall holiday. With the spread of Christianity came new festivals. In the year 835, the Roman Catholic Church made a holiday on November 1 to honour all the saints. This day was called All Saints' Day or All Hallows. Many years later, the church made November 2 All Souls' Day to honour the dead. People celebrated by making fires and dressing up as saints, devils, and angels. After many years, the traditions of these holidays and the holidays of the Celtic people combined and became known as Hallowed Evening, which was celebrated on October 31. Eventually, the name was shortened to Halloween.

B. Ask & Answer

You and your partner have the same set of questions. Answer the questions that go with your reading, and ask the questions that relate to your partner's reading.

1. Where did the Celtic people live?
2. When did they celebrate New Year's Eve?
3. What was Samhain?
4. Why did the Celts dress in costumes on October 31st?
5. Explain the modern custom of giving treats on Halloween.
6. What festival did the Romans celebrate around the end of October?
7. Where did the custom of bobbing for apples originate?
8. What holiday did the Christians celebrate on November 1st?
9. How did the Christians celebrate All Souls' Day?
10. Explain the name *Halloween*.



Vocabulary, Idioms & Expressions

A. Reference

VOCABULARY, IDIOM, OR EXPRESSION	DEFINITION
the apple of one's eye	someone's favourite person, a well-loved person
the Big Apple	New York City
as blind as a bat	to have very poor eyesight
as white as a ghost	to be very pale, to have no colour in one's face
skin and bones	very thin
a jack of all trades	a person who has many skills
mask one's feelings	to cover or hide one's true feelings

B. Complete the Sentences

Choose the correct idiom or expression from the list above to complete the sentences.

1. My grandfather has very thick glasses. He is _____.
2. I am very excited about our vacation. We're going to the _____.
3. I never know if Mary is really happy or sad. She always _____.
4. You should start eating a lot more. You are _____!
5. Mr. Baker is so proud of his youngest daughter. She is _____.
6. You look terrible! Are you feeling sick? You are _____.
7. Robert is a _____ . He can fix anything.

C. Writing

In your notebook, write your own sentences using the idioms above.



Class Activity

FIND SOMEONE WHO...

Walk around the classroom and ask your classmates questions. Write the questions in the spaces provided below, and write your classmate's name on the right if he/she answers "yes."

#	Find someone...	Question	Name
1	who is a jack of all trades.		
2	who is going to a Halloween party this year.		
3	who made a costume for Halloween.		
4	who has a similar celebration to Halloween in his or her country.		
5	who believes in ghosts.		
6	who has been to the Big Apple.		
7	who is afraid of spiders.		
8	who likes costume parties.		
9	who is planning to put a jack-o'-lantern in his/her window.		
10	who is going to give out Halloween treats this year.		



Listening

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

- October 31 is Halloween. This is not a holiday, but it is a very special day for children in Canada and the United States. On Halloween, children dress up in costumes to _____ themselves. Some wear masks and others wear makeup. In the evening, they walk around their _____ and go from door to door shouting "Trick or treat!" Children carry bags to collect a variety of _____ from their neighbours. People give out many different kinds of treats, such as candy, chocolates, gum, popcorn, etc. In the past, it was also very common to give children apples on Halloween. Children usually collect many, many treats on this evening, and the treats often last for several weeks.
- Children _____ Halloween for a long time before the day actually arrives. They have fun deciding what special disguises they will choose for Halloween and planning their costumes. Will they be ghosts or witches, pumpkins or princesses, pirates or monsters, or perhaps a famous cartoon character or movie star this year? While some children wear store-bought costumes, others like to help their parents with the sewing or preparation of their own special _____. Many elementary schools hold parties and celebrations on Halloween. Children have fun _____ for apples, carving pumpkins, and sharing scary ghost stories.
- Adults sometimes celebrate Halloween too. They have special Halloween parties and dress up in costumes. One traditional custom of Halloween is to put a jack-o'-lantern in the window. To make a jack-o'-lantern, clean out the inside of a pumpkin, _____ out a face, and put a candle inside. People often _____ their homes with pictures of black cats, spiders, witches, bats, and ghosts. Because the traditional colours of Halloween are black and orange, you can see many stores filled with products in these colours. Bakeries sell cakes and cookies decorated for Halloween and grocery stores are filled with large bags of Halloween treats.
- Because Halloween is such a special day for children, it is important for parents to make sure their children are safe on this day. Children should wear bright or light costumes so _____ can see them easily. If children wear masks, the eye holes must be big enough for the children to see out of _____. Small children should not go out trick-or-treating alone. A parent or older brother or sister should accompany them. Before children eat their treats, parents should examine them carefully. Unfortunately, a cruel person might put something dangerous into the children's bags. This, of course, does not happen very often, but it is better to be safe than sorry.
- Have a safe and happy _____ !



Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

These activities are designed for intermediate-level adult ESL learners, but they may also be suitable for junior and senior high school ESL students.

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students read about the history of Halloween. They learn and practise useful vocabulary, including idioms and expressions. An information-gap exercise is included.

LEVEL: Int – High Int

TIME: 2–3 hours

TAGS: holidays, Halloween, October 31, fall, ghost, witch, trick-or-treat, tradition, Celtic, idioms

Introduction to Halloween

You can begin by showing pictures of pumpkins, ghosts, skeletons, witches, spiders, bats, etc. Ask the students if they know why they have been seeing so many packages of candies and treats in the grocery stores lately. Then ask them to share any information they may already have about Halloween or any similar celebrations they have in their own countries.

Pre-Reading

A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

- Halloween is on October 31.
- Answers will vary.
- Answers will vary. Some symbols include pumpkins, jack-o'-lanterns, candy, costumes, witches, ghosts, apples, and tombstones.
- On Halloween, children (and sometimes even teens and young adults) run around in the dark. Motorists and families have to be careful. Parents also have to check their children's candy to make sure it is safe. Some people dress up in scary costumes that can terrify young children.

B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1. n | 4. b | 7. e | 10. o | 13. c |
| 2. i | 5. g | 8. a | 11. j | 14. f |
| 3. k | 6. l | 9. m | 12. h | 15. d |

Reading (and/or Listening)

Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. You can also play the listening as your students read along. A gap-fill version of the reading is available on page 10. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

Comprehension

After reading the passage, break the students into pairs and have them practise asking and answering the comprehension questions. At the end of the oral practice, have the students write the answers. Review again orally with the whole class.

- Halloween is on October 31.
- Yes, people do have to go to work.
- Children wear costumes, masks, or makeup to disguise themselves.
- Children walk door to door around their neighbourhood shouting things like “trick or treat” and collecting treats from their neighbors.
- You usually see a jack-o'-lantern in people's windows.
- Children wear all kinds of store-bought or homemade costumes such as ghosts, witches, pumpkins, or princesses.
- To make a jack-o'-lantern, you must clean out the inside of a pumpkin, carve out a face, and put a candle inside.

(continued on the next page...)



Answer Key cont.

Comprehension cont.

8. The traditional colours of Halloween are black and orange.
9.
 - 1) Children should wear bright or light costumes so motorists can see them easily.
 - 2) If children wear masks, the eye holes must be big enough for the children to see out of clearly.
 - 3) Small children should not go out trick-or-treating alone.
 - 4) Before children eat their treats, parents should examine them carefully.
10. It's a good idea to take precautions. Examples will vary.

Vocabulary Review

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1. looking forward to | 6. outfit |
| 2. scary | 7. variety |
| 3. mask | 8. neighbourhood |
| 4. outfit | 9. bob |
| 5. decorate | 10. disguise |

Jack-o'-Lanterns

A. PUT IN ORDER

Instructions on how to carve a jack-o'-lantern: Ask the students to read the instructions and put them in the correct order. (There may be some differences in the students' ordering, but make sure that the ordering is logical.) Follow up with a real pumpkin carving activity.

- 8 Use a sharp knife and carve the pumpkin, following your drawing.
- 3 Spread newspapers on a table and place the pumpkin on top.
- 9 Light a candle and drip some wax into the bottom of the pumpkin.
- 7 Draw a face on the pumpkin with a pen or pencil.
- 4 Cut a circle on the top of the pumpkin for a lid.
- 10 Blow the candle out and hold it firmly in the melted wax until the wax hardens.
- 1 Buy a pumpkin with at least one good side.
- 6 Put the seeds on a cookie sheet, add salt, and bake in a warm oven till brown.

- 2 Get a pen or pencil, some newspaper, a spoon, a sharp knife, a pumpkin, a candle, a cookie sheet, and some salt.
- 5 Scrape out the inside (seeds and membrane) of the pumpkin with a spoon.
- 11 On Halloween evening, light the candle, put on the lid, and place in your front window.
- 12 Eat your delicious pumpkin seeds!

B. COMPLETE THE STORY

- | | | |
|------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. carving | 4. wandering | 7. burning |
| 2. tale | 5. resting | 8. represent |
| 3. tricks | 6. lantern | |

(continued on the next page...)



Answer Key cont.

Pair Work

Break the class into pairs. Each student has a different reading about the origins of Halloween. Have the students read their articles silently and then share the information with their partner by completing the comprehension questions together.

B. ASK & ANSWER

1. The Celts lived in northern Europe.
2. The Celts celebrated their New Year's Eve on November 1.
3. Samhain was a Celtic festival to honour the dead.
4. The Celts dressed in costumes to disguise themselves from the spirits of dead people who wandered around outside.
5. The custom of giving treats on Halloween may have originated from the Celts who left offerings of food outside their homes so that the spirits would treat them kindly.
6. The Romans celebrated Pomona Day.
7. Pomona Day honoured Pomona, the Roman goddess of fruit and trees, and the symbol of Pomona was the apple, which might explain the origin of our modern custom of bobbing for apples.
8. Christians celebrated All Saints' Day on November 1.
9. Christians celebrated All Souls' Day by making fires and dressing up as saints, devils, and angels.
10. Over time, the traditions of the Celtic and Roman holidays were combined and became known as Hallowed Evening. Eventually, the name was shortened to Halloween.

Vocabulary, Idioms & Expressions

A. REFERENCE

The idioms given include words used in the context of Halloween (ghost, bat, mask, Jack, skeleton, apple). Explain the meanings, use them in context, have the students complete the sentences, and then have them write their own sentences using the idioms.

B. COMPLETE THE SENTENCES

1. as blind as a bat
2. Big Apple
3. masks her feelings
4. skin and bones
5. the apple of his eye
6. as white as a ghost
7. jack of all trades

C. WRITING

Individual answers.

Class Activity

First have the students write out the questions they will be asking their classmates. Then have the students circulate around the class asking the questions on the sheet. When a student finds a classmate who can answer the question, he/she will then write the student's name in the chart and follow up with one more question of his/her own. (E.g., "Are you a jack of all trades?" "Yes." "What can you do?") Try to encourage the students to engage in real conversation during this activity. Follow up by sharing the information with the whole class.

Listening

1. disguise, neighbourhoods, treats
2. look forward to, outfit, bobbing
3. carve, decorate
4. motorists, clearly
5. Halloween