

Halloween: Stories, Costumes and Community

B1 | Adults / Teens | Reading + Vocabulary + Discussion | 50-60 minutes

BEFORE YOU READ

Talk with a partner. Do people enjoy scary stories in your culture? Why or why not?

1. Match the words (1-6) with the definitions (A-F).

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|------------------|-------|--|
| 1. costume | _____ | A. an area where people live near each other |
| 2. folk tale | _____ | B. clothes worn to look like a different person or character |
| 3. superstition | _____ | C. the time when crops are collected |
| 4. neighbourhood | _____ | D. a traditional story shared by ordinary people |
| 5. carve | _____ | E. cut a shape into wood, stone or another material |
| 6. harvest | _____ | F. a belief that something brings good or bad luck |

2. Read the article. The bold words are the vocabulary from Activity 1.

- Halloween is celebrated on 31 October. Its modern customs are especially popular in the United States, Canada, Ireland and the United Kingdom, although people celebrate it in many other places too. The holiday has connections with old autumn festivals and **folk tales** about the season.
- Children and adults may wear a **costume** and go to a party. Some choose funny characters; others choose ghosts, witches or monsters. Scary characters are part of the holiday, but many celebrations are playful rather than truly frightening.
- One familiar activity is to **carve** a pumpkin into a lantern. Pumpkins are associated with autumn and the **harvest**. People also decorate homes with paper bats, spiders and lights. These objects create a temporary, theatrical atmosphere.
- In some **neighbourhoods**, children go from house to house to ask for sweets. Halloween has also kept some old **superstitions** alive in stories and games. Today, however, it is usually an opportunity for creativity, shared fun and meeting neighbours.

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UNDERSTAND, DISCUSS AND WRITE

3. Comprehension. Answer in complete sentences. Use the article to help you.

1. When is Halloween celebrated?

2. What are costumes used for?

3. Why are pumpkins connected with Halloween?

4. What happens in some neighbourhoods?

5. How does the article describe modern Halloween?

4. Discuss. Talk in small groups. Give reasons and examples.

- Which is more important at Halloween: costumes, food or stories?
- Do old superstitions still influence people today?
- How can a neighbourhood event be safe and welcoming?
- Would you enjoy a Halloween celebration? Why?

5. Homework: Write a descriptive paragraph.

Write 120-150 words describing a festival or event that uses costumes, stories or special decorations.

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ANSWER KEY AND TEACHING NOTE

Vocabulary matching

1. costume - B
2. folk tale - D
3. superstition - F
4. neighbourhood - A
5. carve - E
6. harvest - C

Comprehension answers

1. When is Halloween celebrated?

It is celebrated on 31 October.

2. What are costumes used for?

They are worn to look like a different person or character.

3. Why are pumpkins connected with Halloween?

They are associated with autumn and the harvest and can be carved into lanterns.

4. What happens in some neighbourhoods?

Children go from house to house to ask for sweets.

5. How does the article describe modern Halloween?

It describes it as a chance for creativity, shared fun and meeting neighbours.

Teaching note

Compare matching answers before reading. Accept other article-supported comprehension answers; discussion and homework answers vary. Discuss customs respectfully, distinguishing religious, cultural and personal traditions.