

HISTORY of HALLOWEEN

READING COMPREHENSION!

Name: _____

History of Halloween L1

The History of Halloween
A long time ago, people in Ireland celebrated a holiday called Samhain. It marked the end of summer and the start of winter. People believed that spirits came out at night during Samhain. Later, the holiday mixed with Christian traditions and became what we now call Halloween.

1) What country did Halloween start in?
☐ Ireland ☐ Mexico
☐ America ☐ Canada

2) What did Samhain mark the end of?
☐ summer ☐ winter
☐ spring ☐ fall

3) What did people believe happened at night during Samhain?
☐ ghosts stayed away ☐ spirits came out
☐ animals danced ☐ the sun came out



Name: _____

History of Halloween L2

The History of Halloween
A long time ago, people in Ireland celebrated a holiday called Samhain. It marked the end of summer and the start of winter. People believed that spirits came out at night during Samhain. Later, the holiday mixed with Christian traditions and became what we now call Halloween.

1) What country did Halloween start in?

2) What did Samhain mark the end of?

3) What did people believe happened at night during Samhain?

Name: _____

History of Halloween L3

The History of Halloween
A long time ago, people in Ireland celebrated a holiday called Samhain. It marked the end of summer and the start of winter. People believed that spirits came out at night during Samhain. Later, the holiday mixed with Christian traditions and became what we now call Halloween.

1) What country did Halloween start in?

2) What did Samhain mark the end of?

3) What did people believe happened at night during Samhain?

3
levels!



10
topics!



Name: _____ History of Halloween LI



Jack-o'-Lanterns

Long ago, people carved scary faces into turnips to keep away bad spirits. When Irish people came to America, they found pumpkins were bigger and easier to carve. That is how the jack-o'-lantern we know today became part of Halloween.

1) What did people carve before pumpkins?

- ☐ apples ☐ turnips
☐ potatoes ☐ carrots

2) Why did people carve faces into them?

- ☐ to make soup ☐ to keep away bad spirits
☐ to play games ☐ to feed animals

3) What vegetable is used today for jack-o'-lanterns?

- ☐ pumpkins ☐ corn
☐ onions ☐ beets

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Name: _____ History of Halloween LI



Trick-or-Treating

Years ago in Europe, children would go door to door and sing songs or say prayers. In return, they were given food. When Halloween came to America, this tradition changed into "trick-or-treating." Today, kids wear costumes and get candy from neighbors.

1) What did children in Europe do when they went door to door?

- ☐ played games ☐ sang songs or said prayers
☐ read books ☐ gave out candy

2) What did they get in return?

- ☐ money ☐ food
☐ toys ☐ candy

3) Where did trick-or-treating first begin?

- ☐ America ☐ Europe
☐ Mexico ☐ Canada

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Name: _____ History of Halloween LI



Costumes

In the past, people wore costumes to hide from ghosts they believed roamed the earth on Halloween night. They thought if they dressed up, the spirits would not recognize them. Today, costumes are a fun way to pretend and celebrate.

1) Why did people wear costumes long ago?

- ☐ to go to school ☐ to hide from ghosts
☐ to go shopping ☐ to look funny

2) What did people think spirits would not do if they wore costumes?

- ☐ follow them ☐ recognize them
☐ talk to them ☐ help them

3) What are costumes used for today?

- ☐ to keep warm ☐ to go to work
☐ to play sports ☐ to have fun and celebrate

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Name: _____ History of Halloween LI



Black Cats

In old times, people thought black cats had special powers. Some even believed they were connected to witches. Today, black cats are a symbol of Halloween, but many people just see them as cute pets.

1) What did people long ago think about black cats?

- ☐ they had special powers ☐ they were noisy
☐ they were bad pets ☐ they were farm animals

2) Who were black cats believed to be connected to?

- ☐ kings ☐ witches
☐ farmers ☐ pirates

3) What do many people think black cats are today?

- ☐ cute pets ☐ dangerous animals
☐ bad luck ☐ scary monsters

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Name: _____ History of Halloween LI



Witches

Witches are popular Halloween characters. Long ago, some people believed witches had magic powers and flew on broomsticks. Today, most people know witches from books, movies, and costumes—not from real life.

1) What did people believe witches could do long ago?

- ☐ bake cookies ☐ use magic powers
☐ plant gardens ☐ clean houses

2) What do witches fly on in stories?

- ☐ horses ☐ broomsticks
☐ chairs ☐ cars

3) Where do most people see witches today?

- ☐ books ☐ costumes
☐ movies ☐ all of these

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Level
1

Name: _____

History of
Halloween L2

Ghost Stories



For hundreds of years, people have told ghost stories on Halloween night. Long ago, people believed spirits could visit from the other world. Now, ghost stories are a way to share spooky fun with friends and family.

1) When do people tell ghost stories?

2) What did people long ago believe spirits could do?

3) Who do people share ghost stories with today?

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Name: _____

History of
Halloween L2

Bats



Bats are often seen as Halloween animals. Long ago, during Samhain, big bonfires were lit. The fires attracted bugs, and the bugs attracted bats. That is one reason bats are linked to Halloween today.

1) What did the bonfires first attract?

2) What did the bugs attract?

3) What animal is a Halloween symbol?

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Name: _____

History of
Halloween L2

Candy



Giving out candy on Halloween is a newer tradition. In the early 1900s, children often got homemade treats like cookies or popcorn balls. Later, candy companies made Halloween their biggest holiday. Now, kids expect a bag full of sweets!

1) What treats did children get in the early 1900s?

2) Who helped make candy part of Halloween?

3) What do kids expect to get today on Halloween?

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History of
Halloween L2

Halloween Around the World



Halloween started in Ireland, but today it is celebrated in many countries. In Mexico, people celebrate Día de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, to honor family who have passed away. In other places, children enjoy costumes, games, and treats.

1) Where did Halloween start?

2) What holiday do people in Mexico celebrate around the same time?

3) What do children enjoy in many places around the world?

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History of
Halloween L2

The History of Halloween

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Level 2

Name: _____

History of
Halloween L3

Jack-o'-Lanterns

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1) What did people carve before pumpkins?

2) Why did people carve faces into them?

3) What vegetable is used today for jack-o'-lanterns?

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Name: _____

History of
Halloween L3

Trick-or-Treating

Years ago in Europe, children would go door to door and sing songs or say prayers. In return, they were given food. When Halloween came to America, this tradition changed into "trick-or-treating." Today, kids wear costumes and get candy from neighbors.

1) What did children in Europe do when they went door to door?

2) What did they get in return?

3) Where did trick-or-treating first begin?

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History of
Halloween L3

Costumes

In the past, people wore costumes to hide from ghosts they believed roamed the earth on Halloween night. They thought if they dressed up, the spirits would not recognize them. Today, costumes are a fun way to pretend and celebrate.

1) Why did people wear costumes long ago?

2) What did people think spirits would not do if they wore costumes?

3) What are costumes used for today?

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History of
Halloween L3

Black Cats

In old times, people thought black cats had special powers. Some even believed they were connected to witches. Today, black cats are a symbol of Halloween, but many people just see them as cute pets.

1) What did people long ago think about black cats?

2) Who were black cats believed to be connected to?

3) What do many people think black cats are today?

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History of
Halloween L3

Witches

Witches are popular Halloween characters. Long ago, some people believed witches had magic powers and flew on broomsticks. Today, most people know witches from books, movies, and costumes—not from real life.

1) What did people believe witches could do long ago?

2) What do witches fly on in stories?

3) Where do most people see witches today?

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Level 3

Name: _____ History of Halloween L1



Candy

Giving out candy on Halloween is a newer tradition. In the early 1900s, children often got homemade treats like cookies or popcorn balls. Later, candy companies made Halloween their biggest holiday. Now, kids expect a bag full of sweets!

- 1) What treats did children get in the early 1900s?

☐ candy bars	☐ cookies and popcorn balls
☐ ice cream	☐ gumdrops
- 2) Who helped make candy part of Halloween?

☐ farmers	☐ candy companies
☐ teachers	☐ neighbors
- 3) What do kids expect to get today on Halloween?

☐ a bag of books	☐ a bag of sweets
☐ a bag of toys	☐ a bag of clothes

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Name: _____ History of Halloween L2



Candy

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- 1) What treats did children get in the early 1900s?

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Students can practice critical thinking and deductive reasoning to make meaning of the text!

Name: _____ History of Halloween L1

Ghost Stories



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1) When do people tell ghost stories?

- ☐ on birthdays ☐ on Halloween night
☐ on New Year's Eve ☐ on Thanksgiving

2) What did people long ago believe spirits could do?

- ☐ cook dinner ☐ visit from the other world
☐ hide in trees ☐ build houses

3) Who do people share ghost stories with today?

- ☐ sports teams ☐ friends and family
☐ gardeners ☐ choir members

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Name: _____ History of Halloween L2

Trick-or-Treating



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1) What did children in Europe do when they went door to door?

2) What did they get in return?

3) Where did trick-or-treating first begin?

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Name: _____ History of Halloween L3

Costumes



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1) Why did people wear costumes long ago?

2) What did people think spirits would not do if they wore costumes?

3) What are costumes used for today?

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Name: _____ History of Halloween L3

Black Cats



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1) What did people long ago think about black cats?

2) Who were black cats believed to be connected to?

3) What do many people think black cats are today?

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Name: _____ History of Halloween L1

Witches



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**B&W
included!**

Name: **ANSWER-KEY** History of Halloween L1



Black Cats

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2) Who were black cats believed to be connected to?

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☐ farmers ☐ pirates

3) What do many people think black cats are today?

- ☒ cute pets ☐ dangerous animals
☐ bad luck ☐ scary monsters

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Name: **ANSWER-KEY** History of Halloween L2



Black Cats

In old times, people thought black cats had special powers. Some even believed they were connected to witches. Today, black cats are a symbol of Halloween, but many people just see them as cute pets.

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People thought that black cats had special powers.

2) Who were black cats believed to be connected to?

Black cats were believed to be connected to witches.

3) What do many people think black cats are today?

Today, many people think black cats are cute pets.

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Name: **ANSWER KEY** History of Halloween L3



Black Cats

In old times, people thought black cats had special powers. Some even believed they were connected to witches. Today, black cats are a symbol of Halloween, but many people just see them as cute pets.

1) What did people long ago think about black cats?

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Answer keys included for quick and easy assessment!

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