



Halloween

October 31 • United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and other countries worldwide

Halloween is unlike any other holiday. Celebrate by sharing its vibrant history and customs, turning the fun and games into rich learning experiences.

Holiday History

The first Halloween celebrations in America began as public events to celebrate the harvest. Neighbors shared stories of the dead, danced, sang, and told fortunes.

In Other Words

The word *Halloween* comes from the Christian holiday All Saints' Day on November 1, which honors the saints who don't have feast days named after them. All Saints' Day was known long ago as All Hallows' Day—hallow is the Middle English word for "holy." Combined with the Scottish e'en ("evening"), it became Hallow's E'en or Holy Evening.

Trick AND Treat!

Math

Make math fun at Halloween with this game of "Trick AND Treat."

- ★ Each student takes a turn at trying to trick you with a very difficult math problem. (The real trick is that the student must know the answer first and have it written down.)
- ★ Establish rules so the game reinforces your current math lesson—without the need for a calculator.
- ★ If you get it right, the students get to try again! If you get the answer wrong, give a treat.

Fast Fact

Pumpkins, black cats, witches' hats . . . our favorite Halloween symbols are orange and black. These colors have their true origins in the season: Orange represents the colors of fallen leaves and the autumn harvest; black stands for the darkening sky that leads to winter. Discuss these meanings, and decorate your classroom with crafts in colors of the season.

★ Reproducible ★



Colorful Symbols of Halloween, page 42

Art

Use this reproducible to provide pictures of symbols of the season that students can hang on colorful streamers to decorate the room. FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS: Let students color in the shapes orange or black, or photocopy onto colored construction paper. FOR OLDER STUDENTS: Have students select two or more shapes to include in a spooky Halloween story. They can color and arrange the shapes on a piece of construction paper to create a cover collage for their story.

Halloween



~ EXCERPT ~

Little Jack Pumpkin Face
Lived on a vine,
Little Jack Pumpkin Face
Thought it was fine.
First he was small and green,
Then big and yellow.
Little Jack Pumpkin Face
Is a fine fellow.

—country song, from
Month-by-Month Poetry

Holiday History

The legend of the jack-o'-lantern comes from an Irish tale. According to the legend, a man named Jack played many tricks on the devil. When Jack died, his spirit was not welcome anywhere, and so his spirit roamed the countryside with only a small lantern to guide the way. Our jack-o'-lantern is a tribute to Jack and his lantern.

Fast Fact

The traditional U.S. jack-o'-lantern is made from a pumpkin. English children honor the legend of Jack by carrying small lanterns made from beets, called punkies. In Scotland, the lanterns are made from turnips and called bogies.

Around the World

British children celebrate Halloween as well as Guy Fawkes Day, which continues the ghoulishness. On November 5, 1605, Guy Fawkes tried to kill King James I in a plot to blow up the House of Parliament, the British government building. Thirty-six barrels of gunpowder were found before they exploded. The king was saved, and Fawkes was caught and hanged. Today, groups of children run up and down the streets at dark on November 5 begging for change and chanting, "A penny for the Guy! A penny for the Guy!" They hold "Guy," a straw dummy wearing clothing and a mask. In some parts of England, "Guy" is thrown into a bonfire—called a bone fire—in the town square.

Halloween Feels Like . . .

Social Studies

Science

Halloween takes on a creepy-crawly quality when students use their sense of touch to identify mystery foods. British favorites include:

- ★ Halloween worms (egg noodles)
- ★ witch's fingers (chicken strips)
- ★ eyeballs (small scoops of chocolate and vanilla ice cream)
- ★ witch's elixir (a mixture of fruit juices with grapes, berries, and chunks of apple and orange)

Have some spine-shivering fun: Blindfold students and ask them to touch and identify edibles such as cooked oatmeal, whipped cream, maple syrup, and chopped-up ice pops. Encourage students to use descriptive adjectives to capture the textures they feel.

★ Book Links

Wee Witches' Halloween by Jerry Smath (Scholastic, 2002). Picture book, easy. Fresh out of scaring school, these witches try to be scary.

Scary, Scary Halloween by Eve Bunting (Houghton Mifflin, 1988). Picture book, all ages. Cats watch trick-or-treaters.

★ Teacher Resources

Fresh & Fun: Halloween: Dozens of Instant and Irresistible Ideas and Activities From Creative Teachers Across the Country by Tracey West (Scholastic, 1999). For grades K–2.

Month-by-Month Poetry (September, October, and November) compiled by Marian Reiner (Scholastic, 1999). For grades PreK–2.

~ EXCERPT ~

Remember, remember, the 5th of November,
Gunpowder, treason and plot.
We see no reason why gunpowder treason
Should ever be forgot.

—British nursery rhyme



Halloween

Name

Date

Colorful Symbols of Halloween

Familiar colors of the season are orange and black. Which pictures should be orange? Which pictures should be black? Color and cut out the pictures.

