



HISTORY OF HALLOWEEN

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Close Reading &
Informational Text

Suggestions for Use

- To get students thinking about Halloween, I often begin this lesson by asking students to do a journal entry on how they spend a typical Halloween with their friends and family.
- You could also have them write a journal entry on how they think Halloween originated.
- Read article and highlight important information.
- Answer close reading questions.
- I also show this short video from History.com. You can watch it before or after reading article, depending on what works best for you. The video can be found [here](#).

After Reading Suggestions

- Put students into partners or groups. Assign each group a certain country and research how or if the country celebrates Halloween.
- Have students create a pictograph that represents the different ways Halloween is celebrated across the world.

Common Core Standards

RI.3- Analyze how a key individual event or idea is introduced and elaborated into a text.

RI.4- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text.

RI.5- Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, or chapter fits into the overall structure of the text and contributes to development of ideas.

RI.6- Determine an author's point of view in a text and explain how it is conveyed.

HISTORY OF HALLOWEEN

Halloween dates to the ancient Celtic Festival, which took place in what is now known as Ireland, Northern France, and the United Kingdom (Europe) over 2000 years ago. This is how the Celts celebrated their New Year, which occurred on November 1st. It also meant the end of summer and the beginning of the shorter, colder days. This is like what we experience in the fall and winter today (History of Halloween, 2009).

According to History.com, on the night before the New Year, which was October 31st, Samhain occurred. This is when it was believed that... “ghosts of the dead return to the Earth,” (History.com, 2). Celts thought that these “otherworldly spirits” made it easier for Celtic priests to predict the future. During this yearly ritual, individuals would dress up in costumes, which was mainly animal skins and heads, and would make an effort to tell each other’s fortune. While telling each other’s fortunes, Celts would sit around a bonfire, in hope that the flames would drive the spirits away.

In the United States celebrations of the Halloween sort began around the 19th century; however, it was less common in the northern states, due to the strong religious background. European backgrounds began to materialize and combine with American beliefs to create a more, what we know today as an, “Americanized version of Halloween.”

According to History.com, the first Halloween celebrations were called, “play parties, public events held to celebrate the harvest, where neighbors would share stories of the dead,” (6). By the 1920’s and 30’s, Halloween became a more community-driven event, where parties were held and entertainment began. “Due to the increase in children that came from the baby-boomers of the 1950’s, trick-or-treating and similar events began to be more common, both in schools and at home.

History of Halloween

1. What was the author's purpose for writing the selection?
 - a. To entertain the reader with stories about Halloween.
 - b. To explain to the readers what Celtic people were.
 - c. To persuade the reader to believe that Halloween is the best holiday.
 - d. To inform the reader about the history of Halloween.

2. According to the article, the Celtic people originated where?
 - a. United States
 - b. Europe
 - c. South America
 - d. British Isles

3. Use context clues to determine what the text meant by "otherworldly spirits."
 - a. Celtic people
 - b. Witches
 - c. Ghosts
 - d. Town's People

4. Which of the answer choices would **NOT** make sense to be included in the selection? There may be more than 1 answer.
 - a. The Leprechaun is celebrated St. Patrick's Day.
 - b. On Samhain, the puca – Irish evil fairies – spat on any unharvested apples to make them inedible.
 - c. The American Halloween tradition of "trick-or-treating probably dates back to All Soul's Day parades in England.
 - d. At Christmas, American's sometimes get candy in their stocking.

HISTORY OF HALLOWEEN-ANSWER KEY

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