

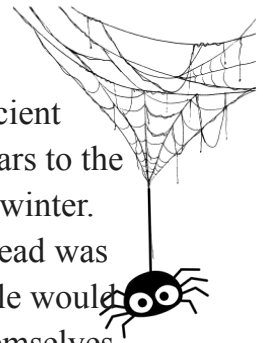


**HALLOWEEN**

 **Activities**



# Halloween then and now C1-C2



Halloween, celebrated on October 31st, is a holiday rich in history, blending ancient rituals with contemporary customs. Its origins can be traced back over 2,000 years to the Celtic festival of Samhain, marking the end of the harvest and the beginning of winter. The Celts believed that on this night, the boundary between the living and the dead was blurred, allowing spirits to roam the earth. To ward off malevolent ghosts, people would light bonfires and wear costumes, often made from animal skins, to disguise themselves.

With the spread of Christianity, Samhain evolved into All Hallows' Eve, preceding the celebration of All Saints' Day on November 1st. The practice of honoring the dead was preserved, though it adopted more Christian overtones. Over time, these customs crossed the Atlantic with Irish and Scottish immigrants in the 19th century, where they blended with American culture, eventually shaping the Halloween we recognize today.

Modern Halloween is characterized by a range of customs, both playful and spooky. Trick-or-treating is one of the most widespread traditions, particularly in the United States. Children dress up in costumes—often representing witches, ghosts, superheroes, or popular fictional characters—and go door-to-door in their neighborhoods, asking for candy with the familiar phrase, “trick or treat!” This custom is thought to have evolved from the medieval practice of "souling," where poor people would visit homes asking for food in exchange for prayers for the dead.



Halloween parties are another common tradition, featuring activities like bobbing for apples, a game with origins in Roman harvest festivals, and telling ghost stories. Costume contests, haunted house tours, and themed games add to the festive atmosphere. Horror films and eerie music are also integral to Halloween celebrations, emphasizing the holiday's darker, more supernatural aspects.

Decorations play a significant role in creating the eerie ambiance that defines modern Halloween. Carved pumpkins, or jack-o'-lanterns, are ubiquitous symbols of the holiday. The tradition is rooted in Irish folklore, where a man named Stingy Jack was condemned to wander the earth with only a carved-out turnip to light his way. Today, pumpkins are intricately carved with faces, symbols, and even elaborate scenes. Houses and gardens are adorned with fake cobwebs, skeletons, witches, and bats, all designed to evoke the imagery of haunted spaces.

Despite its ancient origins, Halloween remains a dynamic and evolving celebration that continues to captivate people around the world, combining elements of the past with modern-day creativity and enjoyment.



**After reading the text, answer the questions below:**

1. What are the origins of Halloween, and how did the Celts celebrate Samhain?
2. How did Halloween evolve after the spread of Christianity?
3. What are some common activities and games played at Halloween parties today?
4. Describe the significance of jack-o'-lanterns and the folklore associated with them.
5. Which customs from the original Celtic celebration of Samhain are still present in modern Halloween traditions?
6. Do you think Halloween's evolution has caused it to lose its original meaning, or has it simply adapted to modern culture? Why?
7. Why do you think Halloween, a holiday rooted in ancient Celtic traditions, has become so globally popular today?



**8. Halloween decorations often focus on fear and horror. Why do you think people enjoy being scared during this holiday?**

**9. In your opinion, should holidays like Halloween preserve their historical roots, or is it natural for them to evolve and incorporate new traditions?**



**Fill in the blanks with the correct word :**

**harvest spirits traditions disguised secular honor customs immigrants evolved celebrated**

1. The festival of Samhain marked the end of the ..... season and the start of winter.
2. The Celts believed that the boundary between the physical world and the world of .....was thinner during Samhain.
3. People .....themselves in animal skins or masks to confuse evil forces.
4. Pope Gregory III established All Saints' Day to .....saints and martyrs.
5. Many ancient pagan .....survived even after Christianity spread across Europe.
6. Halloween was..... by the Celts, but over time, it has become more of a .....celebration in many countries.
7. The practice of Halloween ..... when European ..... brought their ..... to the United States.



# Halloween then and now

# Teacher's C1-C2

## 1. What are the origins of Halloween, and how did the Celts celebrate Samhain?

Halloween originated from the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain. The Celts celebrated Samhain by lighting bonfires and wearing costumes made from animal skins to ward off spirits, as they believed that on this night, the boundary between the living and the dead was blurred, allowing spirits to roam the earth.

## 2. How did Halloween evolve after the spread of Christianity?

After the spread of Christianity, Samhain evolved into All Hallows' Eve, the night before All Saints' Day, which was celebrated on November 1st. The festival retained its focus on honoring the dead but took on more Christian overtones. These customs were later brought to America by Irish and Scottish immigrants and blended with local traditions.

## 3. What are some common activities and games played at Halloween parties today?

Common activities at Halloween parties today include bobbing for apples, telling ghost stories, organizing costume contests, and hosting haunted house tours. These games and activities are meant to create a fun and spooky atmosphere, in line with the holiday's theme.

## 4. Describe the significance of jack-o'-lanterns and the folklore associated with them.

Jack-o'-lanterns are carved pumpkins that symbolize Halloween. The tradition originates from Irish folklore about a man named Stingy Jack, who was condemned to wander the earth with only a carved-out turnip to light his way. Today, people carve pumpkins with various faces and designs as part of Halloween celebrations.

## 5. Which customs from the original Celtic celebration of Samhain are still present in modern Halloween traditions?

Customs from Samhain that are still present today include wearing costumes to ward off spirits and lighting fires (now represented by candles in jack-o'-lanterns). The focus on the boundary between the living and the dead, as well as the association with ghosts and spirits, remains central to modern Halloween celebrations.

## 6. Do you think Halloween's evolution has caused it to lose its original meaning, or has it simply adapted to modern culture? Why?

## 7. Why do you think Halloween, a holiday rooted in ancient Celtic traditions, has become so globally popular today?

## 8. Halloween decorations often focus on fear and horror. Why do you think people enjoy being scared during this holiday?

## 9. In your opinion, should holidays like Halloween preserve their historical roots, or is it natural for them to evolve and incorporate new traditions?

**Fill in the blanks with the correct word :**

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9. The Celts believed that the boundary between the physical world and the world of ...spirits..was thinner during Samhain.
10. People ...disguised.....themselves in animal skins or masks to confuse evil forces.
11. Pope Gregory III established All Saints' Day to ...honour....saints and martyrs.
12. Many ancient pagan ...customs...survived even after Christianity spread across Europe.
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14. The practice of Halloween .....evolved... when European ...immigrants.. brought their ...traditions.. to the United States.





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