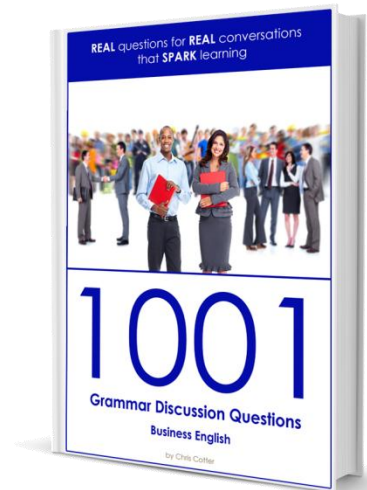
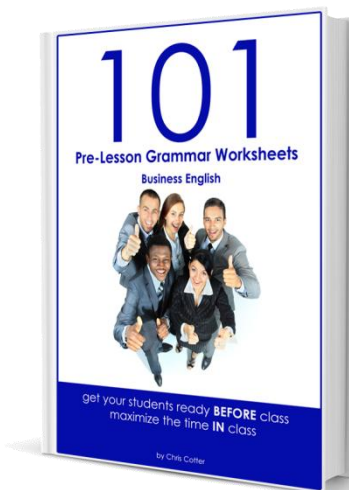


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# Skill Builders: Listening – Halloween: Holiday of the Dead

Advanced

## INSTRUCTIONS

- Step 1:** You will listen to an article about Halloween. The article is about four and a half minutes long. Listen only, and don't worry about understanding everything.
- Step 2:** Read and understand the questions, then listen again. As you are listening, try to answer the questions in your head, but don't write the answers yet. Next, listen again and write the answers this time. Check your answers with a partner.
- Step 3:** Read the article. Check in your dictionary any unknown words. Now listen again. Can you understand more?
- Step 4:** Listen! Listen! Listen! Listen to the article on the train or in your free time. Each time you listen, you will slowly improve!

## QUESTIONS

**Answer the questions to check your comprehension. If you don't know an answer, don't worry. Skip it, then try to answer it when after you listen again.**

- 1: What are some of the stereotyped images mentioned in the article?
- 2: What do kids in the United States do in the weeks before the holiday?
- 3: What does the article mention about movies and Halloween?
- 4: According to the article, what do teenagers typically do on Halloween?
- 5: Where and when does the word "Halloween" originate?
- 6: Where and when does the holiday originate?
- 7: Who or what roamed the land on Halloween? Why?
- 8: Why did the priests light great bonfires on Halloween?
- 9: What did the ancient villagers do at the bonfires lit by the priests?
- 10: What did the ancient villagers later do with the bonfire?

## the ARTICLE

Where does Halloween originate?

When you think of the holiday, what images come to mind? Do you think of pumpkins carved into jack-o-lanterns? Do you picture costumed kids running from house to house yelling, "Trick or treat?" How about horror movies with a too-shaggy wolf man howling at the full moon, or a lumbering Frankenstein reaching for his next victim? Maybe ghosts and witches who haunt the night, and hunt for the unwary to take home to their lairs pops into your head?

These images represent stereotyped aspects of Halloween, especially in the United States. There, during the weeks leading up to the holiday, pumpkins get carved into jack-o-lanterns, and kids agonize over the perfect costume that will bag the most goodies. Shopping malls do a booming trade with haunted houses as well. And as for the wolf man, Frankenstein, and all the other ghosts, witches, mummies, and vampires, Hollywood has played a large role in popularizing this fare. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, B-movies abounded. In more recent years, slasher franchises like *Friday the 13th*, *Halloween*, and *Nightmare on Elm Street* have influenced, and have been influenced by, Halloween.

On the day itself, children roam the neighborhoods in groups, go from door to door, and accumulate enough sweets to last until the end of November--just in time for Christmas candy canes and cookies! Teenagers egg homes, string rolls of toilet paper in trees, and play other nasty, albeit mostly harmless, tricks. Adults find their own fun at costume parties at bars and clubs.

Regardless of these associations, it's a far older holiday than pop culture suggests. Although the word comes from "All Hallow's Eve" in medieval England, the actual origins of Halloween lie thousands of years ago in Pagan Europe.

There exists conflicting specifics on the ancient traditions of the holiday. Yet all agree that it began with a connection to the dead, and hence do the modern connotations originate. Halloween came at what was considered the end of summer and the harvest season, when snows and cold weather would shortly arrive. The land died, at least until spring, and with it there was the idea that the dead returned, too. Although some of the ghosts were relatives who had passed away within the year, others who roamed the land were far more malicious.

The people of ancient Europe believed it was the Lord of the Dead who called forth the evil spirits. As a form of protection, priests lit great bonfires to drive away the evil. Villagers gathered around the bonfires, burned crops and animals as sacrifices, and sometimes dressed in costumes of animal skins. Later everyone returned home with fire from the sacred bonfire, and relit the hearths of their homes. This afforded protection to the home and its inhabitants during the course of the next year, especially important during the bleak winter months.

For all the candy, costumes, and cheesy movies, did you guess the older, darker meaning of this very ancient holiday?



# Skill Builders: Listening – Halloween: Holiday of the Dead

Advanced

## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES (optional)

1: Which paragraph was the easiest to listen to? Which paragraph was the most difficult? Look at the vocabulary and sentence structure, then think why one paragraph was easy and another difficult.

2: Listen for these words, understand the context, then try to repeat the information from the sentence:

stereotyped (paragraph 3)

accumulate (paragraph 4)

malicious (paragraph 5)

3: Listen and write the sentences:

On the day itself, children roam the neighborhoods in groups... (paragraph 4)

---

Although the word comes from "All Hallow's Eve" in medieval England... (paragraph 5)

---

Halloween came at what was considered the end of... (paragraph 6)

---

4: Summarize the following paragraphs. Don't worry so much about specifics, but explain the gist or big picture:

paragraph 3

paragraph 6

paragraph 7

## ANSWERS

### QUESTIONS

- 1: Pumpkins are carved, and children yell "Trick or treat!" There is the wolf man, Frankenstein, and other ghosts in the night too.
- 2: Kids carve jack-o-lanterns, and agonize over the perfect costume that will bag the most goodies.
- 3: In the 1950s and 1960s, B-movies abounded. Slasher franchises have influenced, and have been influenced by, Halloween.
- 4: Teenagers egg homes, string rolls of toilet paper in trees, and play other nasty, albeit mostly harmless, tricks.
- 5: The word comes from "All Hallow's Eve" in medieval England.
- 6: The actual origins of Halloween lie thousands of years ago in Pagan Europe.
- 7: Some of the ghosts were relatives who had passed away within the year, others who roamed the land were far more malicious.
- 8: As a form of protection, priests lit great bonfires to drive away the evil.
- 9: Villagers gathered around the bonfires, burned crops and animals as sacrifices, and dressed in costumes of animal skins.
- 10: Later everyone returned home with fire from the sacred bonfire, and relit the hearths of their homes.

### EXTENSION ACTIVITIES - Listen and write the sentences.

...and accumulate enough sweets to last until the end of November--just in time for Christmas candy canes and cookies!

...the actual origins of Halloween lie thousands of years ago in Pagan Europe.

...summer and the harvest season, when snows and cold weather would shortly arrive.