The History of Halloween

Halloween is a holiday celebrated each year on October 31. The _____ originated with the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, when people would light bonfires and wear _____ to ward off ghosts. In the eighth century, Pope Gregory III designated November 1 as a time to honor all saints. Soon, All Saints Day incorporated some of the traditions of Samhain (pronounced sow-in). The evening before was known as All Hallows Eve, and later Halloween. Over time, Halloween evolved into a day of activities like _____, carving _____, festive gatherings, donning costumes and eating treats.

Halloween's origins date back to the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain. The Celts, who lived 2,000 years ago, mostly in the area that is now Ireland, the United Kingdom and northern France, celebrated their new year on November 1. This day marked the end of summer and the _____ and the beginning of the dark, cold winter, a time of year that was often associated with human death. Celts believed that on the night before the new year, the boundary between the worlds of the living and the dead became blurred. On the night of October 31, they celebrated Samhain, when it was believed that the _____ of the dead returned to earth.

In addition to causing trouble and damaging crops, Celts thought that the presence of the otherworldly spirits made it easier for the Druids, or Celtic priests, to make predictions about the future. To commemorate the event, Druids built huge sacred _____, where the people gathered to burn crops and animals as sacrifices to the Celtic _____. During the celebration, the Celts wore costumes, typically consisting of animal heads and skins, and attempted to tell each other's fortunes.

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tradition ghosts costumes
trick-or-treating
jack-o-lanterns harvest bonfires deities

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