



The History of Halloween

**1**

Do you know anything about the history of Halloween? Read and listen.

83



We celebrate Halloween on 31st October. Today it's a popular festival in the USA and in lots of other countries around the world, but did you know that a group of people called the Celts started the tradition of Halloween in Ireland about 2,000 years ago?

Halloween was originally a festival for the dead, called Samhain. The word means 'summer's end' and it was a time of the year when people started to prepare for the winter. Some people believed that ghosts came out on this day and they traditionally lit bonfires to protect themselves against these ghosts.



Soon, children started to dress up as ghosts. People gave the children treats to stop them from playing tricks, such as knocking on the door and running away.

In the past these treats were things like autumn fruit, nuts and occasionally coins. These days, not many children play tricks, but they dress up and adults give them sweets.

Making jack-o'-lanterns is a tradition that started in Ireland. People put candles inside jack-o'-lanterns and placed them outside their houses for protection. Traditionally, people used potatoes and other vegetables to make these lanterns but when thousands of Irish people moved to the USA, they started using pumpkins instead. It's much easier to cut a scary design into a pumpkin than into a potato!

**2**

Read and say *True* or *False*.

1 Halloween started in the USA.

TRUE

FALSE

2 Samhain was celebrated in winter.

TRUE

FALSE

3 Bonfires were typical at Halloween.

TRUE

FALSE

TRUE

FALSE

4 In the past, adults gave children treats so they didn't play any tricks.

TRUE

FALSE

5 Today, people give children fruit, nuts and coins when they trick or treat.

TRUE

FALSE

6 The first jack-o'-lanterns were made from potatoes.

TRUE

FALSE