

Use the word given in capitals to form a word that fits the gap.

# HALLOWEEN SUPERSTITIONS



Halloween has always been a (1) \_\_\_\_\_ [HOLY] filled with mystery, magic and superstition. It is celebrated on the night of 31<sup>st</sup> October. The word Halloween is a (2) \_\_\_\_\_ [SHORT] of All Hallows' Evening also known as Hallowe'en or All Hallows' Eve. It began as a Celtic end-of-summer festival during which people felt (3) \_\_\_\_\_ [SPECIAL] close to deceased relatives and friends. For these (4) \_\_\_\_\_ [FRIEND] spirits, they set places at the dinner table, left treats on doorsteps and along the side of the road and lit candles to help (5) \_\_\_\_\_ [LOVE] ones find their way back to the spirit world.

Today's Halloween ghosts are often depicted as more fearsome and malevolent, and our customs and superstitions are (6) \_\_\_\_\_ [SCARE] too. We avoid crossing paths with black cats, afraid that they might bring us bad luck. This idea has its roots in the Middle Ages, when many people believed that witches avoided (7) \_\_\_\_\_ [DETECT] by turning themselves into cats. We try not to walk under ladders for the same reason. This superstition may have come from the ancient Egyptians, who believed that triangles were sacred; it also may have something to do with the fact that walking under a (8) \_\_\_\_\_ [LEAN] ladder tends to be fairly (9) \_\_\_\_\_ [SAFE]. And around Halloween, (10) \_\_\_\_\_ [PARTICULAR], we try to avoid breaking mirrors, stepping on cracks in the road or spilling salt.

But what about the Halloween traditions and (11) \_\_\_\_\_ [BELIEVE] that today's trick-or-treaters have forgotten all about? Many of these obsolete rituals focused on the future instead of the past and the (12) \_\_\_\_\_ [LIVE] instead of the dead. In particular, many had to do with helping young women identify their future husbands and (13) \_\_\_\_\_ [ASSURE] them that they would someday—with luck, by next Halloween—be married.

In 18<sup>th</sup>-century Ireland, a matchmaking cook might bury a ring in her (14) \_\_\_\_\_ [MASH] potatoes on Halloween night, hoping to bring true love to the (15) \_\_\_\_\_ [DINE] who found it. Another tale had it that if a young woman ate a (16) \_\_\_\_\_ [SUGAR] concoction made out of walnuts, hazelnuts and nutmeg before bed on Halloween night she would dream about her future husband. Young women tossed apple-peels over their shoulders, hoping that the peels would fall on the floor in the shape of their future husbands' initials. Other rituals were more (17) \_\_\_\_\_ [COMPETE]. At some Halloween parties, the first guest to find a burr on a chestnut-hunt would be the first to marry; at others, the first (18) \_\_\_\_\_ [SUCCESS] apple-bobber would be the first down the aisle.

Of course, whether we are asking for (19) \_\_\_\_\_ [ROMANCE] advice or trying to avoid seven years of bad luck, each one of these Halloween superstitions relies on the good will of the very same "spirits" whose presence the early Celts felt so (20) \_\_\_\_\_ [KEEN].