

Trick or treat! It's Halloween

Children celebrate Halloween around the world on the night of October 31st. They go out in macabre costumes of ghosts, witches or skeletons to knock on their neighbours' doors and shout "Trick or treat!" The neighbours must give them sweets; otherwise, the children will play tricks on them. Halloween is big business in the United States where people spend around seven billion dollars each year on Halloween products. Theme parks like Disneyland hold week-long festivals and many cities have parades. New York's Village Halloween Parade attracts two million people who celebrate in the streets, dressed in stunning costumes. The tradition is strongest in the United States, but interest is growing in Europe.

Actually, Halloween originated in Europe as a Celtic New Year celebration. For the Irish, in the Celtic calendar, October 31st was Samhain, a pagan festival. The Celts believed that the dead returned to possess the living during that night, and so they opened their doors and provided food to the wandering good souls and wore costumes to scare off the evil ones.

In the 19th century, Irish and Scottish immigrants took their traditions to America and it seems that trick-or-treating is linked to Irish Samhain traditions, and thus became popular about the time that the Irish began to immigrate to the United States in large numbers, fleeing from Ireland's potato famine of 1846. They began to dress up in costumes and go from house to house asking for food or money, a practice that eventually became today's trick-or-treat tradition. A new American tradition was born and has continued to grow. Today, Halloween is the second largest commercial holiday in the United States

1.- Are the following statements TRUE or FALSE? Copy the evidence from the text.

No marks are given for only TRUE or FALSE.

a) Halloween was originally a Christian celebration.

TRUE / FALSE. LINE NUMBER: _____

b) Like the Celts on October 31st, Irish immigrants in the USA wore disguises in order to frighten away the evil souls.

TRUE / FALSE. LINE NUMBER: _____

2.- In your own words and based on the ideas in the text, answer the following questions. Do not copy from the text.

a) Why does the text say that Halloween is one of the greatest commercial holidays in the United States?

b) In what sense is the "trick or treat" tradition similar to the Celtic celebration?

3.- Find the words in the text that mean:

- a) goods (paragraph 1) _____
- b) spectacular (paragraph 1) _____
- c) in fact (paragraph 2) _____
- d) escaping (paragraph 3) _____

4.- Complete the following sentences with one or more words. Use the appropriate form of the word in brackets when given.

- a) _____ children don't get sweets _____ their neighbours, they will play tricks on them.
- b) The Irish emigrated to America _____ they could find _____ better life.
- c) _____ it is an American tradition, interest _____ Halloween is increasing in Europe.

d) Rewrite the following sentence from the text. Begin with the words given.

- d. New York's Village Halloween Parade attracts two million people who celebrate in the streets.

Two million people _____

5.- Write about 150 to 200 words on the following topic.

Write about a Halloween party or any other party where you went wearing a disguise.

LINK: _____