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On Halloween children dress up in costumes and go from door to door at dusk gleefully calling “Trick or Treat!”. The holiday gets its name from “All Hallows Evening” or the evening before All Saints Day, November 1, according to the western European Christian church calendar. However, in traditions date back to pre-Christian Celtic beliefs once prevalent in what is known as Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. Irish immigrants brought these customs with them to the United States.



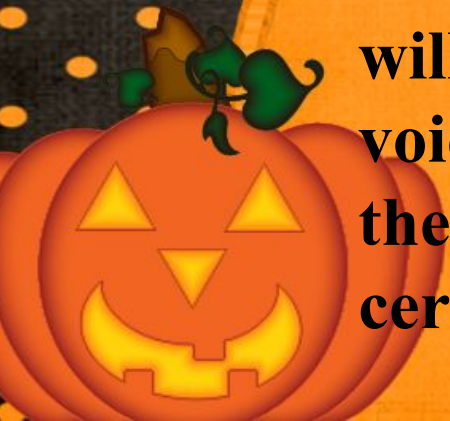
October 31 was the eve of the Celtic new year, a time when ghosts or evil spirits walked the earth and mingled mischievously with the living. Costumes and jack-o-lanterns were thought to protect people from any harm they might cause. A jack-o-lantern is a face carved into one side of a hollowed out pumpkin in which a lighted candle has been placed. This is why the Halloween colours are orange and black. Even today small children are told that any house with a jack-o-lantern burning in the window is a safe place to go trick-or-treating. The custom of trick or treating comes from when children dressed in costumes on All Souls' Day and went from house to house begging for soul cakes.



Children still go begging for treats. However, over the last few years, school, church and neighborhood parties are replacing the custom of trick or treating from house to house. More and more adults are also celebrating Halloween with masquerade parties in which they dress up like political and historical figures, or just plain old scary fellows from recent horror films like ghosts, vampires, goblins, Frankenstein, etc. Whitches flying on broomsticks with black cats, skeletons, spiders and haunted houses are other symbols of Halloween.



Another popular activity at Halloween parties is bobbing for apples. One person at a time must get an apple out of a tub of water without using his hands and only by sinking his or her face into the water and biting the apple. The party may start or end with a Halloween costume parade, wherein those with the best or scariest costumes receive prizes. Telling scary stories or “ghost” stories while huddled together by candlelight or around a fire outside is one of the highlights of Halloween night. Any story will do, but it must be spoken in a low, tense voice and reach a startling climax, as does the following story told in Britain and in certain US eastern coastal states.



“What Do You Come For?”

There was an old woman who lived all by herself, and she was very lonely. Sitting in the kitchen one night, she said, “OH, I wish I had some company.” No sooner had she spoken than down the chimney tumbled two feet from which the flash had rotted. The old woman’s eyes bulged with terror.

Then two legs dropped to the hearth and attached themselves to the feet.

Then a body tumbled down, then two arms, and a man’s head. As the old woman watched, the parts came together into a great, tall man. The man danced around and around the room. Faster and faster he went. Then he stopped, and he looked into her eyes.

“What do you come for?” she asked in a small voice that shivered and shook.

“What do I come for?” he said. “I come – for YOU !!!”

(The narrator shouts and jumps at the nearest person.)





It's Halloween

by Jack Prelutsky

It's Halloween! It's Halloween!
The moon is full and bright
And we shall see what can't be seen
On any other night:

Skeletons and ghosts and ghouls,
Grinning goblins fighting duels,
Werewolves rising from their tombs,
Witches on their magic brooms.

In masks and gowns we haunt the street
And knock on doors for trick or treat.
Tonight we are the king and queen,
For oh tonight it's Halloween!

The background is a vibrant orange and red gradient with a subtle pattern of pumpkins and leaves. In the upper left, a large, glowing yellow full moon is partially obscured by several black silhouettes of bats in flight. In the lower left, a black silhouette of a witch with a pointed hat and a broomstick is perched on a vine with leaves. The overall theme is Halloween.

TREAT

by Jack Prelutsky

Trick or treat, trick or treat,
Give us something good to eat.

Give us candy, give us cake

Give us something sweet to take.

Give us cookies, fruit and gum,
Hurry up and give us some.

You had better do it quick

Or we'll surely play a trick.

Trick or treat, trick or treat,
Give us something good to eat.

The background is a dark red and orange gradient with a subtle pattern of leaves and vines. In the upper left, a bright yellow full moon is partially obscured by several black silhouettes of bats in flight. In the lower left, a large black silhouette of a witch is shown from the side, looking towards the right. She has a long, curved tail and a pointed hat. The overall theme is Halloween.

Bobbing for apples

by Jack Prelutsky

Watch us bobbing for an apple,
For an apple, apple, apple,
But no apple, apple, apple,
Not an apple can I get.

Oh I cannot catch an apple,
Not one apple, apple, apple.
Though my sister got an apple,
All I got was soaking wet.

Jack-o-lantern

Sometimes and sometimes small,
But always round and yellow.
When children make my famous grin
Then I'm a scary fellow.



The background is a dark red and orange gradient with a subtle, repeating pattern of leaves and vines. In the upper left, a large, glowing yellow full moon is partially obscured by several black silhouettes of bats in flight. In the lower left, a black silhouette of a witch with a pointed hat and a long, curled tail is perched on a branch of a leafy vine. The overall mood is spooky and festive.

Chickamy, Chickamy, Craney Crow

Chickamy, Chickamy, Craney Crow,
I went to the well to wash my toe,
When I got back, my chickens were gone,
What time is it, old witch?
“One, two, three, four, five, six,
Seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve!”



Ten little witches

One little, two little, three little witches,
Four little, five little, six little witches,
Seven little, eight little, nine little witches,
Ten little witches in the sky!

Ten little, nine little, eight little witches,
Seven little, six little, five little witches,
Four little, three little, two little witches,
One little witch,
Bye – bye!

The background is a vibrant orange and red gradient with a subtle floral pattern. In the upper left, a large, glowing yellow full moon is partially obscured by several black silhouettes of bats in flight. In the lower left, a black silhouette of a witch with a pointed hat and a long, curled tail is perched on a black silhouette of a vine with leaves. The overall theme is Halloween.

Five little pumpkins

Traditional

Five little pumpkins sitting on a gate.

The first one said, "Oh my, it's getting late."

The second one said, "There are witches in the air."

The third one said, "But we don't care!"

The fourth one said, "Let's run and run and run!"

The fifth one said, "I'm ready fr some fun."

Ooooooo o o o went the wind and out went the light,
And the five little pumpkins rolled out of sight.

Witches' brew

Traditional

Dead leaves, seaweed, rotten eggs, too:

Stir them in my witches' brew.

I got magic, ala-ka-zama-ka-zoo.

Spider web, mouldy bread, mucky mud, too:

I got magic, ala-ka-zama-ka-zoo.

Ooh, my witches' brew.

Oh, what's it gonna do to you? Boo!

Floorwax, thumtacks, purple paint, too:

Stir them in my witches' brew.

I got magic, ala-ka-zama-ka-zoo.

Fingernails, lunch pails, apple cores, too.

Stir them in my witches' brew.

I got magic, ala-ka-zama-ka-zoo.

Ooh, my witches' brew.

Oh, what's it gonna do to you? Boo!

Wrinkled prunes, mushrooms, motor oil, too:

Stir them in my witches' brew.

I got magic, ala-ka-zama-ka-zoo.

Yeah, yeah, I got magic, ala-ka-zama-ka-zoo.