

Halloween and the Jack-o'-Lantern



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1) A little jack-o'-lantern history quiz.

Read the text and discuss with your partner which of the options given is the correct one.

THE original story of a person named Jack O'Lantern comes from Ireland Australia Mexico and is hundreds of years old. Jack tricked the devil so that he didn't have to go to hell when he died. But as he was such a friendly bad hungry person in his life he couldn't go to heaven either¹. So Jack has had to walk in darkness between heaven and hell ever since, with only a piece of glowing coal oil butter in a lantern to give him light.

That is the story of where jack-o'-lanterns come from. Originally they were made from carrots coconuts turnips² but when the immigrants came to North America they found out that pumpkins melons potatoes were much better.

Nowadays you can see jack-o'-lanterns in almost every window almost every tree front of almost every door where people celebrate Halloween. When it's dark and the light of a little candle is burning inside the lantern you can almost feel old Jack wandering by.

¹ not...either = auch nicht | ² turnip = Rübe

2) How to make a proper jack-o'-lantern.

A kid that did not get a treat played a trick and stole some words from the description how to make a proper jack-o'-lantern. With your partner, fill in the missing words.

Which pumpkin do I take?

The should be big enough to cut eyes, nose and a into it. It should also be a dry with a hard shell. Think about the form. Do you a moon-faced one or a tall, thin one?

And now?

Clean the outside of the, then find the "best" side. Mark the eyes, nose and on the with a pen but draw them a bit smaller than you want them.

Now for the cutting: cut a clean circle at the around the stem and lift off the "lid". Clean the inside, then the face along the markings you made with your pen. Finally clear the rough edges, put in a little and, hey presto, here's your jack-o'-lantern.

3) More about Halloween.

In a small group, talk with your partners about the following questions.

- What else do you know about Halloween?
- How many people celebrate Halloween where you live? Do any of them make jack-o'-lanterns?
- What do you think of Halloween celebrations in your country?
- Which other festivals do people celebrate where you live? Are there any at around the same time?

Teacher's Notes

Introduce the topic with a little quiz. Tell your students that they have to guess the topic.

The easier option is to draw a jack-o'-lantern on the board and ask your students what topic they would associate with your picture. Collect the students' suggestions on the board – one of them is bound to be either *Halloween* or, depending on the level of you students, even *pumpkin*.

A second option is to explain that you are going to write several words on the board and that the students are supposed to shout out their guesses as soon as they have an idea what the topic could be. You could use *witch, holiday, pumpkin, door, sweets, USA, children, costume, tradition, trick or treat*, etc. in any order you choose, depending on your students' skills and previous knowledge.

Once the topic Halloween has been clarified, make sure your students know the meaning of *pumpkin* and introduce the phrase *jack-o'-lantern*. Now divide your class into pairs and distribute the handouts.

- 1) Ask your students to look at the text and discuss which of the three options given could be the correct one. In a weaker group clarify vocabulary like *devil, hell, glowing* and *coal* before students start reading. Tell your students to do the quiz with their partner and stand by to offer help. Compare the students' answers in open class after some minutes. In order to do this you can ask volunteers to read out their completed sentences.

KEY: Ireland / bad / coal / turnips / pumpkins / ... every door

- 2) Ask your students to read the text and discuss which words might fit to fill the gaps. In a weaker group, write the key words on the board (i.e. *candle, cut, mouth, pumpkin, shell, want*) and tell your students that these are the words that go into the gaps and that they are allowed to use the words more than once if necessary. Stand by to clarify vocabulary. After some minutes, compare in open class. Again, you can ask volunteers to read out their versions.

KEY: The pumpkin should be big enough to cut eyes, nose and a mouth into it. It should also be a dry pumpkin/fruit with a hard shell. Think about the form. Do you want/fancy/prefer a moon-faced one or a tall, thin one?

Clean the outside of the pumpkin, then find the "best" side. Mark the eyes, nose and mouth on the outside/shell with a pen but draw them a bit smaller than you want them.

Now for the cutting: cut a clean circle at the top around the stem and lift off the "lid". Clean the inside, then cut the face along the markings you made with your pen. Finally clear the rough edges, put in a little candle and, hey presto, here's your jack-o'-lantern.

3) More about Halloween.

Join two pairs to a group of four students each or make new groups of three. Ask your students to look at the questions and discuss them in their groups. Stand by to offer help. After about ten minutes, compare the students' ideas in open class.

Depending on the size of the group this complete exercise could be done in open class.

OPTIONAL HOMEWORK:

Ask your students to make their own jack-o'-lantern and bring them to the next class.

TOTAL TIME: 20-30 minutes