

Name _____ Date _____

Halloween

Learn more about this topic! Each section gives more detail on one of the lyrics from the song. Read each section, and then respond by answering the question or taking notes on key ideas.

1. Samhain ('Sau • wen) means "summer's end." This Celtic festival celebrated the end of harvest season. The Celts thought the changing season brought ghosts and spirits back to Earth for one night. People wore costumes to scare evil spirits away. They also left food and money outside their doors to keep spirits happy. Some customs from Samhain are still part of Halloween. Today, we still wear costumes and give out treats to keep trick-or-treaters happy.

Notes

2. When the Roman Empire conquered the Celts, many Celts converted to Christianity. The Celts accepted Christian traditions and began celebrating their holidays. In 600 CE, the church created a new holiday called All Saints' Day. This holiday took place on November 1st and was also called All Hallows' Day. The night before was called All Hallows' Eve. Many of the rituals from Samhain became part of this night. Over time, the name was shortened to Halloween. Halloween is a combination of Celtic and Christian customs, but it is not a religious holiday anymore.

Notes

3. Día de los Muertos, or the Day of the Dead, is a lot like Halloween. It is celebrated throughout Latin America. But most people associate the holiday with Mexico. Many Mexicans decorate their homes with pictures and candles and eat treats shaped like skulls and skeletons to celebrate. This holiday also combines customs from different cultures, including the Aztecs. Like the Celts, ancient Aztecs believed ghosts and spirits sometimes returned to Earth. When the Spanish conquered the Aztecs, Christian holidays were brought to Mexico. Two holidays called All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day turned into the Day of the Dead.

Notes

4. When Irish immigrants arrived in the United States, they brought customs and traditions from their home countries. Many of these customs came from the Celts. The Halloween tradition began to gain popularity in the 1900s. Since then, Halloween has become a major holiday in the United States. Trick-or-treating was only a small part of the holiday until the 1940s when it began appearing in children's magazines. As trick-or-treating became more popular, so did costumes and candy. Now Halloween costumes, decorations and candy are a big business every fall.

Notes

5.



Jack-o'-lanterns are fun to make and have become an important part of Halloween. Here's how to make one. First, pick a pumpkin. It can be large and perfectly round or small and oddly shaped. Next, find an adult to help you with carving. Ask them to cut around the top of the pumpkin so that you can fit your hand inside. Clean out the pumpkin until it is hollow. Make sure the inside is smooth and that you remove all the seeds. After that, carve a face into the pumpkin. The face can be scary, silly or serious. Finally, place a candle or light inside the pumpkin to make the face glow. You can place your jack-o'-lantern on your doorstep, in your window or anywhere else you think needs Halloween decoration!

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