

Focus Question:

How has the celebration of Halloween changed throughout the years?

Book Summary

Text Type: Nonfiction/Informational

What do you think of when you see monsters, goblins, and ghosts? Halloween, of course! But do you know where common Halloween traditions come from? In *The History of Halloween*, students will learn about the origins of Halloween, tracing the timeline of traditions from two thousand years ago to today. Engaging photographs and an interesting topic will capture students' interest. The book can also be used to teach students how to identify main idea and details as well as to connect to prior knowledge to better understand the text.

The book and lesson are also available for levels R and X.



Lesson Essentials

Instructional Focus

- ☐ Connect to prior knowledge to better understand text
- ☐ Identify the main idea and details in a text
- ☐ Understand and use the table of contents
- ☐ Recognize and use proper nouns in sentences
- ☐ Identify and use synonyms and antonyms

Materials

- ☐ Book: *The History of Halloween* (copy for each student)
- ☐ Main idea and details, proper nouns, synonyms and antonyms worksheets
- ☐ Discussion cards
- ☐ Book quiz
- ☐ Retelling rubric

Vocabulary

Boldface vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on VocabularyA-Z.com.

• Words to Know

Story critical: *Celtic* (adj.), *pranks* (n.), *predictions* (n.), *supernatural* (adj.), *tradition* (n.), *underworld* (n.)

Enrichment: *enthusiasm* (n.), *immigrants* (n.), *medieval* (adj.), *Puritans* (n.), *rich* (adj.), *roam* (v.)

- **Academic vocabulary:** *believe* (v.), *common* (adj.), *culture* (n.), *different* (adj.), *event* (n.), *receive* (v.)

Guiding the Reading

Before Reading

Build Background

- Place on the board a photograph depicting Halloween. Ask students to share with a partner everything they know about this holiday, including its name, date, and traditions. Invite volunteers to share their answers with the class.
- Ask students if they know where the traditions of Halloween began. Invite volunteers to share their ideas with the class, and record these ideas on the board. Explain to students that they will be learning all about the history of Halloween and where Halloween traditions began.

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of *The History of Halloween*. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is (genre, text type, and so on) and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, authors' names).

Introduce the Reading Strategy:

Connect to prior knowledge

Explain to students that effective readers make connections between what they already know and new information they read, which is called *connecting to prior knowledge*. Remind them that thinking about what they already know about the topic of a book will help them better understand what they read. Read the title of this book and ask students to look at the front and back covers. Invite volunteers to share what they already know about the topic of this book, on the basis of the title and cover pictures.

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

Introduce the Comprehension Skill:

Main idea and details

- Explain to students that most books have a *main idea*, or a general topic that is the subject of the book, and that the extra information or descriptions that help explain the main idea are the *details* of the book. Point out to students that the title of a book often provides clues about the main idea.
- Have students discuss with a partner their predictions about the main idea of this book. Invite volunteers to share their predictions with the class, and write these predictions on the board. Point out that each section of a nonfiction text will also have its own main idea and details, which will relate to the main idea of the entire book.

Vocabulary

Have students turn to the “Words to Know” box on the copyright page. Discuss each word with students. Then, have students turn to the glossary on page 16. Explain that the glossary provides definitions for the vocabulary words in the book. Point out the use of each content word and academic vocabulary word in the book, and then use each word in a different model sentence. Have students work in groups to create posters for these words. Have them include on each poster the word and its part of speech, the definition, the word in an example sentence, and a picture illustrating the meaning of the word.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read to find out more about the history of Halloween. Write the Focus Question on the board. Invite students to look for evidence in the book to support their answer to the question.
- Have students make a small question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. These can be addressed in a future discussion.

During Reading

Text-Dependent Questions

As students read the book, monitor their understanding with the following questions. Encourage students to support their answers by citing evidence from the book.

- Where and when is Halloween celebrated?* (level 1) page 4
- How is Halloween important in both culture and business in the United States?* (level 1) page 5
- Why do you think the Celts believed lighting bonfires and making sacrifices would help the dead on their journey to the underworld?* (level 3) page 6
- How are the Celtic traditions part of Halloween traditions today?* (level 2) multiple pages

- Which Halloween traditions are no longer celebrated? Why do you think that is?* (level 3) page 11
- Why do you think the Puritans discouraged people from celebrating Halloween?* (level 3) page 12
- How do adults make sure they aren’t left out of the fun on Halloween?* (level 1) page 14
- Why did the authors write this book about Halloween?* (level 3) multiple pages

Text Features: Table of contents

Explain that the table of contents helps readers identify key topics in the book in the order they are presented. Put students into small groups and give each group multiple sentences cut out from the book. Ask groups to work together to match the sentences with the correct section by using the table of contents. Invite volunteers to share their answers with the class. Discuss with students how the table of contents helps readers better identify the order of key topics in the book.

Skill Review

- Model for students how you connect with prior knowledge as you read. Share personal experiences with Halloween traditions. Ask volunteers to share their personal connections with the class.
- Review the predictions for the main idea of this book that are written on the board. Have students work in small groups to brainstorm to generate the main idea of this book and compare it to the main ideas that were predicted before reading. Guide students to a class consensus regarding the main idea of the book, such as: *The celebration of Halloween has changed throughout the years.* Write this main idea on the board.
- Model identifying details that support the main idea.

Think-aloud: *I know the main idea of this book: The celebration of Halloween has changed throughout the years. Since every main idea needs details to explain it, I will be looking for details that explain or describe how Halloween has changed from the past to today. On pages 9 and 10, I read about the tradition of lighting jack-o’-lanterns. This tradition comes from the Irish story of Stingy Jack, who liked to play tricks on his friends. When he died, his spirit was forced to roam in the darkness as punishment, so he carved a hole in a turnip and placed a candle inside. This gave him the nickname Jack-of-the-lantern. People in Ireland and England would carve scary faces in turnips, beets, and potatoes and place a candle inside to scare Jack away (or to look like his scary face). Today, people carve faces in pumpkins and put candles inside to light them up, and these are called jack-o’-lanterns. This shows how the tradition of jack-o’-lanterns started long ago and changed into the tradition we know today, so I know these are two details that support the*

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

main idea. I will continue to look for more details that support the main idea as I read this story.

- Model how to complete the **main-idea-and-details worksheet**, using evidence from the text as support.

After Reading

Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Skill Review

Graphic Organizer: **Main idea and details**

Review the main-idea-and-details worksheet that students completed. Have students share their work in groups. Invite volunteers to share their details with the rest of the class. Ask students to share how identifying details that support the main idea helped them to better understand the text.

Comprehension Extension

Discussion cards covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided to be used for extension activities.

Response to Focus Question

Have students cite specific evidence from the book to answer the Focus Question. (Answers will vary. Sample: *The celebration of Halloween today is very different from celebrations of the past. For example, trick-or-treating has evolved from people in England dressing up as fairies, witches, and ghosts and getting food and drink to the present tradition of people dressing up in costumes and saying "Trick-or-treat!" to get candy.*)

Comprehension Checks

- **Book quiz**
- **Retelling rubric**

Book Extension Activities

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics:

Proper nouns: Months and days of the week

- Review or explain with students that *proper nouns* are words that name *specific people, places, and things*.
- Write the word *October* on the board. Remind students that the word *October* is a noun. Ask students to share with a partner which holiday takes place during this month (*Halloween*). Then ask students to find which day of the week Halloween takes place on this year (for example, *Monday*). Point out that *October*, *Halloween*, and *Monday* are all

proper nouns. *October* names a month of the year, *Halloween* names a special event, and *Monday* names a day of the week. Explain that each of these nouns should be capitalized to show it is a proper noun.

- Have students work with a partner to name other months of the year, days of the week, and holidays, and invite volunteers to share these nouns with the class. Write each noun on the board with a lowercase letter. Invite volunteers to come to the board to correct each proper noun by adding a capital letter.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students look through the book to locate proper nouns that name months of the year, days of the week, and special events. Ask them to share with a partner five nouns they found and confirm that each one is a proper noun.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **proper nouns worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their answers.

Word Work: **Synonyms and antonyms**

- Write the word *frighten* on the board. Ask students to suggest a word that means almost the same thing (*scare, alarm*, and so on). Review or explain that a word that means the same or almost the same as another word is called a *synonym*. Ask students to suggest a word that means the opposite of *frighten* (*reassure, comfort*, and so on). Review or explain that a word that means the opposite of another word is called an *antonym*.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students turn to page 10 to find the word that describes Stingy Jack's face (*terrifying*). Ask students to suggest a synonym and an antonym for this word.
- Use a thesaurus to look up the entry word *terrifying* and show how a thesaurus is used. Give students a thesaurus. Ask them to find the word *terrifying* and have them confirm the synonyms suggested. If the thesaurus lists antonyms, have them find antonyms for the word. Explain to students that some dictionaries also list synonyms and antonyms for words.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **synonyms-and-antonyms worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their answers.

Connections

- See the back of the book for cross-curricular extension ideas.