

What is Halloween?

Every year on the 31st of October, streets around the world glow with pumpkins, costumes, and flickering candles. This celebration is called **Halloween**, and while many children know it as the night of trick-or-treating, its story goes back thousands of years.

Halloween began with the ancient Celtic festival of **Samhain** (pronounced “sow-in”). People believed that on this night, the barrier between the living and the spirit world grew thin. To protect themselves from wandering ghosts, they lit big bonfires and wore costumes to scare away spirits.

When Christianity spread through Europe, the festival was combined with All Saints’ Day, also called **All Hallows’ Day**, which honoured saints and the faithful. The night before became known as All Hallows’ Eve, and later shortened to Halloween.

Today, Halloween is a mix of old traditions and new fun. Children dress up in costumes—witches, superheroes, ghosts, or anything their imagination creates. They knock on doors, calling “trick or treat!”, hoping for sweets. This idea began in the United States but has spread to many countries around the world.

One of the most famous symbols of Halloween is the carved pumpkin, known as a **Jack-o’-lantern**. This tradition started in Ireland, where people once carved turnips with scary faces to frighten away evil spirits. When Irish families moved to America, they discovered pumpkins were larger and easier to carve.

Halloween is also a time for games and gatherings. Some families bob for apples, a game with roots in old harvest festivals. Others watch spooky films, share scary stories, or decorate their homes with cobwebs, skeletons, and candles.

Although Halloween has spooky beginnings, it is now a celebration of creativity, imagination, and fun. It shows how traditions can change over time, blending history, culture, and modern enjoyment.

Glossary

1. **Halloween** – a celebration held on 31st October with costumes, games, and traditions.
2. **Samhain** – an ancient Celtic festival marking the end of the harvest and the start of winter.
3. **Barrier** – something that separates or blocks one thing from another.
4. **Spirits** – supernatural beings such as ghosts.
5. **Christianity** – the religion based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.
6. **All Hallows' Day** – a Christian festival also known as All Saints' Day.
7. **Imagination** – the ability to form new ideas and pictures in the mind.
8. **Jack-o'-lantern** – a carved pumpkin with a candle inside, used as a decoration.
9. **Harvest** – the time when crops are collected from the fields.
10. **Traditions** – customs or practices passed down through generations.