

## The Origins of Halloween:

*Thematic language activity packet for older students*



**Overview:** This thematic packet was created to target listening and reading comprehension of upper-elementary, middle-school, and/or high school students diagnosed with language impairments and learning disabilities<sup>1</sup>. The packet contains Response to Intervention (RTI) Tier 2 vocabulary words in story context. Expressive language activities for the packet include production of synonyms and antonyms, fill-in the blank, as well as sentence formulation using story vocabulary. Comprehension questions pertaining to story are provided in an open ended question format.

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<sup>1</sup>This packet can be used with students with a wide range of ages depending on the students overall language functioning and intellectual abilities as per SLP's judgement.

## The Origins of Halloween

1. In United States, Halloween festivities are celebrated every year on October 31st. But what do you know of this holiday's origins? The word Halloween comes from the phrase, All Hallows' Evening, a holiday, which in the ancient times was for remembering the dead, including saints and martyrs. This holiday's multifaceted roots come from ancient Celtic, Roman, and Christian traditions.
2. The Celts resided in Europe, in the modern day countries of Ireland and Scotland, approximately two millenniums ago. They considered November 1st as the commencement of the New Year and October 31 as the termination of summer. Celts believed that this was the time when spirits roamed the earth. To ward off phantoms and apparitions, Celts dressed up in costumes not to be harmed by them. Later day Scottish and Irish people also carried lanterns made of turnips during this holiday. When they immigrated to the United States, they started using pumpkin gourds. Legend has it that this is where the custom of carving a jack-o'-lantern on Halloween comes from.
3. After the Romans (modern day Italians) conquered the Celts, they adopted and changed some Halloween traditions. For example, they created the tradition of bobbing for apples. To prevent ghosts from causing mischiefs, they also left fruit and other edible offerings as bribes.
4. When Christianity spread through the world, other traditions took root. Pope Boniface IV for example declared November 1st "All Saints Day", or a day for honoring saints and martyrs. Now instead of appeasing the spirits, people gave special food, called "soul cakes", to beggars who came knocking on their door. This is where modern day tradition of trick-or-treating comes from.
5. What started out as serious celebrations of harvest, religion, and spirituality is nowadays considered great entertainment for children and adults alike. Halloween customs and traditions sure have changed vastly since its inception thousands of years ago. Nowadays, typical Halloween activities for children and adults include carving pumpkins into jack-o'-lanterns, trick-or-treating, attending costume parties, decorating houses and lawns, visiting haunted attractions, or watching horror movies. So what will you do on Halloween this year?

**Open Ended Comprehension and Critical Thinking Story Questions:**

1. What is the author's purpose for writing this text?
2. What is the main idea of this story?
3. What three traditions influenced Halloween?
4. Why did the Celts dress up in costumes?
5. How did the Romans change the tradition of offering treats?
6. *How do you think ghosts can cause mischief?*
7. *Why do you think people started to provide food to the beggars?*
8. *How do you think a person might end up a beggar?*
9. *Why do you think some people immigrate to another country?*
10. *What are some popular traditions in United States related to other holidays?*

**Vocabulary Key:**

1. **Festivity** – celebration (such as a party)
2. **Origin** - beginning
3. **Modern** - new
4. **Ancient** - very old
5. **Saint** – a holy person after death
6. **Martyr** - sufferer
7. **Multifaceted** - many-sided
8. **Resided** - lived
9. **Millennium** - 1000 years
10. **Commencement** - beginning
11. **Termination** - end
12. **Roamed** – traveled
13. **Phantoms** - ghosts
14. **Apparitions** - ghosts
15. **Harmed** - hurt
16. **Immigrate** – move from one country to another
17. **Gourds** – hard shelled and ornamental plants which grow on a vine including pumpkins, squash, cucumbers, etc.
18. **Legend** – a story from the past that is believed by many people but cannot be proved to be true

19. **Conquer** – take over
20. **Prevent** - stop
21. **Edible** – you can eat it
22. **Offerings** – gifts
23. **Bribe** - something valuable (e.g., money) that is given in order to get someone to do something
24. **Christianity** – a religion based on the teachings of Jesus Christ
25. **Appease** – calm [down]
26. **Beggar** – homeless person
27. **Religion** – belief in god
28. **Spirituality** – related to religion
29. **Vast** - great
30. **Inception** - beginning

Fill-in the blank by finding the words **in the story text**:

1. The word Halloween comes from the phrase, \_\_\_\_\_, a holiday, which in the past was for remembering the dead, including \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The Celts lived in \_\_\_\_\_, in the modern day countries of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, about two thousand years ago.
3. Celts believed that during Halloween spirits \_\_\_\_\_ the earth. To ward off \_\_\_\_\_, Celts dressed up in costumes.
4. Modern day jack-o'-lanterns made out of pumpkins used to be \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Romans \_\_\_\_\_ the Celts, and \_\_\_\_\_ some of their Halloween traditions. They also started \_\_\_\_\_ as bribes.
6. When \_\_\_\_\_ spread Halloween became known as \_\_\_\_\_ honoring saints and martyrs. People started giving food to \_\_\_\_\_ starting the modern day tradition of \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Nowadays Halloween is considered as \_\_\_\_\_ for children and adults alike. Some activities people do on Halloween are \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

## TRUE Synonyms and Antonyms workout:

A true synonym is only one word with the same exact meaning as the original word.

A true antonym is only one word with the opposite meaning as the original word.

**Instructions:** Match the synonyms or antonyms by labeling the correct words. Pay close attention to the details since they are all mixed up together.

- |              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
| 1. Inception | ___Termination |
| 2. Vast      | ___Old         |
| 3. Appease   | ___Poisonous   |
| 4. Prevent   | ___Live        |
| 5. Phantom   | ___Sinner      |
| 6. Harm      | ___Great       |
| 7. Reside    | ___Stop        |
| 8. Edible    | ___Ghost       |
| 9. Saint     | ___Hurt        |
| 10. Modern   | ___Upset       |

## Sentence formulation:

**Directions:** Make up the sentences with the following words:

1. Celts, Halloween \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Spirits, Roamed \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Scotland, immigrate \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Romans, conquered \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Beggars, offering \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Helpful Smart Speech Therapy Resources

- [Best Practices in Bilingual Literacy Assessments and Interventions](#)
- [Comprehensive Literacy Checklist For School-Aged Children](#)
- [Dynamic Assessment of Bilingual and Multicultural Learners in Speech Language Pathology](#)
- [Differential Assessment and Treatment of Processing Disorders in Speech Language Pathology](#)
- [Practical Strategies for Monolingual SLPs Assessing and Treating Bilingual Children](#)
- [The Checklists Bundle](#)
- [General Assessment and Treatment Start Up Bundle](#)
- [Multicultural Assessment Bundle](#)
- [Narrative Assessment and Treatment Bundle](#)
- [Social Pragmatic Assessment and Treatment Bundle](#)
- [Psychiatric Disorders Bundle](#)
- [Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Assessment and Treatment Bundle](#)
- [Assessment Checklist for Preschool Aged Children](#)
- [Assessment Checklist for School Aged Children](#)
- [Speech Language Assessment Checklist for Adolescents](#)
- [Differential Diagnosis of ADHD in Speech Language Pathology](#)
- [Creating Functional Therapy Plan](#)
- [Selecting Clinical Materials for Pediatric Therapy](#)
- [Social Pragmatic Deficits Checklist for Preschool Children](#)
- [Social Pragmatic Deficits Checklist for School Aged Children](#)
- [Language Processing Deficits Checklist for School Aged Children](#)