

HALLOWEEN

October 31

**spirits, saints,
skulls, and scares!**

**ALSO:
ALL SAINTS DAY +
DIA DE MUERTOS**

see below!

*origin
pre-christian*

Halloween had its beginnings in an ancient, pre-Christian Celtic festival of the dead. The Celtic people, who lived in Great Britain, Ireland, and France, began their year on a day corresponding with November 1st on our present calendar. This time marked the beginning of winter. The cooler weather meant that cattle and sheep had to be moved to closer pastures and all livestock had to be secured for the winter months. Crops were harvested and stored.

The festival observed at this time was called Samhain (pronounced Sah-ween) which means “summer’s end.” It was the biggest and most significant holiday of the Celtic year. The Celts believed that all those who had died during the past year traveled into the beyond during this season. But for one night, the spirits were free to mingle with the living. The people lit bonfires to honor the dead, to aid them on their journey into the afterlife, and also to keep themselves safe from any wicked spirits wishing to snatch their hair or sour their milk. They regaled one another with scary stories about encounters with these spirits, year after year.

Then, in the year 43 AD, the Romans conquered the Celts. The Romans held different beliefs, but they also celebrated a harvest festival around October 31 – the feast of Pomona, the goddess of fruits. They offered gifts of nuts and fruits to Pomona, and prayed that she would give them a bountiful harvest next year. They also played games and told one another’s fortunes as a way to look forward to the year to come. The Celts continued to recognize the feast as Samhain, but as the two groups intermingled, so did their traditions.





history: Christian

In the years that followed, Christian missionaries began teaching and converting the Celts. The Celts came to accept Christianity, yet still held on to many of their ancient ideas and practices. For instance, they still believed that ghosts and devils wandered about on October 31, bothering their crops and spooking their animals. So they went right on lighting bonfires, telling scary stories, eating nuts and apples, and telling one another's fortunes.

In the 601 AD, the Roman Catholic Church tried a novel approach. Rather than try and obliterate native peoples' customs and beliefs, they would use them: if a group of people worshipped a tree, rather than cut it down, they would consecrate that tree to Christ, allowing for its continued worship. In terms of spreading Christianity, this was a brilliant concept that proved wildly successful. Church holy days were purposely set to coincide with native holy days. Christmas, for instance, was assigned the arbitrary date of December 25th because it corresponded with the mid-winter celebration of many peoples. Likewise, St. John's Day was set on the summer solstice.

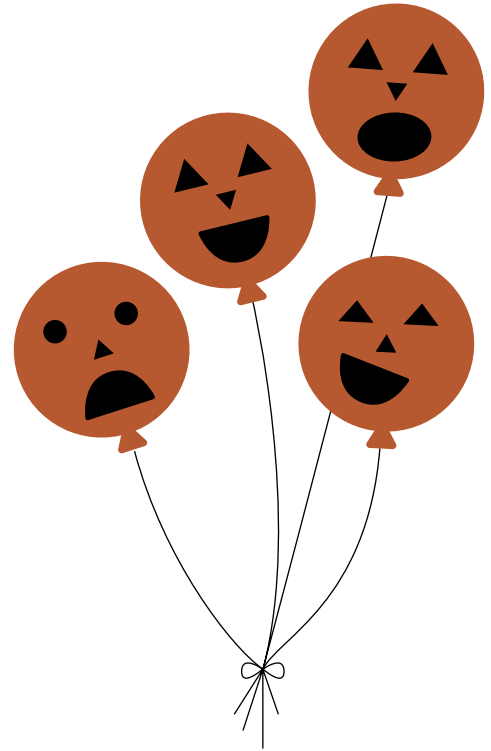
The Christian feast of All Saints was assigned to November 1st. The day honored every Christian saint, especially those that did not otherwise have a special day devoted to them. All Saints Day, otherwise known as All Hallows (hallowed means sanctified or holy) was meant to substitute for Samhain, to draw the devotion of the Celtic peoples, and, finally, to replace it forever. That did not happen, but the traditional Celtic deities diminished in status, becoming the fairies or leprechauns of more recent traditions.

The old beliefs associated with Samhain never died out entirely. The powerful symbolism of the traveling dead was too strong, and perhaps too basic to the human psyche, to be satisfied with the new, more abstract Catholic feast honoring saints. Recognizing that something that would subsume the original energy of Samhain was necessary, the church tried again to supplant it with a Christian feast day in the 9th century. This time it established November 2nd as All Souls Day—a day when the living prayed for the souls of all the dead. But, once again, the practice of retaining traditional customs while attempting to redefine them had a sustaining effect: the traditional beliefs and customs lived on, in new guises.



history: to present

Virtually all present Halloween traditions can be traced to the ancient Celtic day of the dead. Halloween is a holiday of many mysterious customs, but each one has a history, or at least a story behind it. The wearing of costumes, for instance, and roaming from door to door demanding treats can be traced to the Celtic period and the first few centuries of the Christian era, when it was thought that the souls of the dead were out and around, along with fairies, witches, and demons. Offerings of food and drink were left out to placate them. As the centuries wore on, people began dressing like these dreadful creatures, performing antics in exchange for food and drink. This practice is called mumming, from which the practice of trick-or-treating evolved. To this day, witches, ghosts, and skeleton figures of the dead are among the favorite disguises. Halloween also retains some features that harken back to the original harvest holiday of Samhain, such as the customs of bobbing



for apples and carving vegetables, as well as the fruits, nuts, and spices cider associated with the day.

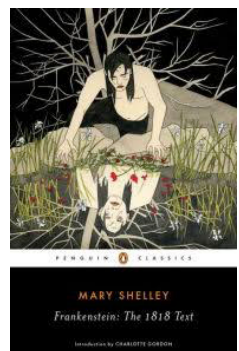
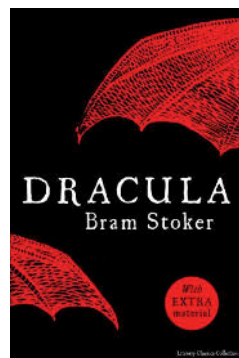
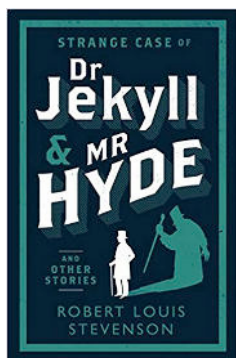
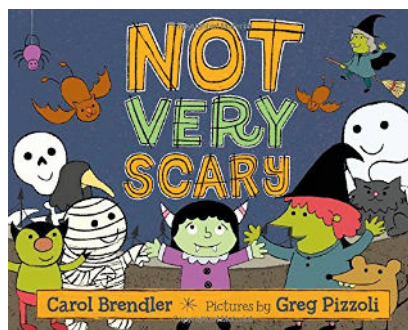
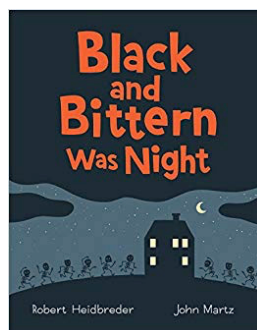
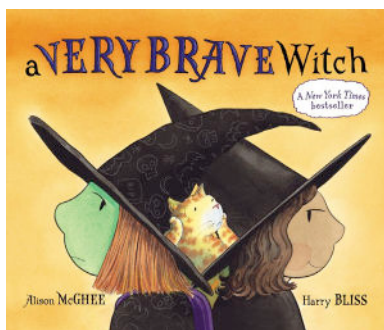
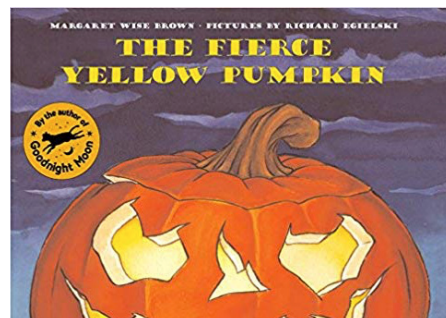
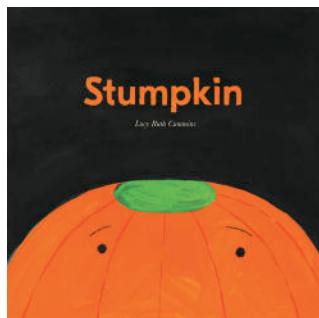
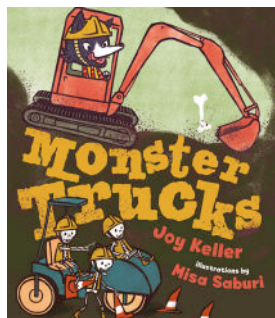
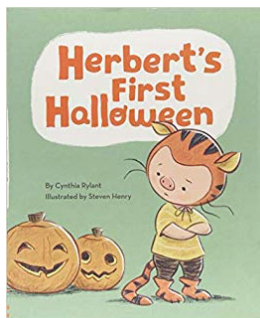
SONG OF THE WITCHES FROM MACBETH BY SHAKESPEARE

Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and caldron bubble.
Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the caldron boil and bake;
Eye of newt and toe of frog,
Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting,
Lizard's leg and howlet's wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and caldron bubble.
Cool it with a baboon's blood,
Then the charm is firm and good.

Today, many people around the world are crazy about Halloween. They love the costumes, the spooky decorations, and the parties associated with Halloween. And of course, they trick-or-treat! In this familiar evening ritual, children go door-to-door in costumes begging for candy, sometimes also threatening a “trick” if they’re not given something tasty. Neighbors decorate their houses with spooky scenes to accommodate the visitors. When they decorate with ghosts, goblins, and witches, they may not realize that doing so hearkens back to an ancient time when spirits were thought to roam the countryside, looking for mischief. Halloween has endured as one of the most popular holidays of the year. It blends the frivolous with the frightening, the secular with the spiritual

a small selection of books



parents:
**PLEASE PREVIEW
ALL MATERIALS
BEFORE SHARING
WITH YOUR CHILD**

You are the best judge of what is appropriate for your child/ren and what they will enjoy. Try checking [goodreads.com](https://www.goodreads.com) for reviews.

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR DETAILS

a small selection of books

TITLE	AUTHOR	LEVEL
<i>Five Little Pumpkins</i>	Dan Yaccarino	preschool +
<i>Little Goblins Ten</i>	Pamela Jane	preschool +
<i>Herbert's First Halloween</i>	Cynthia Rylant	preschool +
<i>The Ghosts Go Scaring</i>	Chrissy Bozik	preschool +
<i>Stumpkin</i>	Lucy Ruth Cummins	preschool +
<i>Monster Trucks</i>	Joy Keller	preschool +
<i>Trick Arr Treat: A Pirate Halloween</i>	Leslie Kimmelman	preschool +
<i>Room on the Broom</i>	Julia Donaldson	preschool +
<i>Zip! Zoom! On a Broom</i>	Teri Sloat	preschool +
<i>10 Trick-or-Treaters</i>	Janet Schulman	preschool +
<i>The Teeny Tiny Ghost</i>	Kay Winters	preschool +
<i>Scary, Scary Halloween</i>	Eve Bunting	preschool +
<i>The Ugly Pumpkin</i>	Dave Horowitz	preschool +
<i>The Fierce Yellow Pumpkin</i>	Margaret Wise Brown	preschool
<i>Monster Needs a Costume</i>	Paul Czajak	preschool +
<i>Minerva Louise on Halloween</i>	Janet Morgan Stoeke	preschool +
<i>The Three Bears Halloween</i>	Kathy Duval	preschool +
<i>Enzo's Very Scary Halloween</i>	Garth Stein	preschool +
<i>A Tiger Called Tomas</i>	Charlotte Zolotow	kinder +
<i>What Was I Scared Of?</i>	Dr. Seuss	kinder +
<i>Tam Lin: An Old Ballad</i>	Jane Yolen	kinder +
<i>And Then Comes Halloween</i>	Tom Brenner	kinder +
<i>Pumpkin Jack</i>	Will Hubbell	kinder +
<i>The Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything</i>	Linda D. Williams	kinder +
<i>Not Very Scary</i>	Carol Brendler	kinder +
<i>The Pomegranate Witch</i>	Denise Doyen	kinder +
<i>Black and Bittern Was Night</i>	Robert Heidbreder	kinder +
<i>The Monsterator</i>	Keith Graves	kinder +
<i>What There Is Before There Is Anything There</i>	Liniers and Elisa Amado	kinder +
<i>Outside Over There</i>	Maurice Sendak	kinder +
<i>The Scariest Book Ever</i>	Bob Shea	kinder +
<i>Ol' Clip-Clap</i>	Pat McKissack	kinder +
<i>A Teeny Tiny Halloween</i>	Lauren Wohl	kinder +
<i>Heckedy Peg</i>	Audrey Wood	kinder +
<i>I'm Not Afraid of This Haunted House</i>	Laurie Friedman	kinder +
<i>Halloween Night</i>	Marjorie Dennis Murray	kinder +
<i>A Very Brave Witch</i>	Alison McGhee	kinder +
<i>Child of Faerie, Child of Earth</i>	Jane Yolen	kinder +
<i>Zen Ghosts</i>	Jon Muth	kinder +
<i>Only a Witch Can Fly</i>	Alison McGhee	kinder +
<i>The Trip</i>	Ezra Jack Keats	kinder +

a small selection of books

TITLE	AUTHOR	LEVEL
<i>Vunce Upon a Time</i>	J. Otto Seibold	kinder +
<i>The Spider and the Fly</i>	Mary Howitt, ill. Tony DiTerlizzi	kinder +
<i>School of the Dead</i>	Avi	int - MS
<i>The Worst Night Ever</i>	Dave Barry	int - MS
<i>Monsterland</i>	James Crowley	int - MS
<i>Dead Boy</i>	Laurel Gate	int - MS
<i>The Graveyard Book</i> (highly recommended audio version!)	Neil Gaiman	int - MS
<i>Captain Nobody</i>	Dean Pitchford	int - MS
<i>The Best Halloween Ever</i>	Barbara Robinson	int - MS
<i>Ghosts</i>	Raina Telgemeier	int - MS
<i>Witch Boy</i>	Molly Ostertag	int - MS
<i>The Night Gardener</i>	Jonathan Auxier	int - MS
<i>Ramona the Pest</i>	Beverly Cleary	int - MS
<i>Sammy Keyes and the Skeleton Man</i>	Wendelin Van Draanen	int - MS
<i>The Boy of a Thousand Faces</i>	Brian Selznick	int - MS
<i>Who Stole Halloween?</i>	Martha Freeman	int - MS
<i>Bunnicula</i>	James Howe	int - MS
<i>The Witch Family</i>	Eleanor Estes	int - MS
<i>The Witches</i>	Roald Dahl	int - MS
<i>The Worst Witch</i>	Jill Murphy	int - MS
<i>A Newbery Halloween: A Dozen Scary Stories</i>	Newbery Award-winning Authors	int - MS
<i>Jenny's Moonlight Adventure</i>	Esther Averill	int - MS
<i>The Halloween Tree</i>	Ray Bradbury	MS +
<i>Doll Bones</i>	Holly Black	MS +
<i>Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark</i>	Alvin Schwartz	MS +
<i>The Shadows</i>	Jacqueline West	MS +
<i>The Legend of Sleepy Hollow</i>	Washington Irving	MS +
<i>The Seer of Shadows</i>	Avi	MS +
<i>The Graveyard Book</i>	Neil Gaiman	MS +
<i>The Gashlycrumb Tinies</i>	Edward Gorey	MS +
<i>The House of Dies Drear</i>	Virginia Hamilton	MS +
<i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i>	Robert Louis Stevenson	MS +
<i>Something Wicked This Way Comes</i>	Ray Bradbury	MS +
<i>We Have Always Lived in the Castle</i>	Shirley Jackson	MS +
<i>The Haunting of Hill House</i>	Shirley Jackson	MS +
<i>Short Stories</i> (978-0143122364 is a nice edition)	Edgar Allen Poe	MS +
<i>The Call of Cthulhu and Other Weird Stories</i>	H. P. Lovecraft	MS +
<i>Ghost Stories</i>	(Everyman's Library Pocket Classics)	MS +
<i>Ghostly: A Collection of Ghost Stories</i>	Audrey Niffenegger	MS +
<i>Dracula</i>	Bram Stoker	MS +
<i>Frankenstein</i>	Mary Shelley	MS +

a small selection of poetry

TO READ ALOUD ON A SPOOKY NIGHT

parents:

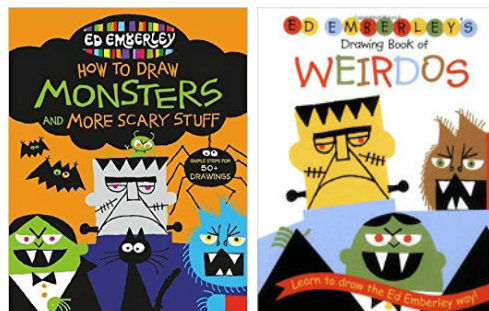
**AGAIN, PLEASE READ THESE FIRST TO BE SURE
THEY ARE APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR LITTLE ONES**

POETRY COLLECTIONS:

Halloween Hoots and Howls: Poems	Joan Horton	kids
Boo! Halloween Poems and Limericks	by Patricia Hubbell	kids
The Headless Horseman Rides Tonight	Jack Prelutsky	kids
Killer Verse: Poems of Mayhem and Madness		high school +
Poems Bewitched and Haunted		high school +
Poems Dead and Undead		high school +

POEMS:

The Highwayman	Alfred Noyes
Halloween Party	Kenn Nesbitt
The Raven	Edgar Allen Poe
Windigo	Louise Erdrich
Haunted	Siegfried Sassoon
A Child's Nightmare	Robert Graves
The Vampire	Conrad Aiken
The Haunted Oak	Paul Laurence Dunbar
The Spider and the Fly	Mary Howitt
The Night Wind	Eugene Field
The Little Ghost	Edna St. Vincent Millay
The Witch	Mary Elizabeth Coleridge
The Hollow Men	T. S. Eliot
Ghost House	Robert Frost
The Only Ghost I Ever Saw	Emily Dickinson



just for fun

**Ed Emberley's How to
Draw Monsters and
More Scary Stuff**

**Ed Emberley's Drawing
Book of Weirdos**

EL DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

the day of the dead



More than 3,000 years ago, the Aztecs and other pre-Columbian people viewed death as a part of life – something to be accepted, embraced, and honored. They spent several months each year paying respect and tending to their beloved dead with ceremonies and rituals. When Spanish conquistadors arrived in the New World, they tried to eradicate these traditional practices and convert the natives to Christianity. Rather than completely turn their back on their customs, the indigenous people chose to meld their ancient traditions with those of the Roman Catholic Church. Just as they had done with the Celts in Europe, the church allowed new converts to hold on to some of their established traditions, while rebranding them as Christian holy days. In Mexico, All Saints' and Souls' Days took place on November 1 and 2, during the same time of year that the Aztec Indians had always celebrated their dearly departed. What was once months of rituals came to center around these holy days. These rituals evolved over time, and even today, the holiday continues to evolve as Mexican Americans add their own unique twists to the holiday, sometimes mixing in American-style Halloween traditions with their Dia celebrations.



Although the activities associated with Dia de Muertos continue to evolve, the purpose behind these celebrations remains constant: to honor those who have passed away. It is more than an act of fondness; it is an obligation of respect. Observance of the Day of the Dead ensures that the loved one's soul will not be forgotten and will therefore never truly die. To this day, adults and children celebrate this occasion with fun activities – painting faces, dressing up like ghosts, and creating beautiful decorations – but these festivities are not meant to take away from the holy nature of this day. Central to the celebrations is the family altar, which is laden with ofrendas (offerings) believed to guide the souls of the departed back to the family for Dia de Muertos.

books to learn more about El Dia de los Muertos

<i>The Remembering Day</i>	Pat Mora
<i>I Remember Abuelito</i>	Janice Levy
<i>Calavera Abecedario</i>	Jeannette Winter
<i>Ghost Wings</i>	Barbara Joosse
<i>Day of the Dead</i>	Tony Johnston
<i>Dia De Los Muertos</i>	Roseanne Thong
<i>Clatter Bash: A Day of the Dead Celebration</i>	Richard Keep
<i>A Dash of Trouble</i>	Anna Meriano
<i>Gift for Abuelita</i>	Nancy Luenn
<i>LouLou and Pea and the Mural Mystery</i>	Jill Diamond

a few terms to remember

Altars - altars built for honoring and remembering the dead

Calaveras - decorative sugar skulls given as offerings and gifts

Calendulas - marigold flowers are commonly seen on altars

Ofrendas - offerings placed upon family altars as gifts to the dead

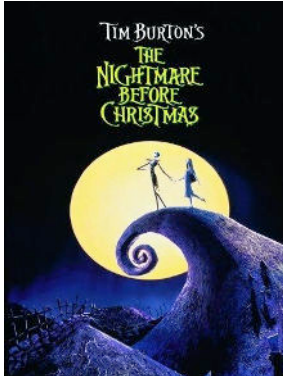
Viaje - the journey taken by the dead as they travel between this world and the next

La Llorona - the legend often told on Dia de Muertos of a woman who wanders the earth for eternity, crying as she searches for her lost family.

SEE ALSO
recent films
Coco AND
The Book of Life

Here is a link to one version of this legend: <https://www.legendsofamerica.com/gh-llorona/>

MOVIES + TELEVISION

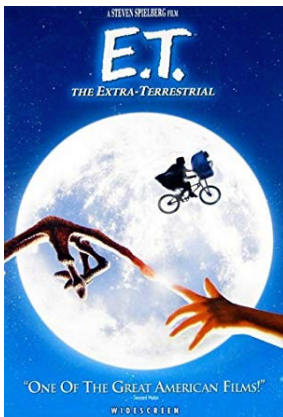


parents:

Common Sense Media is a good online resource to see whether or not a movie is appropriate for your child.



The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad
It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown
The Nightmare Before Christmas
Monsters, Inc.
Hocus Pocus
Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone
Halloweentown
Monster House
Corpse Bride
E. T.
Hotel Transylvania
Gremlins
The Addams Family
Casper
Wallace and Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit
Coco (Dia de Muertos)
The Book of Life (Dia de Muertos)
Ghostbusters
Beetlejuice



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