

Today is Halloween. In America we celebrate Halloween on October 31st. The pictures below are common Halloween symbols. Label the pictures with one of the words from the list.

devil	pumpkin seeds	ghost	bat	jack-o-lantern
spider	witch	pumpkin	mummy	skull and cross bones
skeleton	tombstone	haunted house	cemetery	black cat



Things people do on Halloween:

- 1.visit a pumpkin patch
- 2.carve pumpkins to make jack-o-lanterns
- 3.roast pumpkin seeds
- 4.trick or treat
- 5.give out candy
- 6.scare people
- 7.dress in costumes
- 8.decorate their yards with witches, skeletons, ghosts, monsters, graveyards, bats and spiders

Discuss

1. List some things you are scared of.
2. Have you been trick or treating? Have your children?
3. Is trick or treating dangerous?
4. Are teenagers too old to trick or treat?
5. Have you ever dressed up in a costume? Describe your costume.
6. Do you believe in ghosts?
7. Do you like to hear ghost stories?
8. Have you ever been to a haunted house? Was there an old house in your neighborhood that the kids believed was haunted?
9. Do you enjoy watching zombie movies or other scary shows?



Witches fly on broomsticks, have black cats and make witches' brew in black cauldrons. A cauldron is a big pot with a lid and a handle. It is used for cooking over an open



fire.

People used to believe that witches' brew had magic powers. Witches' brew might turn you into a frog, for example. People used to believe witches were real. They feared them.

In the 1600's, in America and Europe, many women were burned or tortured because people thought they were witches. This often happened to older women who lived alone. It also happened to women that were a little different. Women who didn't have many friends, or didn't fit in with society were frequently called witches. Some were burned. Others were crushed under loads of stone. Some had rocks tied to their feet, then were thrown in a lake. If they sank, that was proof they were a witch.

Believing in witches is an example of a superstition. A superstition is a belief in a story that explains something we don't understand. If you believe in superstitions you are superstitious.

Superstitions: Talk about each superstition. Are these the same in your country or do you have different ones?

1-Some believe that number 13 is an unlucky number. They don't want to live or work on the 13th floor of a building. Friday the 13th is an especially unlucky day. People don't want to fly or take a trip on this unlucky day. Are there particular numbers or days that are unlucky in your country? Would you live on the 13th floor?

2-Black cats are associated with witches. It is unlucky if a black cat crosses your path. People used to believe that snakes were friends of the devil. Sometimes the devil could appear as a snake like the snake in the garden of good and evil in the Bible. Do you believe any animals are unlucky or associated with the devil?

3-Breaking a mirror will cause seven years of bad luck. Be careful around mirrors!

4-It's unlucky to walk under a ladder. This superstition makes sense, as the ladder could fall and hurt someone.

5-Spilling salt is bad luck. If you spill salt, you should take a small pinch and throw it over your shoulder. That reverses the bad luck.

6-Crossing your fingers will bring good luck. Also owning a rabbit's foot is good luck.

7-Opening an umbrella indoors is bad luck.

History of Halloween: In Europe, people celebrated this holiday for two thousand years. People believed spirits of the dead could travel into our world during Halloween. Sometimes

people dressed as spirits to protect themselves. Poor people went door to door begging for food. This is where the idea of trick or treating comes from.

When Christianity came, the church changed this holiday. It became a time to honor the dead. The dead are hallowed (sacred). The church called this holiday All Hallow's Evening. Eve is a short form of evening. That is how it got the name Halloween. Some cultures call this holiday All Souls Day or All Saints Day.

Many cultures have a holiday to honor the dead. Does your culture? Describe what happens at this time. do you visit cemeteries? Do you take food to the cemetery to honor the dead? Are there other ways to honor the dead?