

History of Halloween



Like many other holidays, Halloween has changed throughout history. Over 2,000 years ago people called the Celts lived in what is now Ireland, the UK, and parts of Northern France. November 1 was their New Year's Day. They believed that the night before the New Year (October 31) was a time when the living and the dead came together.

More than a thousand years ago the Christian church named November 1 *All Saints Day* (also called *All Hallows*.) This was a special holy day to honor the saints and other people who died for their religion. The night before *All Hallows* was called *Hallows Eve*. Later the name was changed to Halloween.

Like the Celts, the Europeans of that time also believed that the spirits of the dead would visit the earth on Halloween. They worried that evil spirits would cause problems or hurt them. So on that night people wore costumes that looked like ghosts or other evil creatures. They thought if they dressed like that, the spirits would think they were also dead and not harm them.

The tradition of Halloween was carried to America by the immigrating Europeans. Some of the traditions changed a little, though. For example, on Halloween in Europe some people would carry lanterns made from turnips. In America, pumpkins were more common. So people began putting candles inside them and using them as lanterns. That is why you see Jack 'o lanterns today.

These days Halloween is not usually considered a religious holiday. It is primarily a fun day for children. Children dress up in costumes like people did a thousand years ago. But instead of worrying about evil spirits, they go from house to house. They knock on doors and say "trick or treat." The owner of each house gives candy or something special to each trick or treater.

True or False?

1. The Celts thought the spirits of dead people returned to the earth on October 31st.
2. Today Halloween is especially for children.

3. The word *Halloween* comes from the word *Hallows eve*.
4. A thousand years ago Europeans wore costumes to get candy.
5. Children get candy by saying "trick or treat."

Solution: 1. true, 2. true, 3.true, 4. false, 5. true

Catching a Cold

Many people catch a cold in the springtime and/ or fall. It makes us wonder... if scientists can send a man to the moon, why can't they find a cure for the common cold. The answer is easy. There are literally hundreds of kinds cold viruses out there. You never know which one you will get, so there isn't a cure for each one.



When a virus attacks your body, your body works hard to get rid of it. Blood rushes to your nose and brings congestion with it. You feel terrible because you can't breathe well, but your body is actually "eating" the virus. Your temperature rises and you get a fever, but the heat of your body is killing the virus. You also have a runny nose to stop the virus from getting to your cells. You may feel miserable, but actually your wonderful body is doing everything it can to kill the cold.

Different people have different remedies for colds. In the United States and some other countries, for example, people might eat chicken soup to feel better. Some people take hot baths and drink warm liquids. Other people take medicines to stop the fever, congestion, and runny nose.

There is one interesting thing to note- some scientists say taking medicines when you have a cold is actually bad for you. The virus stays in you longer because your body doesn't have a way to fight it and kill it. Bodies can do an amazing job on their own. There is a joke, however, on taking medicine when you have a cold. It goes like this:

If takes about 1 week to get over a cold if you don't take medicine, but only 7 days to get over a cold if you take medicine.

True or False?

1. There is a cure for the common cold.
2. There are 22 different cold viruses in the world.

3. Heat in your body kills viruses.
4. Congestion means your head feels hot.
5. Scientists always think taking medicine is good when you have a cold.

Solution: 1. false, 2. false, 3. true, 4. false, 5. false