

The History of Halloween

The Origin of Halloween

Like many other holidays, Halloween has changed throughout history. Over 2000 years ago, the Celts lived in Ireland and Northern France. They celebrated New Year's Day on 1st November. They believed that the night before the New Year (31st October) was a time when the living and the dead came together on earth.



How Halloween Got its Name

Over one thousand years ago, the Christian church named 1st November 'All Saints Day', also called 'All Hallows'. This was a holy day to commemorate the saints and other people who died for their religion. The night before All Hallows, was named Hallows' Eve. Many years later, the name was changed to Halloween.

Dressing up on Halloween

During this time, the Europeans also believed that the spirits of the dead would walk among the living on earth. They were worried that the evil spirits would cause problems, hurt or even kill them. To fix this concern, on that night, people wore costumes of ghosts or other wicked creatures. They believed that if they dressed in costume, they would be disguised and the spirits would think they were also dead and not hurt them.

How Halloween Was Brought to Australia

The tradition of Halloween was brought to Australia by the immigrating Europeans. Some of the traditions changed slightly. For example, on Halloween in Europe, some people would carry lanterns made from turnips. In America, pumpkins were more common than turnips. Americans began putting candles inside them and using them as lanterns. That is why you see Jack-o'-lanterns today. Jack-o'-lanterns have evolved from being a lantern used in America, to a popular Halloween decoration around the world, including Australia.



Halloween Traditions

Halloween is no longer considered a religious holiday. It is mainly a celebration for both children and adults. The most common Halloween tradition, is to dress up in costumes like people did a thousand years ago. Instead of only wearing frightening costumes, it is now just as

common to see people dressed in other costumes. Australian children sometimes attend a Halloween disco or party at school, dressed in costumes.

Another popular Halloween tradition is to go trick-or-treating. This is where children go from house-to-house, knocking on doors and saying, "Trick or treat!" The person who answers the door, often gives the children a treat to eat. Whichever activities you participate in, Halloween can be a fun celebration for everyone!

Questions

1. On which date did the Celts celebrate New Year's Day?

2. What was All Saints' Day also known as?

3. What did the Europeans believe the evil spirits might do?

4. How did they fix this worry?

5. What were used as lanterns before pumpkins?

6. What is the most common Halloween tradition?

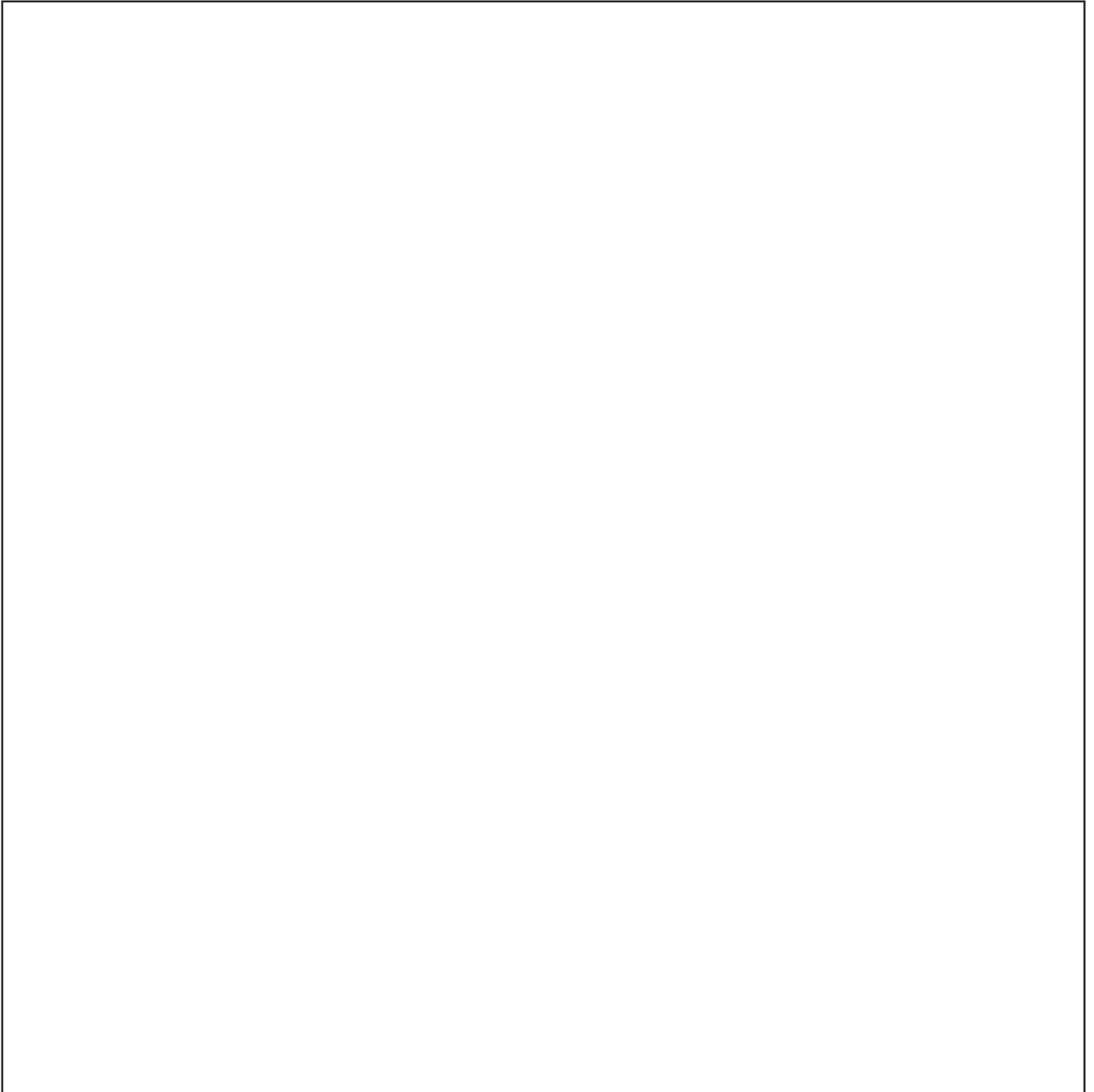
7. List two ways in which Halloween was celebrated during its early years.

8. List two differences between how Halloween is celebrated now, to how it was celebrated when it first began.

9. Why do you think Halloween is a popular celebration?

Questions

10. Draw a spooky Halloween scene from when it was first celebrated.



Answers

1. On which date did the Celts celebrate New Year's Day?
The Celts celebrated New Year's Day on 1st November.
2. What was All Saints' Day also known as?
All Saints' Day was also known as All Hallows.
3. What did the Europeans believe the evil spirits might do?
The Europeans believed the evil spirits would cause trouble, harm or kill them.
4. How did they fix this worry?
They fixed this worry by dressing in costume to confuse the spirits.
5. What were used as lanterns before pumpkins?
Turnips were used as lanterns before pumpkins.
6. What is the most common Halloween tradition?
The most common Halloween tradition is to dress up in costume.
7. List two ways in which Halloween was celebrated during its early years.
They remembered people who died for their religion and they dressed in costume to ward off spirits.
8. List two differences between how Halloween is celebrated now, to how it was celebrated when it first began.
Many years ago, they only dressed in scary costumes. They commemorated people who died for their religion. Now, we dress in many types of costumes and go trick-or-treating.
9. Why do you think Halloween is a popular celebration?
Responses will vary.
10. Draw a spooky Halloween scene from when it was first celebrated.
Responses will vary.

The History of Halloween

The Origin of Halloween

Like many other holidays, Halloween has evolved throughout history. Over 2000 years ago, the Celts lived in Ireland and Northern France. This time of year signified the end of the summer and the beginning of winter and was celebrated with a harvest festival. They believed that the festival would make their gods happy so they would protect them and their crops during the long, hard winter that was to come. They also celebrated New Year's Day on 1st November. They believed that the night before the New Year (31st October) was a time when the living and the dead came together on earth.



How Halloween Got its Name

Over one thousand years ago, the Christian church named 1st November 'All Saints' Day', also called 'All Hallows', which was a traditional English term. This was a holy day to commemorate the saints and other people who died for their religion. The night before All Hallows was named Hallows' Eve. Many years later, the name was changed to Halloween.

Dressing up on Halloween

During this time, the Europeans also believed that the spirits of the dead would walk among the living on earth. They were worried that the evil spirits would cause problems, hurt or even kill them. To address this concern, on that night people wore costumes of ghosts or other wicked creatures. They believed that if they dressed in frightening costumes, their disguise would confuse the spirits and they would think they were also dead and not hurt them.

How Trick-or-Treating Began



Many years ago, people were extremely superstitious. They were not only afraid of meeting ghosts on Halloween night. They were also terrified that ghosts or spirits would come into their homes. They began leaving bowls of food outside their doors to deter the ghosts from entering. Over time, people began to get less fearful of the ghosts and started eating the nice treats themselves. Some people say that this was the start of trick or treating.

How Halloween Was Brought to Australia

The tradition of Halloween was brought to Australia by the immigrating Europeans. Some of these changed slightly. For example, on Halloween in Europe, some people would carry lanterns made from turnips. In America, pumpkins were more common than turnips. Americans began putting candles inside them and using them as lanterns. That is why you see jack-o'-lanterns today. Jack-o'-lanterns have evolved from being a lantern used in America to a popular Halloween decoration around the world, including Australia.



Halloween Traditions in Australia

Halloween is no longer considered a religious holiday. It is primarily a celebration for both children and adults. The most common Halloween tradition is to dress up in costumes like people did a thousand years ago. Instead of only wearing frightening costumes, it is now just as common to see people dressed in other costumes. Australian children sometimes attend a Halloween disco or party at school, dressed in costumes. Another popular Halloween tradition is to go trick-or-treating. This is when children go from house-to-house. They knock on the door and say, "Trick or treat!" The person who answers the door gives the children a treat to eat. Some neighbourhoods come together to decorate their front lawns with a spooky theme to get into the Halloween spirit.

Questions

1. Where did the Celts live?

2. What was All Saints' Day also known as?

3. How did the Europeans ward off evil spirits?

4. Define the word 'superstitious'.

5. Describe the origins of trick or treating.

6. Why did the Americans use pumpkins for lanterns and not turnips?

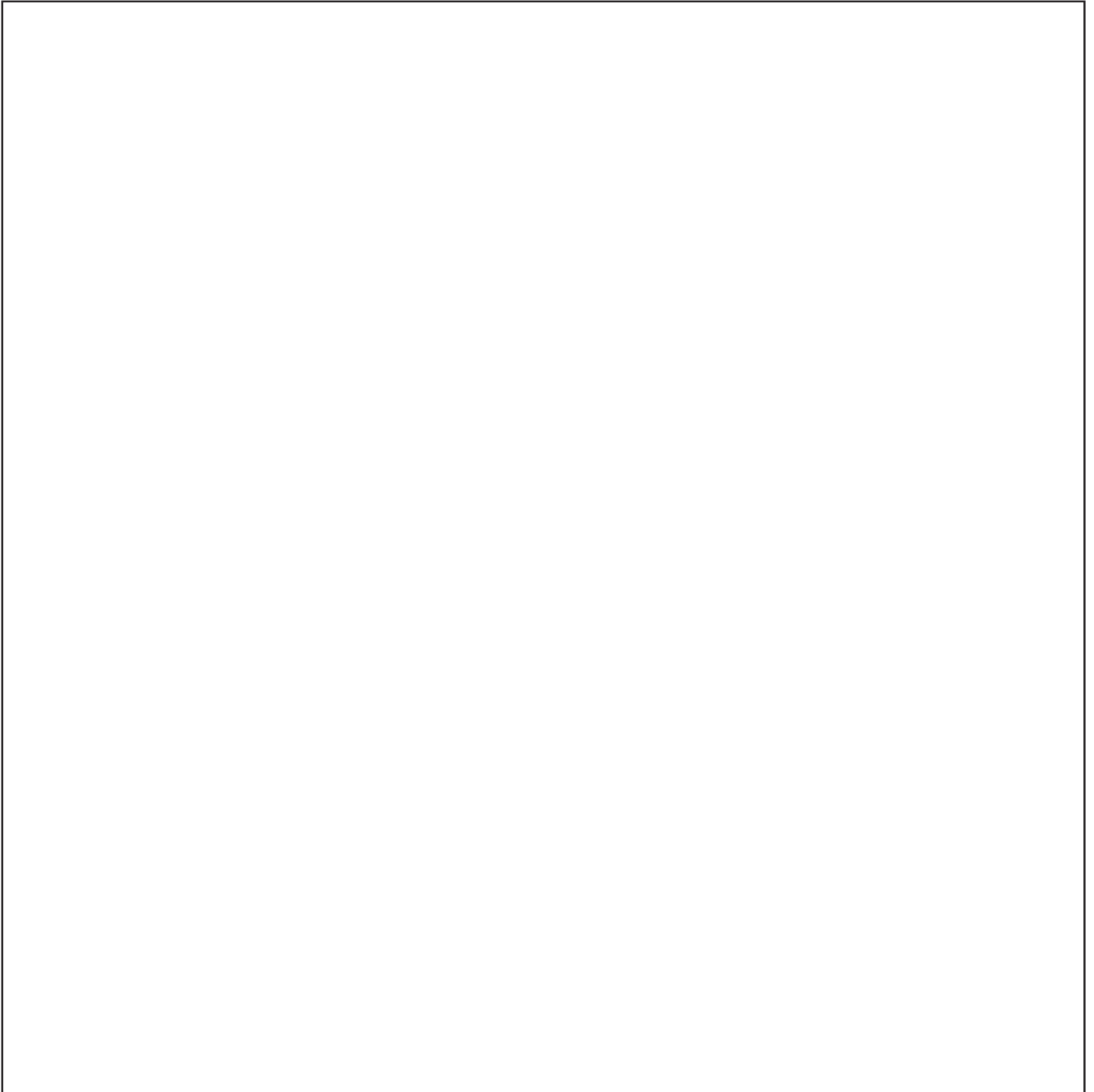
7. Do you think Halloween was enjoyable for the Europeans?

8. List ways in which Halloween is celebrated today.

9. Do you enjoy Halloween? Why or why not?

Questions

10. Draw a detailed Halloween scene from when it first began.



Answers

1. Where did the Celts live?
The Celts lived in Ireland and Northern France.
2. What was All Saints' Day also known as?
All Saints' Day was also known as All Hallows.
3. How did the Europeans ward off evil spirits?
The Europeans warded off evil spirits by dressing in frightening costumes to confuse the spirits into thinking they were also dead.
4. Define the word 'superstitious'.
Superstitious means to believe in the power of things to bring about good or bad events when there's no logical reason to link the two.
5. Describe the origins of trick or treating.
People were afraid that spirits would come into their homes. They left bowls of food outside their doors to deter the ghosts from entering. People began to get less fearful of the ghosts and started eating the nice treats themselves.
6. Why did the Americans use pumpkins for lanterns and not turnips?
Americans used pumpkins instead of turnips for lanterns because pumpkins were more common.
7. Do you think Halloween was enjoyable for the Europeans?
No, because they were superstitious and were frightened of the spirits harming them for one night of the year.
8. List ways in which Halloween is celebrated today.
People dress up in costumes, attend a Halloween disco or party at school, go trick-or-treating and decorate front lawns with a spooky theme.
9. Do you enjoy Halloween? Why or why not?
Responses will vary.
10. Draw a detailed Halloween scene from when it first began.
Responses will vary.

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Like many other holidays, Halloween has evolved throughout history. Over 2000 years ago, the Celts lived in Ireland and Northern France. This time of year signified the end of the summer and the beginning of winter and was celebrated with a harvest festival. They called the festival Samhain (sow-in) and this translated to 'the end of summer'. They believed that the festival would make their gods happy so they would protect them and their crops during the long, hard winter that was to come. They also celebrated New Year's Day on 1st November. They believed that the night before the New Year (31st October) was a time when the living and the dead came together on earth.



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Dressing up on Halloween

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How Trick-or-Treating Began



Many years ago, people were extremely superstitious. They were not only afraid of meeting ghosts on Halloween night; they were also terrified that ghosts or spirits would come into their homes. They began leaving bowls of food outside their doors to deter the ghosts from entering. Over time, people began to get less fearful of the ghosts and started eating the nice treats themselves. Some people

say that this was the start of trick-or-treating. There are other stories that claim trick-or-treating started when people started giving cakes in return for prayers being said for their dead relatives on All Souls' Day in England. Instead of just getting cakes, children began visiting their neighbours to look for food, drinks and money as well.

How Halloween Was Brought to Australia

The tradition of Halloween was brought to Australia by the immigrating Europeans. Some of the traditions changed slightly. For example, on Halloween in Europe, some people would carry lanterns made from turnips. In America, pumpkins were more common than turnips. Americans began putting candles inside them and using them as lanterns. That is why you see jack-o'-lanterns today. Jack-o'-lanterns have evolved from being a lantern used in America to a popular Halloween decoration around the world, including Australia.



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Is Halloween Relevant to Australia?

Some people believe that Halloween shouldn't be celebrated in Australia. This is because over the years it has become commercialised and is sometimes viewed as primarily an American holiday. Some people also believe it is just an excuse to play pranks and cause trouble in the neighbourhood. For example, if a person does not give trick or treaters a lolly, they sometimes have eggs or toilet paper thrown at their house. There are valid points for both sides of this argument. What's YOUR opinion?

Questions

1. What was Samhain?

2. Why did Samhain occur?

3. How did Halloween get its name?

4. Why did people dress up in scary costumes?

5. Describe how jack 'o lanterns came to be used.

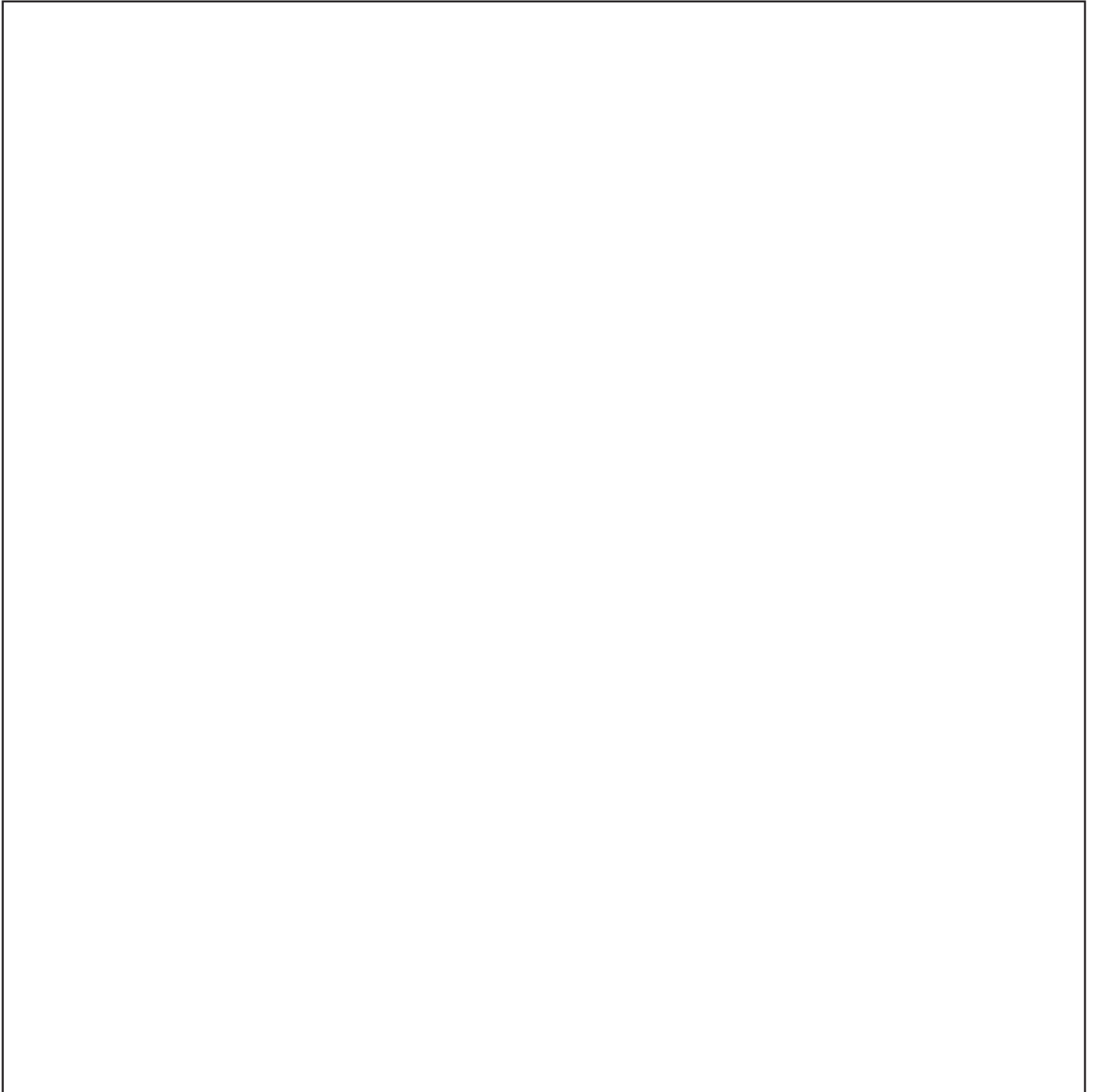
6. List three Halloween traditions in Australia.

7. List reasons some people think Halloween doesn't belong in Australia.

8. Do you think Halloween should be celebrated in Australia? Why or why not?

Questions

9. Design spooky Halloween decorations for your front lawn.



Answers

1. What was Samhain?
Samhain was a harvest festival which signified the end of the summer and the beginning of winter.
2. Why did Samhain occur?
Samhain occurred because they believed it would make their gods happy so they would protect them and their crops during the long, hard winter.
3. How did Halloween get its name?
The 1st November was 'All Saints' Day', also called 'All Hallows'. The night before All Hallows was named Hallows' Eve. Later, it changed to Halloween.
4. Why did people dress up in scary costumes?
They dressed in scary costumes to confuse the spirits into thinking they were also dead and therefore protect themselves.
5. Describe how jack 'o lanterns came to be used.
On Halloween, in Europe, some people would carry lanterns made from turnips. In America, pumpkins were more common than turnips. Jack-o'-lanterns have changed from being a lantern used in America to a popular Halloween decoration.
6. List three Halloween traditions in Australia.
Halloween traditions in Australia are dressing in costume, trick-or-treating, going to a disco or party, bobbing for apples, decorating your front lawn with a spooky theme.
7. List reasons some people think Halloween doesn't belong in Australia.
Some people think Halloween doesn't belong in Australia because it's commercialised, American and an excuse to cause trouble and play pranks.
8. Do you think Halloween should be celebrated in Australia? Why or why not?
Responses will vary.
9. Design spooky Halloween decorations for your front lawn.
Responses will vary.