

# **HALLOWEEN SPECIAL The origins of Halloween**



Subject: SESE History Strand: Local Studies Unit: Feasts and Festivals in the Past





It is widely believed that many Halloween traditions originated from an ancient pagan festival celebrated by Celtic people over 2,000 years ago. This festival was called **Samhain** and was celebrated around the 1st of November. The Samhain festival marked the end of the harvest season. They celebrated the season with bonfires and feasting.







In the 800's, the Christian church established a new holiday called All Saints' Day. All Saints' Day was also called **All Hallows'**. Hallow means saint.

All Saint's Day or All Hallows is celebrated on the 1st of November.







The evening before All Hallows' is the 31st of October. This day was known as All Hallows' Eve by the Christian church.

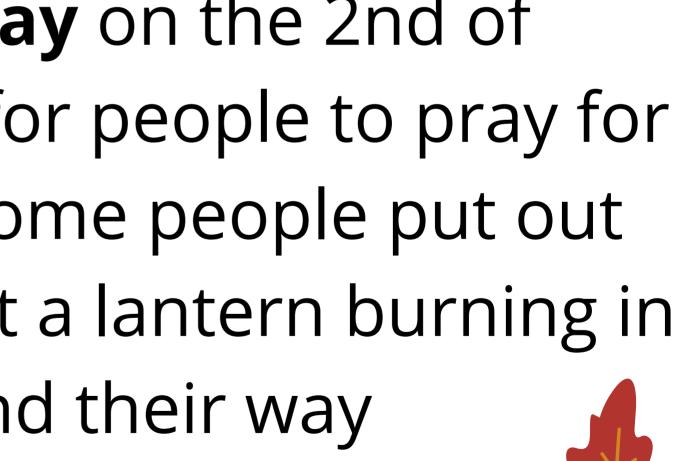
It became abbreviated to All Hallow e'en and eventually shortened to **Halloween**.







The church also added All Souls' Day on the 2nd of November. This day was set aside for people to pray for friends and family who had died. Some people put out food for their ancestors, or they left a lantern burning in the window so that ghosts could find their way home for the night.









Allhallowtide is a time for honoring the saints and praying for the recently departed souls who have yet to reach Heaven.

- All Hallows Eve 31st October
- All Saints' Day 1st November
- All Souls' Day 2nd November





## Questions:

Q1. Where does the word Halloween come from? Q2. Celtic people celebrated a festival around the 1st of November to mark the end of the harvest season. What is the name of this festival? Q3. What is the name of the day before All Saints' Day? Q4. What is the name of the day after All Saints' Day? Q5. Think of a Halloween tradition and research its origin. You could use WorldBook Online encyclopedia to help you with your research.



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### **Answers:**

- Q1. From the Christian church.
- All Hallows' Eve became abbreviated to All Hallow e'en and eventually shortened to Halloween
- Q2. Samhain
- Q3. All Hallows Eve 31st October (Halloween)
- Q4. All Souls Day 2nd November
- Q5. Tradition: Jack-o'-lanterns
- Origin: Linked to an Irish legend. Jack-o'-lantern originally represented spirits present in the dark, or souls released from Christian purgatory. Link: https://www.worldbookonline.com/studentnew/#/article/home/ar243460/outline/h6



