



ESL Podcast 73 – Halloween

GLOSSARY

to dress up – to wear special clothes; to wear clothing that one does not wear on an ordinary day

* Jerica dressed up in a fancy blue dress when she went to the formal dinner.

costume – clothing that is meant to make the person wearing it look like someone or something else

* Everett needed a white lab coat to complete his costume of a doctor.

to pick out – to choose; to select

* Lavonne needed to pick out which shampoo to buy before she could finish shopping.

odds and ends – random items; various unrelated objects

* The box holds many odds and ends, and Norris needs to sort through it to find out what is in there.

trick-or-treating – a tradition on Halloween, in which children visit neighbors' homes while wearing costumes and ask for candy by saying the phrase "trick or treat"

* Every Halloween, the kids went trick-or-treating and did not come home until they had filled their bags with candy from their neighbors.

to (one's) heart's content – until one is happy and satisfied; until one has done or had as much as one wanted

* Alejandra was very thirsty, so when she found a drinking fountain, she drank water to her heart's content.

pumpkin – a vegetable that is large, round, and orange, and is ripe and ready to be eaten in autumn

* Mrs. Escobedo grew pumpkins and used them to bake pies, cakes, and bread.

pumpkin patch – an area of land where pumpkins grow on green vines

* The pumpkin patch was damaged during the storm, and none of the pumpkins that were growing there managed to survive.

jack-o-lantern – a pumpkin with shapes cut out of the skin in a pattern that looks like a face; a pumpkin that one cuts open, removes the seeds from, and cuts decorative shapes into

* Judson cut a scary face into his jack-o-lantern, but his sister cut a silly face into her jack-o-lantern.



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to scoop out – to remove something soft and/or wet from the inside of a container using a spoon or spoon-like object

* Lorena scooped out ice cream and place it into bowls.

to carve – to cut; to create a shape or design by cutting that shape into something solid

* The artist chipped and cut away at the block of ice until he carved the figure of a swan.

doorstep – a top step that connects the front door of a house to the front yard or sidewalk outside

* Shaunta tripped on her way into the house because she forgot to step up onto the doorstep.

bobbing for apples – a game in which several apples are placed into a large container of water, and people try to remove the apples from the water by biting the apples with their teeth, instead of grabbing the apples with their hands

* Darren played a game of bobbing for apples but didn't get any apples.

haunted house – a building or enclosed space in which one group of people try to trick another group of people into being scared

* The haunted house was dark and full of people who would jump out and surprise anyone who walked past, causing many visitors to scream.

blast – a very fun experience; a very happy and exciting event

* The food and music at the party were both great, and overall, the party was a blast.



CULTURE NOTE

Summer Camp

Each summer, millions of American children spend from one week to two months living away from home at a place we usually just call “camp” or “summer camp.” These children, mostly sons and daughters of middle- and upper-class parents, live with other children and adults who “supervise” (watch over) them. The adults are usually called “camp counselors,” and the children are called “campers.” These camps “traditionally” (typically in the past) taught campers skills like boating, making a fire, and “crafts” (making small objects by hand). Summer camp was a good way to give your child something entertaining and a little educational, and to give yourself a few weeks of vacation for the “chores” (jobs; duties) of parenting.

The bad economy in the U.S. beginning in the late 2000’s has meant that fewer students are attending summer camps, and those camps that want to “survive” (continue to exist) have to offer something more than just making “s’mores” (a traditional summer camp food made from chocolate, marshmallows, and graham crackers). A 2011 article in the *New York Times* talked about the different kinds of “specialty” camps that you can now send your child to. There are camps for all kinds of special interests, from “film making” (movie making) to computer game development to playing soccer. Especially popular among rich parents are camps that will “supposedly” (apparently) help your child prepare for college, often “run by” (operated by) the same expensive colleges parents want their children to eventually attend.

Camp counselors are no longer just college students who need a little extra money in the summertime. Now professionals are “brought in” (hired; employed) to teach the children those special skills.

How much do these camps cost? Some are more than \$1,000 a week.



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPTION

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 73 – Halloween.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 73. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Trick-or-treat! Today's podcast is all about Halloween. Let's get started.

[start of story]

As a kid, I always loved Halloween. I liked dressing up in a costume that I had picked out at the store or, more often, that I had made out of odds and ends at home. The best part was going trick-or-treating. Some years, I went with my brothers and sisters. When I got a little older, I went with my friends.

We would go to all the houses in our neighborhood and knock on the door or ring the doorbell. When the door opened, we would yell, "Trick or treat!" We never played tricks and always got treats. The neighbors would put some candy in our bags, and we would go home at the end of the night and eat to our hearts' content.

To get ready for Halloween, my parents would buy pumpkins from the market or from the makeshift pumpkin patches on the side of the road so we could make jack-o'-lanterns. We'd take a pumpkin, cut off the top, scoop out the seeds from the inside, and carve a face on the front. Sometimes we carved a scary face and sometimes we carved funny ones. At night, we would put candles inside the jack-o'-lanterns and put them on our doorstep.

One year we had a Halloween party. Our friends came over dressed up as witches, ghosts, superheroes, cartoon characters, and anything else you can think of. We played party games like Bobbing for Apples, and we even created a haunted house in our backyard. It was a blast! Halloween is truly a holiday for kids.

[end of story]

Today we are talking about Halloween, which is a very popular tradition or custom here in the United States. It's not an official holiday – it's not like Christmas or New Year's where you don't have to go to work – but it is very widely celebrated in the U.S. The name "Halloween" is a combination of two



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words: “hallow” (hallow) and “een” (een). “Hallow” is an old word for “holy,” and “een” is an old English word that means “eve” (eve). The “eve” of something is the night before something.

In the Catholic Church, November 1st is called “All Saints Day,” or sometimes “All Hallows Day.” So, the night before All Hallows Day is All Hallows Eve, which ended up being shortened to simply “Halloween.” “Halloween,” then, always falls on, or takes place on, the 31st of October. Halloween is a very old holiday that began early in European history – some people think even before the days of the Romans. At the time, people would have celebrations associated with the dead.

Originally, the idea was that for one night, the dead would come back to life and would go around looking for food. So, people would leave food outside their houses as gifts for the dead people. People would wear masks over their faces to disguise themselves. A “mask” is something you wear over your face so that people can't recognize you. The verb “to disguise” (disguise) means to change your appearance so people don't know who you are. But nowadays, at least in the United States, Halloween is a holiday for children to dress up in costumes and walk from house to house, getting candy from their neighbors.

In the story, I say that “when I was a kid, I liked dressing up in a costume that I had picked out at the store.” “To dress up” is a two-word phrasal verb that usually means to wear your nicest clothing. “I'm going to dress up for the wedding this Saturday. I'm going to wear a suit and a tie.” But “to dress up” can also mean to put on a costume. A “costume” (costume) is clothing that makes you look like a different person. So, you would get a police officer costume if you wanted to dress up as a police officer.

We often made costumes out of “odds and ends.” “Odds and ends” are just various things you have in your house: paper bags, material, string, whatever you happen to have. In my family, we would often make our costumes from odds and ends, from whatever it is that was in the house at that time. Nowadays, people go out and buy costumes. Sometimes, they can be very expensive. There are also stores that will rent costumes to you just for that day.

In the story, I say that the best part of Halloween was “going trick or treating.” “Trick (trick) or treat” (treat) is what children say, or yell, when the neighbor opens the door. The children walk up to the door, they knock on the door, and they yell, “Trick-or-treat.” What they are really saying is that either they will play a trick on the neighbor or they will get a treat.



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A “trick” here means something naughty, something slightly bad that you would do to someone. We have the expression “to play a trick on someone,” which means to deceive or fool someone. A “treat” is a small surprise gift – often food, and in this case, candy. So, the neighbors are supposed to give the children a treat if they don't want the children to play a trick on them. We call this tradition “trick or treating.”

There is another story about the history of why we say, “Trick or treat,” which is that children used to have to do something entertaining in order to get a treat. In this case, a trick could mean a song, a game, or something involved with magic. But in any case, at least nowadays in the United States, kids do not perform tricks. Instead, they knock on the door and they expect to get candy. So, if you live in an area, in a neighborhood, with children as I do, you have to go out and buy some candy to give to the children who come trick-or-treating or you will be a very unpopular neighbor.

After trick-or-treating, I say that we would go home with our candy and “eat to our hearts' content.” “To do something to your hearts' content” (content) means to do something for as long as you want to do it, to do something until you are satisfied. So, “to eat to your hearts' content” means to eat as much as you want with no restrictions, not stopping for any reason.

I said that before Halloween, “My parents would buy pumpkins from the market or from the makeshift pumpkin patches on the side of the road.” A “pumpkin” (pumpkin) is a round orange vegetable that is very important for the celebration of Halloween. You can get a pumpkin either from the grocery store – from the market – or from what is called a “pumpkin patch” (patch). A “pumpkin patch” is basically a field where they have pumpkins for sale, often where the pumpkins themselves are grown.

The word “makeshift” (makeshift) is an adjective meaning something that is temporary. A “makeshift pumpkin patch” is something that they put together just for Halloween, and then when Halloween is over, they take it apart. This happens a lot during holidays. You will see temporary or makeshift places where you can buy Christmas trees during the Christmas season. For Halloween, you can buy pumpkins. Even in the city you will find these makeshift areas, usually on an empty parking lot where people sell things that are for that particular holiday.

My parents bought pumpkins so that we could make jack-o'-lanterns. “Making jack-o'-lanterns,” also called “carving a pumpkin,” is another Halloween tradition. You carefully cut the top off of the pumpkin and then you scoop out the seeds from the inside. “To scoop (scoop) out” means to scrape out or to remove.



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When carving a pumpkin, you first need to scoop out the seeds that are inside the pumpkin. After you've done that, you then carve a face on your pumpkin. "To carve" (carve) means to cut something very carefully or precisely. So, you carefully take a knife and you carve a face on your pumpkin. You make holes for the eyes, the nose, the mouth, and so forth. You can make a happy, smiling face or a mean, scary face.

The carved pumpkin is usually called a "jack-o'-lantern" (jack-o'-lantern). A "lantern" is something like a lamp – when you put a candle inside a carved pumpkin, the light shines out through the holes of the face like a light or a lantern. You then put your "jack-o'-lantern" on your doorstep. A "doorstep" (doorstep) is the step or area in front of your house near the front door. The door of the house is often above the level of the ground, so you have to have stairs, or steps, in order to get up to the door.

I said that "one year, we had a Halloween party," meaning the Halloween party was at our house. A "Halloween party" is often a costume party in which everyone dresses up in a costume. At our party, people came dressed up as witches, ghosts, superheroes, and cartoon characters. A "witch" (witch) is a woman who is said to have magical powers. A man who has magical powers is called a "warlock" (warlock). A "ghost" (ghost) is the spirit of someone who has died. A "superhero" is someone like Batman or Superman. And "cartoon characters" are characters like Bugs Bunny and Mickey Mouse. On Halloween, you can dress up as all sorts of things or people.

At our Halloween party, we played party games like "Bobbing for Apples." "Bobbing (bobbing) for Apples" is a traditional game at many American Halloween parties. To play, you fill a large container, such as a bucket, full of water, and you put apples in the water. The players in the game then have to get the apples out of the water without using their hands. So, you would put your head in the water and try to remove an apple by biting with your teeth, which is harder to do than it sounds. That's called "Bobbing for Apples."

I said that we even made a "haunted house" in our backyard. Something that is "haunted" (haunted) is something that is thought to be influenced by, or affected by, some sort of spiritual or magical presence. A "haunted house" is a house that is supposed to have spirits or ghosts living in it. Creating a haunted house is another tradition associated with Halloween. We had a haunted house in our backyard, which is the area behind your house.



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Finally, I said that our Halloween party was a blast. “It was a blast” (blast) is an informal expression meaning it was a lot of fun.

Now let’s listen to our story, this time at a normal speed.

[start of story]

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[end of story]

Thanks to our fantastic scriptwriter, Dr. Lucy Tse, for her hard work, and thanks to you for listening.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Come back and listen to us again right here on ESL Podcast.

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