

Name:

Date:



# **HOW DID HALLOWEEN START?**



## **The Celtic Festival That Started It All**

Halloween began more than 2,000 years ago with an ancient group of people called the Celts, who lived in Ireland, the United Kingdom, and parts of France. Every year on October 31st, they celebrated a festival called Samhain (pronounced "SOW-in"), which means "end of summer." This day marked the end of the warm harvest season and the beginning of the cold, dark winter. The Celts believed that on this night, the wall between the world of the living and the world of the dead became very thin. They thought ghosts and spirits could walk freely among people. To stay safe and honor their gods, the Celts lit huge bonfires and offered crops and animals as gifts. They also wore animal skins and masks to hide from wandering spirits, told spooky stories, and played games to guess what the future might hold.

## **How Halloween Got Its Name and Traditions?**

As time passed, the Celts became Christian, and November 1st was named All Saints' Day, a holiday to honor saints. The night before – October 31st – was called All-Hallows Eve, and over many years, this name shortened to Halloween. Many of the old Samhain traditions continued in new ways. People still dress in costumes, but now it's for fun – it started as a way to trick ghosts into thinking they were spirits too. Jack-o'-lanterns began in Ireland with carved turnips to scare away a lost soul named Jack, who carried a glowing light after being banned from both heaven and hell. When Irish settlers came to America, they switched to pumpkins because they were larger and easier to carve. Trick-or-treating started when people left food outside to calm spirits; later, children went door-to-door asking for treats. Even though Halloween has changed, these traditions keep the ancient magic alive!



Name:

# HOW DID HALLOWEEN START?

Date:

1-When and why did the Celts celebrate Samhain?

---

---

2-How did the name "Halloween" come from a Christian holiday?

---

---

3-Explain two Halloween traditions and where they came from.

---

---

4-Why do you think the Celts wore animal skins and masks during Samhain?

---

---

5-How did the tradition of carving lanterns change when people moved to America?

---

---

---

