

Unit 4 ♦ Boo!

teacher's page

Objective: In small groups, students will create Halloween stories enlivened by the use of newly-learned "Halloween verbs."

Materials: *(Optional)* pumpkins for carving and small candles

Steps:

1. *Ask students to call out as many words connected with Halloween as they can. Write these on the board. Then add (and define) some colorful *verbs* associated with this night, such as *scream, screech, howl, shriek, wail, groan, and moan*.
2. Distribute the handout. Read together, pointing out the author's carefully selected verbs.
3. Divide the students into groups of three. They will follow the directions at the bottom of the handout, as they spin their Halloween tales.
4. *(Optional)* The following class, provide pumpkins for the students to carve. Then, place the lit jack-o-lanterns around the class, and turn out the lights. By flashlight, read the stories written by the students.

* You may wish to copy the Halloween handout in the Appendix at some point during this lesson.

Boo!

student handout



Owl said,
“Door, why do you slam?”
Door said,
“It is a dark and stormy night.
Ghost wails
Stool thumps
Broom swishes
Candle flickers
Fire smokes
Window rattles
Floor creaks
and so I slam.”
Owl said,
“Then I shall hoot.”
And Owl began to HOOT.

from *Old Devil Wind* by Bill Martin, Jr.

Do you like this passage? How do the author’s words create pictures for you as you read?

Including at least three new words you learned in this class, work with your group to create a scary Halloween story. Begin, “One dark and stormy night...”

Unit 4 ♦ Halloween

student handout



Turnips into Pumpkins

A very long time ago, Druids, priests from England and France, believed that ghosts of the dead came to harm people one night of every year. People feared these teachings, so they hid behind costumes and masks to keep their identity secret from the evil spirits. Also, to frighten away these spirits, people hollowed out turnips, carved scary faces into them, and put them in their windows.

In 610 A.D., the Catholic Church chose November 1st as All Saints' Day. The old Druid beliefs and the Catholic special day combined to become Halloween. Halloween means *hallowed*—or holy—evening. It always falls on October 31st, and it is celebrated in many countries around the world.

In the United States, children visit houses wearing costumes (witches, skeletons, pirates, princesses, storybook characters) and asking for candy. Some adults dress in costumes and attend parties. Halloween has become the second most-decorated holiday in America. (The first is Christmas.) Houses, malls, and stores dress in the colors of Halloween: black for dark night and orange for autumn and pumpkins. Pumpkins, carved into jack-o-lanterns and lit with candles inside, sit on front porches and in windows.

Why don't we still carve turnips as ancient people did, and where did pumpkins originate for Halloween? In North America, pumpkins were larger than turnips, easier to carve, and more available.