



Who Owns Halloween?

Read the passage and answer the questions. (CEFR B1–B2)

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1 Halloween is often described as an ancient Celtic festival, but historians are more careful. Many popular claims, such as the idea that Samhain was the Celtic New Year, were first suggested by scholars in the late nineteenth century. The historian Ronald Hutton has called the evidence for this flimsy. What we can say is that the modern holiday is a mixture of Gaelic seasonal customs, Christian feast days, and later inventions.



2 The holiday also shows how culture travels in surprising directions. Irish and Scottish immigrants carried it to North America, where it became a huge commercial event. From there, it was exported back to Europe. In Germany, a public relations adviser for the costume industry has claimed that companies began promoting Halloween after carnival was cancelled in 1991 during the Gulf War. In France, a mobile phone campaign in the late 1990s helped make it fashionable.

3 Not everyone welcomes these changes. Some Australians complain that Halloween is simply American culture arriving through supermarkets and social media. Others argue that every society borrows rituals and gradually makes them its own, as Australians have done with daytime trick-or-treating. Perhaps the real question is not where Halloween came from, but what each community decides to make of it.

Comprehension

1. What is the main idea of the passage?

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| ☐ (A) Halloween is an ancient Celtic New Year festival. | ☐ (B) Halloween should only be celebrated in North America. |
| ☐ (C) Halloween's history is mixed, and each place reshapes it in its own way. | ☐ (D) Companies invented Halloween in 1991. |

2. According to the passage, who first suggested that Samhain was the Celtic New Year?

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| ☐ (A) Scholars in the late nineteenth century | ☐ (B) Irish immigrants in North America |
| ☐ (C) A public relations adviser in Germany | ☐ (D) The historian Ronald Hutton |

3. What helped make Halloween fashionable in France?

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| ☐ (A) The Gulf War | ☐ (B) Daytime trick-or-treating |
| ☐ (C) Supermarkets and social media | ☐ (D) A mobile phone campaign in the late 1990s |

4. What can we guess from the fact that Hutton called the evidence flimsy?

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| ☐ (A) Hutton thinks Halloween started in America. | ☐ (B) The idea that Samhain was the Celtic New Year may not be true. |
| ☐ (C) There is a lot of strong proof about Samhain. | ☐ (D) Historians do not study Halloween. |

5. In paragraph 1, what does flimsy mean in the evidence for this flimsy?

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| ☐ (A) Weak and not convincing | ☐ (B) Very old |
| ☐ (C) Easy to find | ☐ (D) Written in another language |

6. Why does the writer end with the question about what each community decides to make of Halloween?

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| ☐ (A) To prove that Halloween came from Ireland | ☐ (B) To say that Australians should stop celebrating Halloween |
| ☐ (C) To explain how to trick-or-treat in the daytime | ☐ (D) To move the focus from Halloween's origin to how people use it today |



Vocabulary, Paraphrase & Summary

Match the words with the definitions. Then rewrite and summarize.

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| 1. scholar | a. a person who comes to live in a new country |
| 2. evidence | b. connected with buying and selling to make money |
| 3. mixture | c. to send goods or ideas to another country |
| 4. immigrant | d. a set of actions that people always do in the same way, often at a special time |
| 5. commercial | e. slowly, over a long time |
| 6. export | f. a person who studies a subject in great detail, often at a university |
| 7. ritual | g. facts or information that show something is true |
| 8. gradually | h. a combination of different things |

Paraphrase — say it in your own words

1. “What we can say is that the modern holiday is a mixture of Gaelic seasonal customs, Christian feast days, and later inventions.”

Hint: Start with We know, and use mixes and things added later.

2. “Irish and Scottish immigrants carried it to North America, where it became a huge commercial event.”

Hint: Use brought and turned into a big business.

3. “Perhaps the real question is not where Halloween came from, but what each community decides to make of it.”

Hint: Use Maybe, more important, and change it into.

Summary

Summarize the passage in about 50 words.



Debate & Opinion Essay

Prepare for a debate. Then write your opinion (100–150 words).

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Motion: Halloween in Japan is just a business event.

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- In Japan, Halloween started with events by a toy shop in 1983 and a theme park in 1997.
- In Germany and France too, companies helped spread Halloween, so business is the main driver.
- Many people in Japan join for costumes and shopping, not for the meaning of the night.

Add your own reason:

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- Every society borrows rituals and makes them its own, as Australians did with daytime trick-or-treating.
- Japanese people can connect Halloween to Obon, when the spirits of the dead are believed to come home.
- In Japan, Halloween grew as a costume event for adults, so people use it for their own fun and self-expression, not only for shopping.

Add your own reason:

Opinion	<i>I believe / I think that ...</i> _____
Reason 1	<i>First, ... For example, ...</i> _____ _____
Reason 2	<i>Second, ... In fact, ...</i> _____ _____
Counter	<i>Some people say ... However, ...</i> _____
Conclusion	<i>In conclusion, ...</i> _____