Halloween Trivia for Adult Gatherings

Bring spooky stories, animal facts, seasonal customs, and film history to an adult Halloween gathering.

Host guide / Letter / holiday trivia / 15–25 minutes

Read the guide privately first if this activity has hidden answers. Print single-sided at Actual size / 100%. Cut only sheets marked CARDS. Keep answer keys with the host.

What you need

- Printed question cards or a host screen
- Pens and score sheet
- A timer (optional)
- One host or a reader for each team

How to run it

1. Choose a host and keep the key out of sight.
2. Make teams of two to five or play individually.
3. Read each prompt and allow 20–30 seconds for discussion.
4. Award one point for a correct answer; accept equivalent wording.
5. Read the explanation after scoring.
6. Play all cards or choose a section for a short round.

Folklore and calendar

Halloween’s date and name sit within layered seasonal history. The explanations avoid reducing the holiday to a single origin story and distinguish it from related observances.

- Use careful cultural wording.
- Keep place and period attached to historical claims.

Animals and natural history

Spiders and bats are familiar symbols, but the biology questions offer grounded surprises. They work well as an accessible opening round.

- Accept “arachnid” for spider classification.
- Explain that echolocation and vision can coexist.

Books and poems

Mary Shelley, Edgar Allan Poe, and Bram Stoker shaped enduring horror stories. These questions ask recognizable authorship and publication facts.

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- Accept commonly used author names.

- Use explanation for date context.

Classic film

Early film adaptations helped establish images many people now recognize. The cards distinguish the 1910 Edison film from the familiar 1931 movie image.

- Do not treat the film image as the original novel’s description.

- Invite another adaptation after scoring.

Food and party customs

Home parties and varied treats preceded the widespread popularity of packaged candy. The timeline describes change rather than a universal experience.

- Ask about local customs only if guests want to share.

- Do not assume all guests celebrate Halloween.

Host and print notes

Use all questions for a longer trivia night or one section for a short activity. The source links help the host resolve disputes calmly.

- Keep the key out of sight.

- Allow teams to pass.

- Use no-score play for community groups.

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CARDS / Halloween Trivia for Adult Gatherings

EXT_TRIVIA_HALLOWEEN-001 / Calendar

On what date is Halloween observed in the United States?

EXT_TRIVIA_HALLOWEEN-002 / Calendar

What Christian feast day falls on November 1 and is connected to All Hallows Eve?

EXT_TRIVIA_HALLOWEEN-003 / Seasonal history

What Celtic harvest-season observance is often discussed in histories of Halloween?

EXT_TRIVIA_HALLOWEEN-004 / Cross-cultural traditions

Which holiday is related to Halloween but distinct from it, according to the Library of Congress?

EXT_TRIVIA_HALLOWEEN-005 / Plants

Which root vegetable was used to make lanterns in Ireland before pumpkin carving became common in the United States?

EXT_TRIVIA_HALLOWEEN-006 / Plants

Why did pumpkins become a practical choice for jack-o’-lanterns in the United States?

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CARDS / Halloween Trivia for Adult Gatherings

EXT_TRIVIA_HALLOWEEN-007 / Animals

How many legs does a spider have?

EXT_TRIVIA_HALLOWEEN-008 / Animals

Are spiders insects?

EXT_TRIVIA_HALLOWEEN-009 / Animals

Are bats blind?

EXT_TRIVIA_HALLOWEEN-010 / Animals

What is the sound-based navigation method used by many bats called?

EXT_TRIVIA_HALLOWEEN-011 / Literature

Who wrote Frankenstein, first published in 1818?

EXT_TRIVIA_HALLOWEEN-012 / Literature

What subtitle appears in Frankenstein’s original title?

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CARDS / Halloween Trivia for Adult Gatherings

EXT_TRIVIA_HALLOWEEN-013 / Literature

Who wrote the poem “The Raven”?

EXT_TRIVIA_HALLOWEEN-014 / Literature

Which newspaper first published “The Raven” in 1845?

EXT_TRIVIA_HALLOWEEN-015 / Literature and film

Who created Count Dracula in the 1897 novel?

EXT_TRIVIA_HALLOWEEN-016 / Film

Which actor played Dracula in Tod Browning’s 1931 film?

EXT_TRIVIA_HALLOWEEN-017 / Film

Which company made the 1910 short called the first film version of Frankenstein?

EXT_TRIVIA_HALLOWEEN-018 / Film

What visual detail became associated with the monster in the 1931 Frankenstein film?

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CARDS / Halloween Trivia for Adult Gatherings

EXT_TRIVIA_HALLOWEEN-019 / Food

Before packaged candy became common, what might children receive as Halloween treats?

EXT_TRIVIA_HALLOWEEN-020 / Food

In which decade did packaged candy become increasingly common for Halloween?

EXT_TRIVIA_HALLOWEEN-021 / Party customs

What was a major focus of many early-20th-century Halloween gatherings?

EXT_TRIVIA_HALLOWEEN-022 / Folklore

Which familiar animal was often pictured with witches in Halloween folklore?

EXT_TRIVIA_HALLOWEEN-023 / Costumes

What term describes dressing in disguise with a mask or costume for a seasonal celebration?

EXT_TRIVIA_HALLOWEEN-024 / Customs

Which decade does folklorist Tad Tuleja identify for the emergence of American trick-or-treating?

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Host answer key

Keep this section separate from player cards. Accept equivalent wording where the meaning matches.

01. October 31.

The Library of Congress connects Halloween with All Hallows Eve, the evening before November 1.

02. All Saints Day.

The Library of Congress describes All Hallows Eve as the eve of All Saints Day.

03. Samhain.

The Library of Congress describes Halloween history as involving Celtic Samhain and later Christian observances that blended over time.

04. Día de Muertos (Day of the Dead).

The Library of Congress describes it as a distinct holiday rooted in Indigenous Mexican ancestor traditions and Catholic observances.

05. Turnips.

Smithsonian Gardens explains the use of turnips and other root vegetables in Irish lantern traditions.

06. They were easier to find and carve than the root vegetables used in Ireland.

Smithsonian Gardens describes pumpkins as plentiful and easier to carve in the U.S. context.

07. Eight.

The Smithsonian distinguishes eight-legged arachnids such as spiders from six-legged insects.

08. No, they are arachnids.

The Smithsonian teaching resource uses leg count and body structure to distinguish arachnids from insects.

09. No. Bats have vision, including vision useful in low light.

The U.S. Geological Survey says bats are not blind and have sensitive eyes.

10. Echolocation.

The USGS bat audio resource documents calls and returning echoes used by bats.

11. Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley.

The Library of Congress book record names Shelley as the novel’s author.

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12. The Modern Prometheus.

The Library of Congress record gives the full title Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus.

13. Edgar Allan Poe.

The Library of Congress identifies Poe as the poem’s author.

14. The New York Evening Mirror.

The Library of Congress dates its first publication to January 29, 1845, in that newspaper.

15. Bram Stoker.

The Library of Congress traces the character to Stoker’s 1897 novel.

16. Bela Lugosi.

The Library of Congress identifies Lugosi as the star of the 1931 film.

17. The Edison Company.

The Library of Congress moving-image guide identifies Edison’s 1910 film as the first screen version.

18. A flat-topped head and neck bolts.

The Library of Congress guide traces this familiar screen image to James Whale’s 1931 film.

19. Homemade cookies, cake, popcorn balls, fruit, or nuts.

The Smithsonian documents homemade and non-candy treats in earlier Halloween customs.

20. The 1950s.

The Smithsonian article describes packaged candy becoming increasingly common from the 1950s onward.

21. Home parties and socializing, including courtship.

NMAH describes home parties as central before trick-or-treating became widespread.

22. The black cat.

The Library of Congress describes historical newspaper imagery pairing witches and black cats.

23. Masking.

The Library of Congress discusses masking and costume traditions in historical seasonal customs.

24. The 1930s.

A Library of Congress article cites Tuleja’s dating while noting that the history is complex.

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Hosting questions

Can we play without scoring?

Yes. Use the explanations to guide a relaxed group discussion.

Is this made for adults?

Yes. Familiar customs and harder details make it suitable for adult gatherings and clubs.

Can the host verify an answer?

Yes. Each factual card includes a source URL and concise explanation.

How can we shorten the game?

Choose one section and play 8–12 questions.

References

Library of Congress connects Halloween with All Hallows Eve and All Saints Day and describes historical blending of traditions.

https://guides.loc.gov/halloween/?loclr=reclnk%3Floclr%3Dblogser

Library of Congress describes Día de Muertos as related but distinct from Halloween, with Indigenous ancestor traditions and Catholic observances.

https://blogs.loc.gov/loc/2024/10/the-multinational-traditions-of-halloween-and-dia-de-los-muertos/

Smithsonian Gardens notes Irish turnip lanterns and the practical shift to pumpkins in the United States.

https://gardens.si.edu/american-garden-story/ghosts-of-pumpkins-past/

Smithsonian Natural History distinguishes six-legged insects from eight-legged arachnids such as spiders.

https://naturalhistory.si.edu/education/teaching-resources/life-science/what-insect

USGS says bats are not blind and have sensitive eyes useful in low light.

https://www.usgs.gov/faqs/are-bats-blind?page=1

USGS bat audio resource documents echolocation calls and returning echoes.

https://www.usgs.gov/media/audio/hoary-bat-lasiurus-cinereus-echo-call

Library of Congress record names Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley and gives the 1818 title Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus.

https://www.loc.gov/item/53051218/

Library of Congress dates first publication of Poe’s The Raven to the New York Evening Mirror in January 1845.

https://blogs.loc.gov/loc/2024/10/the-season-of-edgar-allan-poe-autumn-halloween-and-the-falling-darkness/

Library of Congress links Bram Stoker’s 1897 novel to Bela Lugosi’s 1931 film role.

https://blogs.loc.gov/now-see-hear/2018/11/reading-the-film-registry-dracula-1931/

Library of Congress guide identifies Edison’s 1910 Frankenstein as the first screen version and the familiar 1931 monster image.

https://guides.loc.gov/halloween/moving-image

Smithsonian NMAH discusses homemade Halloween treats and packaged candy increasingly common from the 1950s.

https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/stories/homemade-halloween-treats-colorfully-packaged-candies

NMAH says early-20th-century Halloween centered on home parties and courtship; trick-or-treating grew later.

https://americanhistory.si.edu/explore/stories/new-woman-meets-old-witch

Library of Congress article covers costume, pumpkin, trick-or-treat, witch, and black-cat customs as practices changing over time.

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https://blogs.loc.gov/headlinesandheroes/2026/10/halloween-traditions-to-follow-tricks-and-treats-of-the-season/

Library of Congress article dates modern U.S. trick-or-treating to the 1930s and contrasts this with older Thanksgiving masking.

https://blogs.loc.gov/folklife/2020/11/masking-and-mumming-for-the-holidays-thanksgiving-style/

Original AI-assisted resource with AI editorial review. Independent human playtesting and physical printing have not been completed. Answer, listen, or pass.

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