

**History of Halloween/International Pen Pals**  
Kim Stickelmaier – Western Illinois University

**I. Date to be taught, Length of lesson, Grade Level, Subject topic**

10/30/12, 35 minutes, 3rd grade, History, Culture-Holidays

**II. Illinois Learning Standards**

16.B.1b (US) Explain why individuals, groups, issues and events are celebrated with local, state or national holidays or days of recognition

16.B.1 (W) Explain the contributions of individuals and groups who are featured in biographies, legends, folklore and traditions.

**Common Core for English/Language Arts**

CC.3.SL.2 Comprehension and Collaboration: Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CC.3.W.2 Text Types and Purposes: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

**III. Objectives and Academic Language (3-4 words)**

*The students will be able to:*

Write a letter to their penpal from Myanmar informing them about Halloween.

Identify the history, traditions, and symbolism of Halloween

**Academic Language**

Traditions

Religion

Holidays

**IV. Materials needed for the lesson**

SmartNotebook “A History of Halloween” (adapted from “A Simple Halloween History for Kids” by Jennifer Maughan. Available at:

<http://www.life123.com/holidays/halloween/halloween-history-traditions/halloween-history.shtml>

Pen Pal Letter: Celebrating Halloween (Independent Practice sheet)

**V. Instructional technology used in the lesson**

Smartboard

**VI. Management techniques for student behaviors, attention-getting, classroom signals**

Class clap and repeat

Give me 5

“Eyes on the Smartboard”

**VII. Instructional Delivery**

**A. Introduce the lesson (activate prior knowledge)**

Tomorrow is Halloween, which is one of the most celebrated holidays in the United States.

Did you ever wonder about the story behind why we celebrate Halloween?

When do you think people started celebrating Halloween?

Where do you think Halloween started?

## **B. Clarify the purpose and objectives of the lesson**

I'm going to put up a story called "The History of Halloween" on the Smart board. As I read, I would like you to think about this question: (purpose for listening)

How have the traditions and celebrations of Halloween changed over time?

## **C. Provide Instruction (sequential, step-by-step procedures)**

### **1. Instruction and modeling (explain and demonstrate)**

**6.2** As I read "The History of Halloween", the students will follow along at their seats.

#### **Ancient Celts**

Centuries ago, people believed in spirits, both good and evil. They believed that spirits sometimes helped and hurt people. Some of those people who lived long ago were known as the Celts. They lived in what are now England, France and Ireland. The Halloween story begins when these people spent all spring and summer growing food to last them through the winter. When it was time to harvest all the food, the Celts held a festival to thank the good spirits for their help. This festival was called Samhain (pronounced sow-en). It was held on the day that marked the end of warm light weather and the beginning of dark cold weather-November 1. As part of the celebration, people wore costumes, told fortunes and ate plenty of good food. They also tried to keep bad spirits away.

#### **All Saint's Day**

Several hundred years later, other beliefs and religions spread to the Celtic lands. The new religion, Christianity, believed that November 1st was a day to honor people who died for their religion. Celtic people understood how November 1st was a good day to honor good spirits-they had been doing it for centuries. The day became known as "All Saint's Day" or "All Hallowmas." The night before the festival day, October 31st, became known as "All Hallows Eve" or "Hallowe'en."

#### **Early Halloween**

Because November 1 was a day for good spirits and souls, the night before was thought to be the time for bad spirits to roam free. Halloween turned into a scary time for people who believed that evil spirits would wander the earth to do mischief and cause trouble. To feel safe, people began to put lanterns in their windows and in front of their doors to scare away spirits. They made lanterns out of carved turnips and other vegetables and, in general, did not consider the time a happy Halloween.

#### **Modern Halloween**

Today's Halloween celebrations combine the joyous fun and food of the Samhain festivals of the Celts with the more creepy and spooky aspect of All Hallows Eve. Costumes, pumpkins and imaginary spooks all combine to make one of the more popular holidays in the United States where people wish each other a "Happy Halloween."

### **2. Checking for Understanding**

When and where did Halloween begin?

What was the Samhain festival?

What is All Saint's Day?

What was the original name of Halloween?

What were the first jack o' lanterns made out of?

### 3. Guided practice

#### Think, Pair, Share

After reading and checking for understanding, I will ask students to take a few minutes to think about the question:

*How have the traditions and celebrations of Halloween changed over time?*

The students will be given a few moments to think about this individually and then will be asked to share their thoughts with their elbow partner.

**6.1** After students have shared these thoughts with their partner, I will ask students to share with the class.

### 4. Independent/student practice

Your pen pals from Myanmar were able to write back to you on our class blog.

We will be going to the computer lab soon to read their responses.

You'll find out that your pen pals do not celebrate Halloween in their country.

Their teacher wants her students to learn more about cultures of different places in the world.

She told me that her students are very curious about the United States.

Today, we are going to write our pen pals letters that tell them a little bit about Halloween traditions and celebrations.

Each of you will get a sheet that says "Celebrating Halloween" at the top.

**5.2** You will write your letter to your pen pal inside the pumpkin. There is a list of topics to write about in your letter:

The day we celebrate

When/where Halloween began

Jack o' lanterns

Costumes & masks

Haunted Houses

Candy

Halloween Movies

Trick or Treating

Bobbing for apples

Please do not color the picture of your pumpkin. We don't want to color over the words, just like what happened with our book reports when you colored the bats.

When you're finished with your letter, please set in on table. If there is a lot of time left, you can pick up the Halloween History crossword puzzle to work on until its time for PE.**5.1**

### 5. Procedures you will use during the lesson to accommodate the *specific needs of the two atypical students and other students with similar needs.*

**These procedures should be inserted at the point they will be used in VII above.**

**5.1** For focus student 1, tends to finish his work early. For him and other students who finish their work quickly, I will provide a Halloween History crossword puzzle based on the story read on the Smartboard.

**5.2** For focus student 2 and other struggling learners, I will support them as they write their letters by providing topic and ideas and helping with grammar and spelling.

**6. Classroom management procedures that will be used to ensure that the lesson proceeds smoothly, efficiently and without confusion.**

**These procedures should be inserted at the point they will be used in VII above.**

**6.1** Class clap and repeat- a very affective attention getter.

**6.2** “Eyes on the Smartboard”- When I see most of the students eyes on the Smartboard, I know they’re reading to learn.

**7. Closure – show how your students will do an end-of-lesson review of the main ideas.**

Traditions, celebrations, and holidays are an important part of culture. As we found out today traditions, celebrations, and holidays change over time and can be added into other cultures.

I will be taking pictures of your pumpkins and uploading them to your blog for your pen pals to read and learn about how we celebrate Halloween.

Will be looking forward to seeing another response for our pen pals.

They will be writing back to tell us about some of their holidays that they celebrate, including New Year, the Lighting Festival that take place in Myanmar.

I’m passing out a sheet with our **blog address** on it for you to show your parents at home. There are pictures of you **working on the monster** that you can show them, as well as, the pen pal posts.

**VIII. Formative assessment tool/checklist/rubric used to measure students’ achievement of the objective(s) of the lesson. Assessment should be attached (use a variety of assessments).**

The pumpkin letters will serve as a way to measure whether the students have met the objective:

Write a letter to their pen pal from Myanmar informing them about Halloween.