

# Trick or Treat?

*Read the story.*

Hi. My name is Tony, and I remember the first Halloween I spent in the United States. I was in the sixth grade, trying my best to study as hard as I could to overcome the language barrier. Even though I studied English in my native country, Hong Kong, I was still not able to communicate in English. I realized that my classmates were talking about how they would dress on Halloween, but I didn't know what Halloween was.

That year Halloween came on Saturday. I was home most of the day studying. I didn't have a chance to go outside and see how everyone was dressed, because if I had, the following incident would not have happened.

After dinner, my parents turned off all the lights and went to their room. They did this so they could ignore the children coming to the house for treats. But they didn't tell me about it. I was in my room, so I didn't know what was happening. After a while I went out of my room to get a drink of water. I realized that the house was dark very early, and I thought that my parents were tired after a long day of work. I didn't have any brothers or sisters to come with me, so I felt very much alone in the dark house. I was not used to that. Then it happened. When I was drinking my glass of water, the doorbell rang. I looked out my window. There, standing at my front door, were four or five ghosts accompanied by a witch!

I was so scared that I started screaming and I covered myself with my blanket. I tried not to scream, but I couldn't stop. My father came running into my room asking me what was the matter. I told him about the ghosts and the witch, and he explained to me about Halloween. I was relieved after realizing the truth but I also felt embarrassed about being afraid.

That was my first experience with Halloween. Now, each year I remind my parents, weeks before Halloween, to buy candy, and when I do, my dad laughs at me about that incident.

**barrier**—Something that prevents progress

**ignore**—To take no notice of; to disregard

**ghost**—A dead spirit who returns to earth

**witch**—A woman who has magic powers

# Comprehension



**A. Tell whether these sentences are true or false.**

1. At school Tony did not understand Halloween.
2. That year Halloween took place on a school day.
3. On Halloween, children wear their regular school clothes.
4. Tony had brothers and sisters living with him.
5. On Halloween night Tony was home alone.
6. At first Tony thought there were real ghosts and a real witch at his door.
7. Tony's parents did not understand American Halloween customs.
8. Now Tony reminds his parents to have treats ready for Halloween.

**B. Answer these questions.**

1. On Halloween day why didn't Tony notice people in their costumes?
2. On Halloween night why were the lights turned off in Tony's house?
3. Why did Tony leave his bedroom?
4. What did Tony see and do when he looked out the window?
5. How did Tony feel after his father told him about Halloween?

**C. Give your opinion.**

1. Why do you think Tony's parents didn't want the children to come to their house?
2. Why do you think the parents didn't explain the holiday to their son?
3. Why do you think Tony didn't want to scream, even though he was frightened?
4. How do you think Tony's father felt when he saw his son was so frightened?
5. Do you think Tony should be angry with his parents for not telling him about Halloween? Why or why not?

**D. Now add your own ideas to the story.**

1. What does Tony think the ghosts and witch are going to do to him?
2. When Tony screams, what does his father think has happened?
3. Do you think Tony will lose respect for himself over this incident? Or will he lose respect for his father?

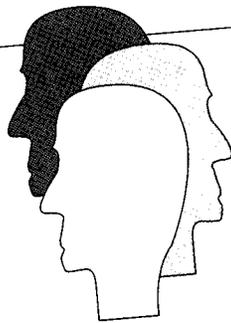
**E. Compare yourself with Tony.**

1. What did Tony learn?
2. What did you learn from Tony's story?

# Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with the appropriate words. Circle the letter of the correct answer.

1. Tony writes about the language barrier. He is referring to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. communication difficulties due to language differences
  - b. a roadblock on his street
2. When Tony wants to overcome the language barrier, he wishes \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. to have someone come over to his house
  - b. to improve his communication in another language
3. Tony's incident \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. is the story of what happened to him
  - b. is an accident
4. Tony's parents wanted to ignore the children. They wanted to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. not pay attention to them
  - b. pay attention to them
5. Halloween is a holiday where \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. children dress in costumes and go door-to-door saying, "Trick-or-treat"
  - b. children dye hard-boiled eggs bright colors
6. Halloween treats are usually \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. candy
  - b. songs the children sing



## CULTURE CAPSULE

On Halloween, which comes on October 31, children go "trick-or-treating." The children dress up in costumes, often pretending to be something scary, like ghosts and witches. They then go from house to house asking for candy or other treats. If they do not receive any, they might threaten to play tricks—like overturning trash cans or spraying windows with shaving cream. But most children do not really play tricks.

At Halloween time, you will see many jack-o'-lanterns. These are pumpkins that have been cut to look like human faces and often have a candle inside.

# Cultural Exchange

**A.** *Tell whether these sentences about the United States are true or false.*

1. Halloween comes on November 30.
2. Turning over trash cans is an example of a trick.
3. A jack-o'-lantern is made out of a pumpkin.
4. "Trick-or-treating" is something that children do on this holiday.
5. Ghosts and witches are not scary.

**B.** *Answer these questions about your culture in writing or aloud.*

1. What kind of holiday do you celebrate that deals with ghosts?
2. What kind of holiday do you celebrate where people dress up in costumes?
3. What kind of holiday do you have that celebrates an important religious event?
4. What kind of holiday do you have that celebrates an important historic event?
5. What kind of holiday do you have that celebrates a particular family member (Mother's Day, Father's Day, Grandparents' Day, other)?
6. What kind of holiday do you have that celebrates the beginning of a new season (spring, summer, fall, winter)?

**C.** *Discuss these questions with your classmates.*

1. Do you think you would enjoy celebrating Halloween?
2. What holiday custom from the United States or another culture would you like to celebrate?
3. How do you celebrate birthdays?
4. For which holidays do you send greeting cards?
5. Have you ever introduced one of your own holiday customs to someone from another culture?