

Halloween classroom activities

This month our activities are dedicated to the topic of Halloween. Our B2 First and C1 Advanced students will practise speaking and writing about Halloween traditions and about activities which can be both scary and fun at the same time. Our B1 Preliminary and B2 First students will watch a video about techniques to make their writing suspenseful and will then be able to put this into practice by writing their own stories. Finally, our young learners will watch a spooky video and then write a story about it. Happy teaching!

1. Fear, fun and traditions.....	2
2. Suspenseful writing.....	6
3. Witchy wonder.....	10
4. References.....	14



1. Fear, fun and traditions

Level: B2 First / C1 Advanced

Skills: Speaking and Writing

Interaction: Whole class, in groups of 3/4 and individual activity

Time: 75 minutes



Warm up (15') – whole class activity

- What is Halloween and when is it celebrated?
- What do we associate with this holiday and why?
- Do people celebrate Halloween in your country? If so, how do people celebrate?
- Do you know of any other Halloween traditions from other countries?
- Is it possible to feel scared and have fun at the same time?
- Can you think of any examples of scary activities that people enjoy?

Speaking (15') – in groups of 3/4

Two of you will be the candidates and answer the questions about the photos below. One of you will act as the interlocutor, conducting the test. The person in the role of the interlocutor will also give the two candidates some feedback. You can find the success criteria for B2 First and C1 Advanced below. Although the full criteria will be used by Speaking examiners during the exam, if this is the first time you are working with the criteria, you may want to focus mainly on discourse management for this activity.

Interlocutor: I'm going to give each of you two photographs. I'd like you to talk about them on your own for about a minute. Student A, I'd like you to compare the pictures and say **what activities the people are doing and how they might be feeling**.



Interlocutor: Student B, I'd like you to compare the pictures and say **which traditional activities the people are doing and what they enjoy about them**.





B2 First Speaking Success Criteria*

B2 First Speaking Success Criteria			
Grammar and Vocabulary	Yes	No	Comments / Examples
Did your classmates use simple grammar e.g. present simple, past simple, can?			
Did your classmates use some complex grammar e.g. modal verbs, future tenses, conditionals, perfect tenses, phrasal verbs?			
Did your classmates use synonyms?			
Did your classmates repeat the same words several times?			
Discourse Management	Yes	No	Comments / Examples
Did your classmates use longer sentences?			
Were there long pauses when your classmates spoke?			
Did your classmates speak about the task?			
Did your classmates repeat their ideas?			
Did your classmates use connectors such as and, but, so, because, although, however, moreover?			
Pronunciation	Yes	No	Comments / Examples
Could you understand your classmates?			
Were there any problems with pronunciation that made communication difficult?			
Was intonation appropriate e.g. in questions, showing interest?			
Interactive Communication	Yes	No	Comments / Examples
Did your classmates start the conversation sometimes and respond to each other's ideas?			
Did your classmates help each other reach a decision?			
Did your classmates need some help when talking?			
Global Achievement	Yes	No	Comments / Examples
Did your classmates handle communication on familiar topics despite some pauses?			
Did your classmates organise their ideas in general?			
Were there any examples of incoherent ideas, inaccuracies and inappropriate use of grammar and vocabulary?			



C1 Advanced Speaking Success Criteria*

C1 Advanced Speaking Success Criteria	Yes	No	Comments / Examples
Grammatical resource	Yes	No	Comments / Examples
Did your classmates show a good degree of control of simple grammar e.g. present simple, past simple, can?			
Did your classmates use some complex grammar e.g. modal verbs, future tenses, conditionals, perfect tenses, phrasal verbs?			
Lexical resource	Yes	No	Comments / Examples
Did your classmates use a variety of appropriate vocabulary to talk about familiar topics?			
Did your classmates use a variety of appropriate vocabulary to talk about unfamiliar topics?			
Discourse Management	Yes	No	Comments / Examples
Did your classmates use longer sentences?			
Were there long pauses when your classmates were speaking? Were they frequent?			
Did your classmates speak about the task?			
Did your classmates organise their ideas clearly?			
Did your classmates use different cohesive devices and discourse markers (connectors, reference pronouns, substitution, etc.)?			
Pronunciation	Yes	No	Comments / Examples
Could you understand your classmates without difficulty?			
Were there any problems with pronunciation that made communication difficult?			
Was intonation appropriate e.g. in questions, showing interest?			
Was sentence and word stress accurately placed?			
Were individual sounds clear?			
Interactive Communication	Yes	No	Comments / Examples
Did your classmates start the conversation and respond to each other's ideas in a suitable way?			
Did your classmates follow up on each other's ideas?			
Did your classmates need some help when talking?			
Did your classmates develop the ideas discussed?			
Did your classmates help each other reach a decision?			
Global achievement	Yes	No	Comments / Examples
Did your classmates handle communication on a variety of familiar topics without many pauses?			
Did your classmates handle communication on a variety of unfamiliar topics without many pauses?			
Did your classmates use suitable grammar and vocabulary with good control to express ideas?			
Did your classmates talk in a coherent and organised way?			

* Please note that your classmates' performance should be analysed independently, considering what each of them does in the different parts of the test.



Writing (45') – individual activity

Choose one of the following options and write 220-260 words:

1. You have received an email from a friend from another country who is coming to visit you:

....

How are you? I'm really looking forward to visiting you next month. I've just realised I'll be there over Halloween! Do you celebrate this holiday too? If so, I'd love to take part in some traditional celebrations there. Are there any activities or events you could recommend? Which option do you think would be best and why?

See you soon!

Thanks,

Anna

Write your email in reply.

2. You see this announcement on an English-language website.

Articles wanted

The scariest thing I have ever done for fun.

What is the scariest thing you have ever done for fun? Why did you do it? What was the experience like?

Write us an article answering these questions.

We will publish the best articles on our website.

Write your article.

2. Suspenseful writing

Level: B1 Preliminary / B2 First

Skills: Speaking, Listening and Writing

Interaction: Whole class and individual activity

Time: 75 minutes



Warm up (10') – whole class activity

- Do you enjoy reading horror or mystery novels? Why / Why not?
- Can you name any classic horror or mystery novels and authors? Have you read any of these novels?
- Are there any features that these types of novels have in common?
- What techniques do you think writers can use to create suspense and intrigue for readers?

Vocabulary (10') – individual activity

Match words A – H below to their definitions 1-8.

A. to conceal	1. a long narrow path in a building
B. imagery	2. the location where a film or story takes place
C. winding	3. worrying or upsetting
D. in anticipation	4. images used in literature, films etc. to express an idea
E. a shot	5. to prevent something being known
F. a passageway	6. excitement about something that will happen
G. disturbing	7. turning in different directions
H. setting	8. a short series of actions in a film

A. ____ B. ____ C. ____ D. ____ E. ____ F. ____ G. ____ H. ____

Definitions adapted from Cambridge Dictionary (Cambridge University Press & Assessment, 2023)



Listening (15') – individual activity

You're going to watch a [video](#) about how to make writing suspenseful. Read questions 1-8 and write an answer below.



1. According to H.P. Lovecraft, what is the strongest type of fear?

2. What do writers do instead of revealing horrors?

3. How is suspense created?

4. How are some classic novels such as Dracula written?

5. Which places are mentioned as appropriate settings to create suspense?



6. Which techniques are used in Alfred Hitchcock films to make the audience feel tense?

7. What is dramatic irony?

8. Why are cliffhangers so effective?

Listen again and list the techniques you can use to achieve suspense in your writing.

1-

2-

3-

4-

5-

Writing (40') – individual activity

You see this announcement on an English-language website.

Stories wanted

Write a story for the Halloween edition of our magazine. Your story must begin with this sentence:

Sarah walked up the path, took a deep breath, and knocked on the door. The door slowly

Write your story in 140-190 words.



Key

Vocabulary

A. 5 B. 4 C. 7 D. 6 E. 8 F. 1 G. 3 H. 2

Listening

1. According to H.P. Lovecraft, what is the strongest type of fear?
The unknown.
2. What do writers do instead of revealing horrors?
They leave the audience in a state of suspense in anticipation of them.
3. How is suspense created?
By keeping the audience interested while delaying the answer to a question that they want to know the answer to.
4. How are some classic novels such as Dracula written?
Through the characters' letters and diaries where the reader learns about their experiences and fears.
5. Which places are mentioned as appropriate settings to create suspense?
Old castles and mansions with secret passageways and winding halls.
London in the Victorian era.
6. Which techniques are used in Alfred Hitchcock films to make the audience feel tense?
Shots of staircases and extended silences.
7. What is dramatic irony?
It is when the audience discovers parts of the secret and is waiting to learn how and when the characters will find out.
8. Why are cliffhangers so effective?
An episode, chapter, season, or volume ends in the middle of a dangerous and hopeless situation or before revealing something. The wait makes the audience imagine what might happen next, creating more suspense.

Techniques you can use to achieve suspense in your writing.

- 1- Write from the characters' perspective
- 2- Choose appropriate settings and imagery
- 3- Think about style and form
- 4- Use dramatic irony
- 5- Include cliffhangers



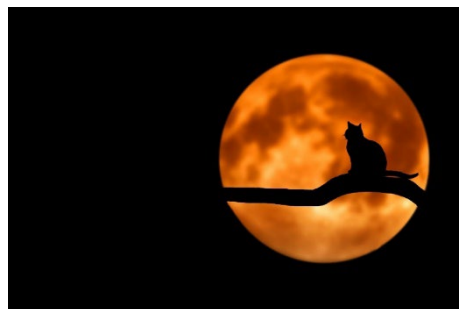
3. Witchy wonder

Level: Pre A1 Starters, A1 Movers and A2 Flyers

Skills: Speaking, Reading and Writing

Interaction: Whole class and individual activity

Time: 35-40 minutes



Warm up (10') – whole class activity

- What is Halloween?
- When do we celebrate it?
- What do we do at Halloween?
- How many words can you think of related to Halloween?

Vocabulary (10') – individual activity (Pre A1 Starters, A1 Movers)

Look at the words in the list below. What do they mean?

Can you find them in the [word search](#)?

Word Search

flippity.net



Word Direction: → ↓ ↘ ↗

Clues

- | | | | | |
|----------|----------|--------|----------|---------|
| ◦ Dark | ◦ Horse | ◦ Moon | ◦ Scared | ◦ Witch |
| ◦ Forest | ◦ Knight | ◦ Owl | ◦ Tree | |



Speaking (10') – whole class activity

We are going to watch a video. Look at the picture below.

- What can you see in the picture? (All levels)
- What do you think will happen in the video? (A2 Flyers)



Watch the [video](#) and answer the questions: (All levels)

- Where is the knight?
- What is he doing?
- How is he feeling?
- Look at the horse. How is it feeling?
- What can you see in the trees?

Pause the video at 00.29. (A2 Flyers)

- What do you think will happen next?

Watch the rest of the video.

- What happens at the end? (All levels)
- In the past, what did some people think owls were? (A2 Flyers)



Reading and Writing (10') – individual activity (Pre A1 Starters, A1 Movers)

Write a word to complete the sentences about the video.

1. It's a dark night and the _____ is shining in the sky.
2. A knight is riding a _____.
3. The knight and the horse are lost in the _____.
4. They can see lots of eyes in the _____.
5. The knight and the horse feel _____ and run away.
6. There isn't a witch in the tree, there is an _____.

Writing (15') – individual activity (A2 Flyers)

Write the story about what you saw in the video you have just watched. Use these questions to help you:

- What is the knight doing?
- Where is he?
- What can he see?
- How is he feeling?
- What happens at the end?



Possible answers

Speaking

- Where is the knight?
He is in the forest.
- What is he doing?
He is riding a horse. He is lost.
- How is he feeling?
He is feeling scared.
- Look at the horse. How is it feeling?
It is feeling scared too.
- What can you see in the trees?
We can see lots of eyes.
- What happens at the end?
The owl in the tree looks like a witch. The knight and the horse are scared and run away.
- In the past, what did some people think owls were?
They thought they were witches.

Key

Reading and Writing

1. It's a dark night and the moon is shining in the sky.
2. A knight is riding a horse.
3. The knight and the horse are lost in the forest.
4. They can see lots of eyes in the trees.
5. The knight and the horse feel scared and run away.
6. There isn't a witch in the tree, there is an owl.



4. References

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