

Name: _____

Jack of the Lantern



By Kelly Hashway

Did you know that before people began carving pumpkins to make Jack O' Lanterns, they used to carve other things like potatoes, turnips, and beets? It all began with an old Irish folklore about a man called Stingy Jack who played tricks on everyone. Because of his trickery, Jack's soul was doomed to roam in the darkness forever. Jack supposedly carved a turnip and placed a flame inside it to help him see



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So how did this tradition evolve into carving pumpkins for Halloween? When millions of Irish people immigrated to America after the Irish potato famine, they had trouble finding potatoes and turnips. They began to use pumpkins, which were more abundant and easier to carve. Today, this Irish tradition is a large part of the American celebration of Halloween.



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1. In the Venn diagram below, compare and contrast how early Jack O' Lanterns in Ireland and Scotland looked and how Jack O' Lanterns in America look today.

Early Jack O' Lanterns in Ireland and Scotland
(how they looked then)

Modern Jack O' Lanterns in America
(how they look now)



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2. What vegetable did Stingy Jack use to carve the first Jack O' Lantern?

3. Why do most Americans choose to carve pumpkins, rather than other fruits or vegetables?

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Read each sentence and choose the best definition for the underlined word.

1. In Irish folklore, a man named Stingy Jack played tricks on everyone.

a. stories told by people

b. old cities



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4. Millions of Irish people immigrated to America.

a. moved to a new country

b. sent a letter to another country

c. visited another country

d. carved pumpkins for another country

5. Many Irish people left Ireland during the potato famine.

a. time of the year when leaves fall off of trees

b. time of celebration because there is lots of food

c. time of starvation because there is no food

6. Stingy Jack carved a face in a turnip and used it for a lantern.

a. bag

b. light

c. tasty treat

d. cane to walk with

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3. Why do most Americans choose to carve pumpkins, rather than other fruits or vegetables?

Americans carve pumpkins because they are abundant and easy to carve.

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c. time of starvation because there is no food

6. Stingy Jack carved a face in a turnip and used it for a lantern.
- a. bag
 - b. light**
 - c. tasty treat
 - d. cane to walk with