The Printable Halloween Quiz

Twenty-four questions in four rounds, written to be read out loud. Print the host sheet, print an answer sheet per team, and turn the lights down.

4 rounds · 24 questions · about 40 min

How to run it

1. Print one host sheet for yourself and one team answer sheet per team. The host sheet has the answers on it — keep it face down.
2. Read each question out loud twice. Give teams about forty seconds, a little longer on the open questions.
3. At the end of each round, teams swap sheets and you read out the answers. They tick the box on the right for each correct one.
4. One point per correct answer, twenty-four in total. If you want a tiebreaker, ask in which year the first Halloween film came out — closest guess wins. The answer, 1978, is in round two.

ROUND 1 — Where Halloween came from

The old customs behind the costumes and the pumpkins.

1. Halloween grew out of which Celtic festival, held at the end of the harvest?

- A Lughnasadh
- B Beltane
- **C Samhain**
- D Imbolc

Answer: C — Samhain

Worth adding: Samhain marked the end of summer and the start of the dark half of the year — the night when the line between the living and the dead was thought to be at its thinnest. Beltane is its opposite number, at the start of May.

2. The word Halloween is a shortened form of which phrase?

Answer: All Hallows' Eve

Worth adding: The evening before All Hallows' Day — All Saints' Day — on 1 November. "Hallow" is an old word for a saint.

3. Before pumpkins, what did people in Ireland and Scotland carve into Halloween lanterns?

- A Apples
- **B Turnips**
- C Beetroot
- D Potatoes

Answer: B — Turnips

Worth adding: Turnips, and in some places swedes or mangelwurzels. Irish and Scottish emigrants in North America switched to the pumpkin: bigger, softer and far easier to carve.

4. In the Irish folk tale behind the jack-o'-lantern, who did Stingy Jack trick?

- A A leprechaun
- B The king of Ireland
- C A giant
- **D The Devil**

Answer: D — The Devil

Worth adding: Jack tricked the Devil into promising never to take his soul. When Jack died, heaven would not have him and the Devil kept his word — so Jack wanders the night with an ember in a hollowed-out turnip.

5. In Scotland, what is the traditional name for children going door to door in costume at Halloween?

- A Mumming
- B Souling
- **C Guising**
- D Wassailing

Answer: C — Guising

Worth adding: From "disguise". The guisers are expected to earn their treat — a song, a joke or a poem at the door.

6. The earliest known use of the phrase "trick or treat" in print, from 1927, appeared in a newspaper in which country?

- A Ireland
- B Scotland
- C The United States
- **D Canada**

Answer: D — Canada

Worth adding: The Lethbridge Herald, in Alberta, reporting on a night of Halloween pranks. Most people guess the United States, where the phrase took off a few years later.

ROUND 2 — Halloween on screen

Crowd-pleaser round. Expect arguments about round two being too easy.

7. In the film Halloween, what is the name of the masked killer?

- **A Michael Myers**
- B Norman Bates
- C Freddy Krueger
- D Jason Voorhees

Answer: A — Michael Myers

Worth adding: The film came out in 1978 — keep that for the tiebreaker. The mask was a cheap Captain Kirk mask from a costume shop, painted white.

8. In Ghostbusters, what giant figure stomps through New York in the finale?

Answer: The Stay Puft Marshmallow Man

Worth adding: Ray was told to choose the form of the destroyer, and thought of the most harmless thing he could.

9. How many Sanderson sisters are there in Hocus Pocus?

- A Four
- B Five
- C Two
- **D Three**

Answer: D — Three

Worth adding: Winifred, Mary and Sarah — Bette Midler, Kathy Najimy and Sarah Jessica Parker.

10. In The Nightmare Before Christmas, Jack Skellington is the Pumpkin King of which town?

- A Spook Hollow
- B Pumpkin Patch
- **C Halloween Town**
- D Christmas Town

Answer: C — Halloween Town

Worth adding: It is usually called Tim Burton's film, and it was his idea — but it was directed by Henry Selick.

11. In Psycho, Marion Crane checks into which motel?

- A The Hollow Inn
- B The Crystal Lake Motel
- C The Overlook Motel
- **D The Bates Motel**

Answer: D — The Bates Motel

Worth adding: The Overlook is the hotel in The Shining; Crystal Lake is the summer camp in Friday the 13th.

12. In E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial, what costume does E.T. wear to go out on Halloween?

- A A vampire
- **B A ghost**
- C A witch
- D A pumpkin

Answer: B — A ghost

Worth adding: A sheet with eye holes. On the way he passes a child dressed as Yoda and tries to follow him.

ROUND 3 — Monsters and legends

The books and the folklore the films came from.

13. Who wrote Frankenstein?

- A Robert Louis Stevenson
- B Edgar Allan Poe
- **C Mary Shelley**
- D Bram Stoker

Answer: C — Mary Shelley

Worth adding: She started it at eighteen, on a wet summer at Lake Geneva when Lord Byron challenged his guests to write a ghost story. It was published in 1818.

14. In Mary Shelley's novel, who is Frankenstein?

Answer: The scientist who makes the creature

Worth adding: Victor Frankenstein. The creature never gets a name — he is "the creature", "the monster", "the wretch".

15. In Bram Stoker's novel, Count Dracula's castle is in which region?

A Bohemia
B Wallachia
C Bavaria
D Transylvania

Answer: D — Transylvania

Worth adding: Wallachia is the trap: the real Vlad the Impaler, whose nickname Stoker borrowed, ruled Wallachia, south of Transylvania.

16. In Washington Irving's story, the Headless Horseman haunts which place?

Answer: Sleepy Hollow

Worth adding: A valley near Tarrytown, New York. The village there renamed itself Sleepy Hollow in 1996.

17. In films and folklore, what is said to kill a werewolf?

A A silver bullet
B Garlic
C Sunlight
D A wooden stake

Answer: A — A silver bullet

Worth adding: The wooden stake, the garlic and the sunlight all belong to the vampire.

18. What is a group of witches traditionally called?

A A conclave
B A cauldron
C A circle
D A coven

Answer: D — A coven

Worth adding: Traditionally thirteen of them, though the number is a later embellishment.

ROUND 4 — Halloween elsewhere

The harder round. Worth playing for double points.

19. In Mexico, the decorated sugar skulls made for the Day of the Dead are called what?

A Calaveras
B Ofrendas
C Piñatas
D Alebrijes

Answer: A — Calaveras

Worth adding: Calaveras de azúcar, often with the name of the person they remember written across the forehead. The ofrenda is the home altar they are placed on.

20. Which flower is laid on Day of the Dead altars, its colour and scent said to guide the spirits home?

A The chrysanthemum
B The rose
C The marigold
D The lily

Answer: C — The marigold

Worth adding: The Mexican marigold, cempasúchil. Paths of petals are laid from the street to the altar.

21. Which Massachusetts town, home of the witch trials of 1692, now draws huge crowds every October?

A Salem
B Lexington
C Plymouth
D Concord

Answer: A — Salem

Worth adding: It calls itself the Witch City; the police cars carry a witch on the door.

22. In Ireland, a fruit loaf baked for Halloween traditionally hides a ring for one lucky slice. What is the loaf called?

A Simnel cake
B Barmbrack
C Soda bread
D Lardy cake

Answer: B — Barmbrack

Worth adding: Whoever found the ring would be married within the year. Shop-bought barmbrack still comes with a ring inside.

23. In the Philippines, where do families traditionally spend 1 and 2 November?

Answer: At the graves of their relatives

Worth adding: Undas: families clean and decorate the graves, bring food, and many stay the night in the cemetery.

24. In which country is 31 October also Reformation Day, a public holiday in several regions?

A Italy
B France
C Spain
D Germany

Answer: D — Germany

Worth adding: Martin Luther is said to have posted his ninety-five theses on 31 October 1517, which makes the date a holiday in a number of German states.