

Scripts for Schools



Thanks to
The Irish for Inventing
Halloween!

A Choral Reading/Speaking Script for
Older Elementary School Readers

Thanks to the Irish for Inventing Halloween!

By Lois Walker

A Choral Reading/Speaking Script, Older Elementary School Readers

ESTABLISHING THE RHYTHM

To find the proper rhythm for this piece, first read-aloud and clap through the sections as you go. Each underlined word or word part falls directly on a beat. As you read, clap on each underlined word, keeping the rhythm steady. Be careful not to read too fast. After you have established the beat, it is time to start interpreting, experimenting, and having fun with the words by varying volume, inflection, and expression.

FORMATTING

This Choral Reading/Speaking script has been formatted for 10 SOLO READERS and ALL. If this arrangement does not work for your particular group, please feel free to assign lines as you wish.

An unformatted version of the piece can be found at the end of the original script version so that a director may re-format the piece to suit any situation.

ON A MUSICAL NOTE

This is an oral reading/speaking script. However, all of the verses below can actually be sung to the tune of "Too-ra-lo-ra-lo-ra (That's an Irish Lullaby)". All the choruses can be sung to the tune of "McNamara's Band". So, the entire script can be sung, or special parts of the script can be sung, if desired.

PERFORMANCE LENGTH

4- 5 minutes, depending on tempo chosen and including entrance and exit.

RESEARCH: Where it all started: Ireland

Halloween is linked to the Celtic festival of Samhain (*sow-un*), which comes from the Old Irish for "summer's end". It was held on or about October 31.

It was the time when cattle were brought back down from the summer pastures and when livestock were slaughtered for the winter.

Special bonfires were lit. These were deemed to have protective and cleansing powers and there were rituals involving them. Samhain was seen as when the spirits or fairies could more easily come into our world.

It was believed that people need to be friendly with the fairies so that the people and their livestock survived the winter. Offerings of food and drink were left for them.

The souls of the dead were also thought to revisit their homes. Feasts were had, at which the souls of dead kin were beckoned to attend and a place set at the table for them.

The celebration also involved people going door-to-door in costume (or in disguise), often reciting verses in exchange for food. The costumes may have been a way of imitating the fairy spirits or the deceased, or disguising oneself as protection from them.

Halloween Today

In Ireland, which is considered to be where Halloween started, the day is still celebrated much like it is in North America. In rural areas, bonfires are lit as they were centuries ago, and all over the country, children dress up in costumes and spend the evening "trick-or-treating" in their neighborhoods. After trick-or-treating, most people attend parties with neighbors and friends.

Snap-apple: At the parties, many games are played, including "snap-apple," a game in which an apple on a string is tied to a doorframe or tree and players attempt to bite the hanging apple. In addition to bobbing for apples, parents often arrange treasure hunts, with candy or pastries as the "treasure."

Barnbrack: In Ireland a traditional food eaten on Halloween is "barnbrack", a kind of fruitcake that can be bought in stores or baked at home. A muslin-wrapped treat is baked inside the cake that, it is said, can foretell the eater's future. If a ring is found, it means that the person will soon be wed; a piece of straw means that a prosperous year is on its way.

Knock-a-dolly: Children are also known to play tricks on their neighbors, such as "knock-a-dolly," a prank in which children knock on the doors of their neighbors, but run away before the door is opened.

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LINES 1-4

VERSE 1

SOLO READER 1: It started in Old Ireland - so many years ago,
The Samhain (*sow-un*) celebration was at summer's
end, you know.

SOLO READER 2: Then every Irish Master and every young Colleen
Ran door to door to take part in what's now called
Halloween.

LINES 5-8

CHORUS

ALL: Oh, the goblins groan, the mummies moan, the
banshees scream and shriek,
Then wander through our neighborhood in search of
something sweet.
There are monsters, ghouls, a spooky ghost - and
everything in between,
All thankful that those Irish folk invented Halloween!

LINE 9-12

VERSE 2

SOLO READER 3: Yes, way back then in Ireland, the children liked a game.

They played it at this time of year, "snap-apple" was its name.

SOLO READER 4: A string tied to an apple was hung down from a tree,

Then players bobbed to take a bite - to set that apple free!

LINES 13-16

CHORUS

ALL: Oh, the goblins groan, the mummies moan, the banshees scream and shriek,

Then wander through our neighborhood in search of something sweet.

There are monsters, ghouls, a spooky ghost - and everything in between,

All thankful that those Irish folk invented Halloween!

LINES 17-20

VERSE 3

SOLO READER 5: Just think back to old Ireland, so many years gone by.

The children hunted treasure, finding cookies, finding pie.

SOLO READER 6: The more they looked, the more they found what they were looking for,

And when they found the candy, well, they always wanted more!

LINES 21-24

CHORUS

ALL:

Oh, the goblins groan, the mummies moan, the banshees scream and shriek,

Then wander through our neighborhood in search of something sweet.

There are monsters, ghouls, a spooky ghost - and everything in between,

All thankful that those Irish folk invented Halloween!

LINES 25-28

VERSE 4

SOLO READER 6:

From bygone days in Ireland, those days of yesteryear,

The children had their fortunes told, and this we know is clear,

SOLO READER 7:

Each ate a piece of "barnbrack" with a trinket baked inside,

That told the child his future and became his yearly guide.

LINES 29-32

CHORUS

ALL:

Oh, the goblins groan, the mummies moan, the banshees scream and shriek,

Then wander through our neighborhood in search of something sweet.

There are monsters, ghouls, a spooky ghost - and everything in between,

All thankful that those Irish folk invented Halloween!

LINES 33-36

VERSE 5

SOLO READER 8: And they played "knock-a-dolly" as they scampered house to house.

They tiptoed to each doorway, just as quiet as a mouse.

SOLO READER 9: Then they knocked loudly on the door, but this was all in play,

For when the door was opened up, each one had run away.

LINES 37-41

CHORUS

ALL GIRLS: Oh, the goblins groan, the mummies moan, the banshees scream and shriek,

ALL BOYS: Then wander through our neighborhood in search of something sweet.

ALL GIRLS: There are monsters, ghouls, a spooky ghost - and everything in between,

SOLO READER 10: All thankful that those Irish folk invented Halloween!

ALL: All thankful that those Irish folk invented **Halloween!**