

Halloween

Interpreting Mood

Directions: Read the following passage from *185 To Go*, a humorous book about school life. The school board voted recently to allow a Halloween party, after many years without one.

Welcome to Sandport Elementary's:

World Harvest Festival Celebration and Allusions to Folklore Traditions Day!

It did not have the same ring as “Halloween”, but some victory was better than no victory. Our teacher, Mr. Greene, gave us a brief history, also known as All Hallow’s Eve, Allhalloween, and All Saint’s Eve.

“Class, there is debate regarding the original meaning, but it probably started as an ancient Celtic end-of-summer celebration 2,000 years ago in northwestern Europe. Later, the Christian church used it to remember the dead, especially important people like saints (hallows). Today, it has morphed more into silly fun with costumes, candy, and scary movies,” instructed Mr. Greene as he adjusted his snug-fitting *Space Trek* uniform from high school. “In the 1800’s, large numbers of Scottish and Irish immigrants came to America, bringing their traditions with them.”

Jack-o’-lantern – a carved, lighted pumpkin (or turnip) used to frighten away evil spirits.

Trick-or-Treat – the practice of children getting a reward in return for praying for a person’s soul, also a reward for not playing a mischievous trick on a home.

Costumes – a way to frighten-off spirits in old times, more for fun in modern times.

Traditional Food – candy apples, roasted sweet corn, pumpkin seeds, bonfire toffee (Great Britain), barmbrack (Ireland), and soul cakes.

“With the help of national news and magazines, modern trick-or-treating with costumes, games, and food became popular in the 1930’s,” noted our knowledgeable Captain *Space Trek*.

Maybe the official school party name is more accurate than I thought. Even lunch lady Louise got into the act, offering ghostly goulash, spooky sauerkraut, and pandemic punch. The spaghetti and eyeballs were a little too scary, with some kids skipping lunch altogether and just eating a bowl of ketchup instead.

Kids wore a variety of scary costumes, like Homework Monster, broccoli salesman, and happy dentist. There had to be enough cookies and candy to cause a spike in world sugar prices, and Principal Sanchez gave special permission for teachers to leave school immediately after the last bell.

Veteran teachers know it takes 20-minutes for sugar to infect students with the “crazies”, so they do not pass out food until the very end of the day. They vividly remember the reason parties were phased-out 25-years ago. Poor Ms. Reagan, an energetic first-year teacher, started her party at 9:30. Word on the playground was that she was the first teacher out the door after the final bell.

Questions:

1. Discuss some historical Halloween events from the passage. (**3 sentences**) **It may have started from a Celtic harvest festival. It likely started in northwestern Europe 2000 years ago. Halloween traditions were brought to America from Irish and Scottish immigrants in the 1800's.**
2. What is the mood or atmosphere of the passage? (**1 sentence**) **The mood is a mix of learning, fun with costumes, and teachers anticipating energy levels to rise.**
3. Explain the sentence “enough cookies and candy to cause a spike in world sugar prices” (**1 sentence**) **It refers to large demand for sugar to make the treats, causing world sugar prices to sharply rise.**
4. How does lunch lady Louise contribute to the holiday atmosphere? (**1 sentence**) **She creates school food with a Halloween theme.**
5. Interpret the principal and teacher’s mood about parties in the last paragraph. (**≥2 sentences**) **It is an energy-filled day for teachers, requiring a special break to recoup.**
6. Why does the author combine facts and fiction to set the mood? (**2 sentences**) **The use of facts shows the historical perspective of the holiday. The fiction allows the author to present it in a fun, humorous way.**
7. Visualize the party atmosphere in Ms. Reagan’s classroom. (**2 sentences**) **The students were excited to start the party before lunch. The sugary food probably energized students throughout the day, raising voice levels.**

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2. What is the mood or atmosphere of the passage? (**1 sentence**)
3. Explain the sentence “enough cookies and candy to cause a spike in world sugar prices”. (**1 sentence**)
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