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Episode #024

Celebrate Halloween
just like an American

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Hi, everybody! I am Georgiana, your English teacher and founder of [SpeakEnglishPodcast.com](https://speakenglishpodcast.com). My mission is to help you speak English fluently.

In today's episode:

- I'll be talking about one of the most celebrated holidays in the United States: **Halloween**.
- After that, you'll practice your **speaking** with a new mini-story while enjoying my new Question & Answer story.

Very well. Let's get started!

Halloween is a holiday celebrated on the last day of October. I would say it's very popular because everybody's excited about it, especially children.

The word Halloween comes from an old English expression, "All Hallows' Eve," and it means **the day before All Saints' Day**.

Children of all ages really love Halloween because they can **dress up** in **funny costumes** and knock on their neighbourhood doors, shouting "Trick or Treat!". The neighbors usually give them candies.

The meaning of the phrase "Trick or Treat" is interesting. In this context, "**treat**" means **getting the candies**, and "**trick**" means the **consequence of not getting the sweets**. It's like an innocent **threat** children make. Of course, kids get really excited when they knock on stranger's doors in their neighbourhood.

Since Halloween originated as a celebration connected with evil spirits, the most common symbols are **witches flying on broomsticks, ghosts, skeletons, black cats**, etc. The **black color** is one of the traditional Halloween colors.

Of course, **pumpkins** are also a Halloween symbol. I'm sure you've seen them in movies. People empty pumpkin and put a candle inside to make a lamp.

How do you make a **Halloween pumpkin**?

- The first step is hollowing out the pumpkin.

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- After we use a keyhole, we saw to cut the hole.
- When using a **candle** for illumination, you can cut the hole in the pumpkin's **top**.
- For **electric lights**, make the hole **in the bottom or side** so you can hide the cord.

The Halloween pumpkin is called Jack-O'-Lantern. It's common to see jack-o'-lanterns on doorsteps decorations before and on Halloween.

The name comes from an **Irish legend** about a man named Jack. He was so **ungenerous** that when he died, he couldn't enter Heaven, but he couldn't go to Hell either because he had **told jokes about the Devil**. As a result, Jack had to walk and walk with a lantern until the **Day of Judgment**.

Here's what a typical family does at Halloween:

- They decorate their home. Americans spend about 5 billion dollars every year.
- They buy costumes. A costume is not cheap. It can cost \$30 or more.
- They buy plenty of candy, and of course, they eat it.
- Kids go "trick or treating." In most towns, it's only allowed from 3 pm until 5 pm because it gets dark quickly.

Very well, now you know a bit more about this beautiful holiday. Maybe next time you'll carve your own Halloween pumpkin and **celebrate Halloween just like an American!**

MINI-STORY

(Practice your speaking)

Ok, let's move on to the next section.

Here, I'll use the **Question & Answer** technique. This is the perfect lesson for automatizing your spoken English. This is how it works:

- I'll give you some information. (A phrase or two).
- I'll ask simple questions.

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- After each question, there will be some seconds of silence: it's your turn to answer the question! Just try to give an easy and short answer, not a complex one.
- After you answer, I'll give you a correct answer.

This process will continue, and little by little, I'll be telling a story using questions and answers. In this mini-story, you are Jack, and you answer the questions.

This mini-story will be a bit more difficult than usual, but don't worry, just repeat it more times, and it will be fine.

I'll be using some words that you may not know:

Miserly: Someone who has a strong wish to have money and hates spending it.

Funnily enough: Strangely, surprisingly.

Fate: Destiny.

To wander: To walk slowly without a destination.

Ok, let's get started!

My name's Jack, and I walk every night in the World of Spirits.

Are you, Jack?

Yes, I'm Jack.

Do you walk every day or every night?

Every night. I walk every night.

When do you walk?

At night. I walk at night in the World of Spirits.

Do you walk in the World of Elves?

No, no. I don't walk in the World of Elves. I walk in the World of Spirits.

What's your name?

Jack. My name's Jack.

Ok Jack, so, you walk in that World of Spirits on Tuesdays and Fridays, right?

No, no. I don't walk on Tuesdays and Fridays. I walk every night.

And where do you walk?

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In the World of Spirits. I walk there.

When I died, I couldn't enter Heaven because I was very miserly.

Did you die?

Yes, I did. I died. I'm not alive.

Are you alive or dead?

Dead. I'm dead. I am a soul.

Could you enter Heaven?

No, I couldn't. I couldn't enter Heaven.

Who couldn't enter Heaven?

Me. Myself. I couldn't enter Heaven. I was very miserly.

Why couldn't you enter Heaven?

Because I was miserly, I liked having money, and I hated spending it.

Did you enter Heaven?

No, I didn't. I didn't enter Heaven because I was miserly.

Funnily enough, I couldn't enter Hell either because I had made some jokes about the Devil.

You couldn't enter Heaven, but could you enter Hell?

No, neither. I couldn't enter Hell either. I couldn't enter Heaven nor Hell.

Was it "funnily enough" that you couldn't enter Hell?

Yes, it was "funnily enough." It was strange or surprising; I couldn't go there.

Didn't you enter Hell because you had made some jokes about the Devil?

Yes. I didn't enter Hell because I had made some jokes about the Devil.

Had you made jokes about yourself?

No, no. I hadn't made jokes about myself. I had made jokes about the Devil.

Had you made stories about the Devil before you died?

Not stories. I had made jokes about the Devil before I died.

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Why didn't you enter Hell?

Because I had made jokes about the Devil, that was the reason.

So, my fate is to wander with a lantern until the Day of Judgment.

Is your fate to sell lanterns?

No, no. That's not my fate. My fate is to wander with a lantern until the Day of Judgment.

Till when do you have to wander?

Till the Day of Judgment. I have to wander till the Day of Judgment.

Do you have to wander with a lantern?

Yes. I have to wander with a lantern.

What do you have to bring with you? A lantern? A torch?

A lantern. Not a torch. I have to bring with me a lantern.

Do you have to wander or run?

Wander. I don't have to run. I am not in a hurry. I have to wander. That's my fate.

Ok, awesome! It's the end of this short lesson.

Can you see how many questions you can answer? It's like talking to another person in English. Now imagine a whole story told this way. It's incredible how much you can learn using this method.

Go to SpeakEnglishPodcast.com/courses and continue practicing your spoken English with stories.

See you soon and have a wonderful week! Bye! Bye!



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