

# **HALLOWEEN SUPERSTITIONS**

Halloween has roots in ancient beliefs, both cultural and religious. While most of them have faded from our collective memory over the centuries, many of the Halloween superstitions and customs we take part in today began because of those very notions.

Learn a little about some of these superstitions and see if you can unscramble the words on the next page!

## **HALLOWEEN COLOURS:**

The tradition Halloween colours of orange and black stem from the pagan celebration of autumn and harvest. The orange was said to symbolize the colour of the crops and turning leaves, while black was said to mark the “death” of summer and the changing season.

## **BLACK CATS:**

Often a symbol of bad luck, black cats gained their reputation in the Dark Ages, when witch hunts were common place. Women accused of witchcraft were often said to have a “familiar” or demonic animals, such as cats, that were given to them by the devil. Another medieval belief was that Satan himself turned into a cat when socializing with witches.

## **BATS:**

Medieval folklore also described bats as witches’ familiars and seeing a bat on Halloween was considered to be an ominous sign. One such myth stated if a bat was spotted flying around one’s house three times, it meant that someone in that house would soon die.

## **SPIDERS:**

Considered yet another evil companion of witches, during medieval times, it was believed that if a spider was to fall into a candle-lit lamp and consumed by the flames that witches were said to be nearby. Another superstition stated that if you spotted a spider on Halloween, it meant the spirit of a deceased loved one was watching over you.

## **WITCHES:**

The notion of the witch has been around for over 1,000 years with it even being mentioned in the bible. Today’s stereotypical image of a witch actually stems from a pagan goddess known as “the crone” who was honored during the festival of Samhain. The crone symbolized wisdom, change and the turning of the seasons. By the 1400s, witches were associated with more wicked behavior, often connected with the devil, and witch hunts became a popular practice over the new few hundred years. In North America, the Salem Witch Trials of 1692 is one such famous example of witch hysteria. Today, thanks to popular culture, witches have morphed into various forms ranging from the menacing cackling kind to that of a more benevolent variety, such as Glinda the Good Witch from the Wizard of Oz

## **CAULDRONS:**

Pagan Celts believed that after death, all souls went into the crone’s cauldron, which symbolized the Earth mother’s womb. There the souls awaited reincarnation. Over the years, as the idea of the crone morphed into the darker version of the witch, the cauldron of life was replaced by the steaming, bubbling, ominous brew. Such notion was made famous by William Shakespeare in his play Macbeth.

# **HALLOWEEN SUPERSTITIONS WORD SCRAMBLE**

See if you can figure out which Halloween words are listed below:

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# **HALLOWEEN SUPERSTITIONS WORD SCRAMBLE (ANSWERS)**

Spider

Cauldron

Black

Witch

Orange

Candle

Bat

Black Cat

Crone

Halloween