

The Origins of Halloween

The practice of dressing up in costumes and begging door to door for treats on holidays dates back hundreds of years to the Middle Ages (5th-15th century).

Trick-or-treating resembles the late medieval practice of Souling, when poor folk would go door to door on Hallowmas (November 1), receiving food in return for prayers for the dead on All Souls Day (November 2).

Souling originated in Ireland and Britain, although similar practices for the souls of the dead were found as far south as Italy. Shakespeare mentions the practice in his comedy *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1593).

The custom of wearing costumes and masks at Halloween goes back to Celtic traditions in Scotland where young men with masked faces, dressed in white, impersonated the dead.

The practice of Guising at Halloween in Scotland is recorded in 1895, where masqueraders in disguise carrying lanterns made out of scooped out turnips, visit homes to be rewarded with cakes, fruit and money.

Guising at Halloween in North America is first recorded in 1911, where a newspaper in Kingston, Ontario reported children going "guising" around the neighborhood.

American historian and author Ruth Edna Kelley of Massachusetts wrote the first book length history of the holiday in the US; *The Book of Hallowe'en* (1919), and references Souling in the chapter "Hallowe'en in America".

Trick-or-treating in America as we know it today does not seem to have become a widespread practice until the 1930s, with the first U.S. appearances of the term in 1934.

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trick-or-treating#Origin>

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

1. **When were the Middle Ages?**
2. **What is Guising?**
3. **Where did Guising originate?**
4. **Which play of Shakespeare's mentions Souling?**
5. **What is Souling?**
6. **Before carving pumpkins, what did people carve to use as lanterns?**
7. **When did trick-or-treating catch on in America?**
8. **What does the word "masquerader" mean?**