

**Lesson Plan PROMPT**  
**Not Just Halloween: Festivals of the Dead around the World**

**Objectives:**

1. Students will be able to respond to the following questions:
  - a. What can be learned from the prevalence around the world and across many different cultures of festivals dedicated to the dead?
  - b. Do the Halloween traditions practiced in America today continue to carry any of their more ancient meanings or significance?
  - c. Why might the making and offering of special foods be an important part of festivals dedicated to the dead?
  - d. How might holding a festival every year to commemorate those who have died help people accept the loss of a loved one?

**Lesson Options:**

Parents and educators might wish to introduce the ideas of this feature ([http://edsitement.neh.gov/monthly\\_feature.asp](http://edsitement.neh.gov/monthly_feature.asp)) using short activities which ask students to think about the meaning of these festivals, and the information they will have gleaned from reading this feature.

**1. Masks, sweets and costumes**

You might ask students to research these and other similar festivals on the Internet, [using the reviewed EDSITEment websites and links cited below](#), and to utilize their research to compare and contrast festivals such as All Hallow's Eve, the *Obon*, or *Los Dias de los Muertos*. Their research can be narrowed to themes or objects that are present across cultures and festivals. Suggestions for research topics might include:

- Masks used in festivals
- Costumes
- Food offerings
- Spooky or ghostly images

Once students have collected data on their topic, you might want to have them compare and contrast the objects and images they have collected together. For example, they might compare the *Calaveras* statues of skeletons playing guitars with the skeleton images that decorate many American doors on October 31st. Students should be sure to explain why these objects or images are used in these celebrations, and what meaning they carry in their cultural contexts.

## Selected EDSITEment Websites

- [The American Memory Project](#)  
[<http://memory.loc.gov/>]
  - [Irish Woman in Massachusetts describing Halloween](#)  
[<http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=wpa1&fileName=14/1402/14020509/wpa114020509.db&recNum=0>]
  - [Halloween Story](#)  
[<http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=wpa1&fileName=17/1709/17091007/wpa117091007.db&recNum=0>]
  - [Halloween a threefold chronicle](#)  
[[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/ncpsbib:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(ABK4014-0073-99\\_bib\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/ncpsbib:@field(DOCID+@lit(ABK4014-0073-99_bib)))]
  - [Harper's Halloween story](#)  
[[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/ncpsbib:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(ABK4014-0081-48\\_bib\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/ncpsbib:@field(DOCID+@lit(ABK4014-0081-48_bib)))]
  - [Halloween in the depression](#)  
[[http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/i?ammem/fsaall:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(fsa+8b15418\)\):displayType=1:m856sd=fsa:m856sf=8b15418](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/i?ammem/fsaall:@field(NUMBER+@band(fsa+8b15418)):displayType=1:m856sd=fsa:m856sf=8b15418)]
  - [Halloween in the depression](#)  
[[http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/i?ammem/fsaall:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(fsa+8b19051\)\):displayType=1:m856sd=fsa:m856sf=8b19051](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/i?ammem/fsaall:@field(NUMBER+@band(fsa+8b19051)):displayType=1:m856sd=fsa:m856sf=8b19051)]
  - [Obon in Hawaii](#)  
[[http://www.loc.gov/bicentennial/propage/HI/hi\\_s\\_akaka4.html](http://www.loc.gov/bicentennial/propage/HI/hi_s_akaka4.html)]
  - [Los Dias de los Muertos in Callifornia](#)  
[[http://www.loc.gov/bicentennial/propage/CA/ca-9\\_h\\_lee3.html](http://www.loc.gov/bicentennial/propage/CA/ca-9_h_lee3.html)]
- [The Center for Liberal Arts](#)  
[<http://www.virginia.edu/cla/>]
  - [Cambodia and the P'chum Ben](#)  
[<http://www.einaudi.cornell.edu/southeastasia/outreach/resources/cambodiawebunit/culture.html>]
  - [P'chum Ben](#)  
[<http://www.khmerinstitute.org/culture/pchumben.html>]
  - [Los Dias de los Muertos](#)  
[<http://www3.niu.edu/newsplace/nndia.html>]

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- [Texas elementary school celebrating \*los dias de los muertos\*](http://www.art.unt.edu/ntieva/aps/north/dead.htm)  
[http://www.art.unt.edu/ntieva/aps/north/dead.htm]
- [Los Dias de los Muertos explanation](http://csumb.edu/events/dead/explanation.html)  
[http://csumb.edu/events/dead/explanation.html]
- [Los Dias de los Muertos altar](http://csumb.edu/events/dead/altar.html)  
[http://csumb.edu/events/dead/altar.html]
- [Los Dias de los Muertos food](http://csumb.edu/events/dead/food.html)  
[http://csumb.edu/events/dead/food.html]
- [Los Dias de los Muertos English vocabulary](http://csumb.edu/events/dead/vocabulary.html)  
[http://csumb.edu/events/dead/vocabulary.html]
- [Los Dias de los Muertos Spanish vocabulary](http://csumb.edu/events/dead/vocabulario.html)  
[http://csumb.edu/events/dead/vocabulario.html]
- [Asia Source](http://www.asiasource.org/)  
[http://www.asiasource.org/]
  - [Obon in Hawaii](#)  
[]
  - [Obon in Japan](http://www.asiasource.org/news/at_mp_02.cfm?newsid=27391)  
[http://www.asiasource.org/news/at\_mp\_02.cfm?newsid=27391 ]
  - [Explanation of Obon](http://www.shingon.org/library/archive/Obon.html)  
[http://www.shingon.org/library/archive/Obon.html]
  - [Story written by a third grader about Obon and her grandmother](http://www.indiana.edu/~japan/treasures3/yamazaki.html)  
[http://www.indiana.edu/~japan/treasures3/yamazaki.html ]
  - [History of Obon](http://mothra.rerf.or.jp/ENG/Hiroshima/Festivals/50.html)  
[http://mothra.rerf.or.jp/ENG/Hiroshima/Festivals/50.html]
- [Casa de Joanna](http://www.casadejoanna.com/)  
[http://www.casadejoanna.com/]
  - [Los Dias de los Muertos](http://www.casadejoanna.com/mirror/dod/cs_muer.htm)  
[http://www.casadejoanna.com/mirror/dod/cs\_muer.htm]

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