



# Coffee and Conversation for ESL Listening



with Donielle and Khrystyna

## Episode 9: Halloween in the United States



Hi! If this is your first time listening to our podcast, this is an opportunity for upper level English learners to practice listening skills and learn new vocabulary by listening to authentic conversations. For more information about ways to use this podcast, download notes for [students](#) or [teachers](#).

In today's episode Donielle and Khrystyna discuss the origin of Halloween and different ways people in the United States celebrate the holiday.

Here are a few words and phrases about the topic that you may find useful:

<b>spooky</b>	strange and frightening, especially in a ghostly or supernatural way -a spooky old house, a spooky movie, spooky music
<b>creepy</b>	strange and slightly frightening; causing fear or unease -a creepy old house, a creepy person, a creepy feeling
<b>eerie</b>	so mysterious, strange, or unexpected as to send a chill up the spine -an eerie noise, an eerie coincidence, eerily quiet
<b>haunted</b>	inhabited or visited by ghosts
<b>goose bumps</b>	informal term for the bumps that appear on your skin when your hair stands up on your body due to cold, fear, or a sudden feeling of excitement -I got goose bumps from the chilly air after I got out of the pool. -That creepy story gave me goose bumps. Note: sometimes we say, "My hair stood on end" as away to express that something caused me to feel intense fright or terror.
<b>dress up [as]</b>	wear a costume for Halloween or for some other masquerade event. -Did you dress up for Halloween? – Yes, I dressed up as a vampire.
<b>trick or treat</b> (said like one word - sounds like: "trickertreat")	[only for children] go door to door on Halloween to ask for candy. When the homeowner opens the door, the costumed child says, "Trick or treat!" Also used as a verb [go trick or treating] and the costumed children at this time are referred to as "trick or treaters"
<b>Jack-o'-lantern</b>	a pumpkin that has been hollowed out and carved with eyes and a mouth, and a candle placed inside for an eerie look. It is usually placed outside the home as a decoration.
<b>Trunk or Treat</b>	Trick or treat alternative where people gather in a parking lot and decorate their cars, and kids can come to get candy. See more about this <a href="#">HERE</a> .

Want to know more about Halloween in the United States? See blog posts [HERE](#) and [HERE](#) with explanations and images of some of the things discussed in the conversation

See the following pages for vocabulary and language focus from this episode.



## Vocabulary: Words and Phrases Used in the Conversation

<b>it suits</b> [someone]	in this case: it is a good fit or match for my character. It can also be used for appearance: clothing that looks good on a person. (That hat really suits you.)
<b>commercial holiday</b>	a holiday that is more associated with the commercial aspect – things to buy related to the holiday – rather than the traditional or historical meaning
<b>When</b> [October] <b>rolls around</b>	referring to a time or event that occurs on a predictable and regular schedule: such as seasons, months, days, birthdays, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When October <u>rolls around</u>, I always ask if they celebrate Halloween</li> </ul>
<b>tons of</b> [something]	a very large quantity of something <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Every year, I buy <u>tons of</u> candy for the trick or treaters</li> </ul>
<b>console</b>	make someone feel better when they are sad about something. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He was so sad that there were no trick or treaters, so he had to <u>console</u> himself by eating half a bag of candy.</li> </ul>
<b>tingle</b>	have a feeling like many small sharp points pressing into your skin (like when your hand or foot goes numb) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I felt a <u>tingle</u> down my spine. (Note: Sometimes scary movies, books, etc. are described as “spine tingling”)</li> </ul>
<b>good/bad vibe</b>	a feeling that someone or something gives you <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That creepy guy gave me a really bad <u>vibe</u>.</li> </ul>
<b>roam</b> [around]	go to different places without having a particular purpose or plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The spirits rose from the grave to <u>roam</u> [around] the earth.</li> </ul>
<b>ward off</b>	to avoid being hit or attacked by something <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ward off evil spirits; ward off a blow [e.g. a hit, punch, etc.], ward off a cold</li> </ul>
<b>mindset</b>	a particular way of thinking; one’s attitude or set of opinions about something <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He has the same <u>mindset</u> about Halloween as you.</li> </ul>
<b>iconic</b>	widely recognized and well-established <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Candy corn is an <u>iconic</u> Halloween candy.</li> </ul>
<b>jump in with both feet</b>	To begin or undertake something quickly, enthusiastically, and without fear <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I didn’t want to <u>jump in with both feet</u> and order the ice cream cone in case I didn’t like it, so I asked for a sample first.</li> </ul>
<b>in moderation</b>	in a way that is reasonable and not excessive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The candy is very sweet, but I enjoy it <u>in moderation</u>.</li> </ul>
<b>come up with</b> [something]	This very common and useful phrasal verb means to create or think of something new <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I don’t know who <u>came up with</u> the idea of circus peanuts, but it’s a very strange combination.</li> </ul>
<b>coffin</b>	a box in which a dead person is placed to be buried
<b>hinge</b>	a usually metal piece that attaches a door, gate, or cover to something and allows it to open and close

## Vocabulary: Words and Phrases Used in the Conversation

<b>bob</b>	to move up and down quickly or repeatedly [e.g. <i>the bird <u>bobbed</u> its head up and down as it searched for food.</i> ]
<b>bob for apples</b>	to play a children's game in which you try to grab floating apples with your teeth
<b>mold</b>	a container that is used to give its shape to something that is poured or pressed into it [e.g. a Jello mold, cake mold, etc.] In this case, a brain mold to make Jello in the shape of a brain for Halloween.
<b>carve</b>	cut a pattern or design into the surface of something • We <u>carve</u> pumpkins every Halloween [to make a Jack-o'-lantern]
<b>guts</b>	the internal organs of an animal or [informally] the inside parts of something • To make a Jack-o'-lantern, first take the <u>guts</u> out of the pumpkin.
<b>hard-core</b>	very active and enthusiastic • I'm a <u>hard-core</u> Halloween fan.
<b>cheesy</b>	of poor quality, fake, or lacking style or good taste; unpleasantly exaggerated • The movie is a little <u>cheesy</u> , but I still like it.
<b>slasher movies</b>	from the verb slash [describing a particular way to cut with a knife] it is a type of horror movie, typically involving a psychopathic serial killer
<b>gore (noun) gory (adj.)</b>	violent images or scenes that show a lot of blood • I don't really like <u>gory</u> slasher movies.
<b>unincorporated towns</b>	describing areas that are outside the city limits and not governed by any local municipal corporation.



## See you later, alligator; after a while, crocodile!

The unspecified time phrase “a *while*” is used very commonly by native speakers, but many English learners tend not to use this when speaking. They may use “*some time*” instead, which is fine, but may seem a bit more formal. For everyday conversation, “a while” sounds a bit more casual.

### Here are some examples of this phrase from the conversation:

- Another Halloween tradition is going to a haunted maze. I haven’t been to one of those in a while.
- I hadn’t seen that movie in a while, and I wasn’t sure if I’d still like it.
- I didn’t look it up [the name of the town: Hell, Michigan], but I heard about it a while ago, and apparently, they embrace the craziness of the name.
- I should make baked pumpkin seeds again one of these days; it’s been a while.
  - On a related note, “one of these days” is another expression of unspecified time to talk about something you want to do in the future, but there is no specific plan.

Depending on context, this unspecified amount of time can be a few minutes or a very long time ago. For example: I decided to rest for a while (short time) - I haven’t seen him in a while (longer time).

*By the way, the phrase above, “See you later, alligator; after a while, crocodile” is a silly rhyme that makes a playful way to say goodbye before a temporary parting. Sometimes it’s simplified to: “See you later, alligator” or even: “later, gator.”*

### Join the Conversation

- What do you think of the Halloween traditions in the U.S.? Do you like them? Take a look at the links given on the first page. Do any of them sound interesting or fun to you?
- In your country, do people celebrate Halloween? If so, how does it differ from the way it’s done in the United States?
- Some people think there are potential risks or dangers with trick or treating. What dangers might there be for the trick or treaters, or for the people giving out candy in their homes?
- What are some good costumes that you have seen? If you went to a Halloween party where you had to wear a costume, what would you dress up as?
- What do you think are the best types of candy to get for Halloween? Have you tasted candy corn? If so, how does it taste? Do you like it? Are there any types of candy that you would not want to eat?
- Do you like scary movies? What about suspenseful or mystery movies? What is the best scary or suspenseful movie you have seen?
- Have you ever been to a haunted house (or something similar)? What was your experience?

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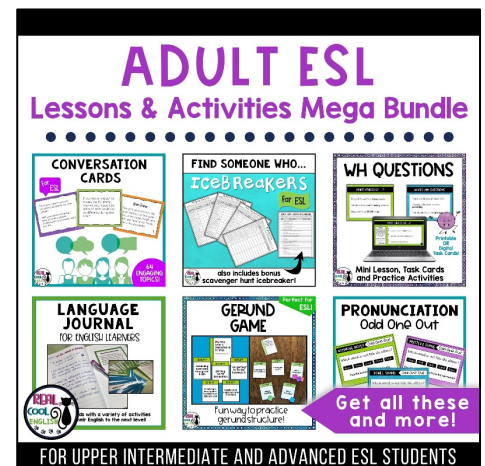
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