

HALLOWEEN

It seems that everyone likes a scary story. As autumn days grow shorter and darker, forcing us indoors, this is the perfect time to tell ghost stories.

Ghost stories and tales of the supernatural have been around for centuries and are a feature of nearly every culture. Though many people may not believe in ghosts today, stories about haunted castles, enchanted ruins and spooky spectres are still very popular.

Why do we like to be scared so much? One theory is that frightening stories cause a release of adrenaline which makes us feel a 'rush'. Adrenaline is the same hormone that is released in a fight or flight situation, and, because there is no real danger, we enjoy this 'thrill'. So we tell ghost stories around the campfire, go to frightening movies, read chilling novels – all in search of a spine-tingling sensation.

As October 31st approaches – and Halloween – why not use this opportunity to incorporate some ghostly language and tasks into your lessons?

We have put together a variety of activities that can be used at various levels and with different age groups, read on!

These words are all synonyms for 'ghost'

APPARITION

BANSHEE

GHOUL

PHANTOM

POLTERGEIST

SHADE

SHADOW

SPECTRE

SPIRIT

SPOOK

WRAITH



SCARY COLLOCATIONS

Segment: All

Level: Intermediate and above

Instructions

Make spooky collocations with nouns and adjectives.

1. Use the nouns in the box or add your own.
2. Choose one of each and write a short descriptive paragraph or story.
3. Underline the collocations.

     **NOUNS:**                                

scream
castle
apparition
event
spectre
shriek
ruins
house
deed
forest
cemetery
night
moon
alley
road
expression
stone circle
moonlight
churchyard
evening
shadow
bat
sound

mysterious

haunted

dark

spooky

gloomy

Example story:

It was a gloomy night in the haunted forest.
The moonlight made dark shadows in the trees.
As I walked, I heard a mysterious sound, then I
saw a spooky house ahead of me on the path.



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GHOULISH WORD FORMS

Segment: All

Level: Intermediate and above

Instructions

Use the correct form of the word in brackets in each of the sentences below.

1. (dark)

The clouds covered the moon and the sky _____.

Children are often afraid of the _____.

2. (haunt)

The memory of the ghost will _____ me for the rest of my life.

The beast's eyes stared _____ at the frightened traveller.

3. (terrify)

They ran out of the building _____.

That film _____ me, but my brother wasn't scared at all.

4. (ruin)

The ghost of the old soldier can still be seen walking in the castle
_____.

Please don't tell me the end of the story – you will
_____ the suspense!

5. (spook)

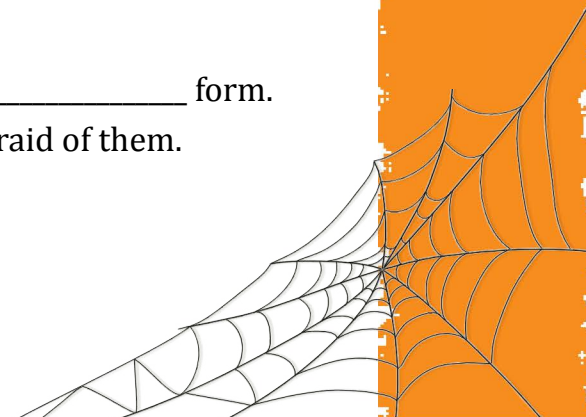
Try not to make a loud noise or you might _____ the horses.

Another word for 'ghost' is '_____'.


6. (ghost)

In the dim light of the candle, I could see a _____ form.

I don't believe in _____, so I'm not afraid of them.

FRIGHTFUL IDIOMS

Segment: Teenagers and Adults

Level: High-intermediate and above

Instructions

Read the sentences below. The underlined words are idioms. Match the idiom with the meanings in the box.

be a mistake	very frightened	coward
make (someone) uncomfortable	make (someone) scared	very white, pale
deserted	stopped working	



1. I don't recommend that horror film. It will scare the living daylights out of you!
2. My old car finally gave up the ghost, so I'll have to buy a new one.
3. When she saw the dark shadow in the in the moonlight, she was scared stiff.
4. What's the matter? You look as if you've seen a ghost!
5. Oh, don't be such a scaredy-cat. Nothing bad is going to happen.
6. That spooky old house gives me the creeps.
7. I wouldn't do that if I were you. It will come back to haunt you.
8. No one lived there anymore. It was a ghost town.



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SPOOKY CLOZE 1

Segment: All

Level: High-intermediate and above

Instructions

This activity practises narrative verbs. Complete the story with the correct form of the verbs in brackets.

It was a dark and stormy night, just after midnight. The cold rain ¹ _____ (come) down in sheets and every time the lightning ² _____ (flash), silhouettes of the bare trees ³ _____ (loom) menacingly overhead.

Earlier in the evening, Ron and his five friends ⁴ _____ (collect) a bag of candy and were looking forward to a sweet feast. As they were jumping over the locked fence and ⁵ _____ (run) through the muddy schoolyard on their way to the forbidding gloom of the old, abandoned school, they suddenly ⁶ _____ (remember) stories of the ghost teacher. "We shouldn't go in!" Ron ⁷ _____ (shout), but the others ⁸ _____ (not stop), so he had to follow.

They ⁹ _____ (find) an empty classroom. It was so cold that the boys could see their breath hanging in the air like ghosts. Using pieces of the old wooden desks for firewood, they ¹⁰ _____ (build) a fire, then put on some loud music and started messing around, throwing chalk, yelling, drawing rude pictures on the board and singing. They ¹¹ _____ (not notice) that a dark, menacing form ¹² _____ (appear) slowly out of the shadows. It was the ghost teacher! He ¹³ _____ (scowl) and his eyes were blazing with a fiery light. He let out a blood-curdling shriek as he hurled himself at the boys. Screaming at the top of their lungs, the boys ¹⁴ _____ (run) out of the building leaving everything behind. They never went there again.

Glossary

To loom – to appear large and threatening

Menacingly – threateningly

Gloom – darkness

Messing around – playing, joking

To scowl – to show anger or displeasure in your facial expression

To blaze – to shine

Shriek – scream



SPOOKY CLOZE 2

Segment: All

Level: Pre-intermediate and low intermediate

Instructions

This activity practises past tense verbs. Complete the story with the correct form of the verbs in brackets.

It was a dark and stormy night, just after midnight. It ¹ _____ (rain) heavily and every time the lightning ² _____ (flash), you could see the outline of the dark, winter trees.

Earlier in the evening, Ron and his five friends had collected a bag of candy and were excited about eating it. They ³ _____ (hop) over the locked fence and ran through the muddy schoolyard on their way to the empty old school. Then, they suddenly ⁴ _____ (remember) stories of the ghost teacher. "We shouldn't go in!" Ron shouted, but the others ⁵ _____ (not stop). He had to follow.

They ⁶ _____ (find) an empty classroom. It was cold and dark. The boys ⁷ _____ (break) the old wooden desks so they could build a fire. Some boys ⁸ _____ (build) the fire, and others put on loud music.

They started playing - throwing chalk, yelling, drawing pictures on the board and singing. They ⁹ _____ (not notice) that a dark, scary form was slowly appearing behind the desk. It was the ghost teacher! He ¹⁰ _____ (frown) and his eyes were red. He screamed loudly as he rushed towards the boys. The frightened boys ¹¹ _____ (run) out of the building. They never went there again.



SPOOKY CLOZE - ANSWERS

CLOZE 1

1. was coming
2. flashed
3. loomed
4. had collected
5. running
6. remembered
7. shouted
8. didn't stop
9. found
10. built
11. didn't notice
12. was appearing (or had appeared)
13. was scowling
14. ran

CLOZE 2

1. was raining
2. flashed
3. hopped
4. remembered
5. didn't stop
6. found
7. broke
8. built
9. didn't notice
10. was frowning
11. ran

READ A GHOST STORY

Why not set aside some time to read a ghost story to your students? It provides listening practice and can provide a welcome change from other types of activities.

Capture students' interest by involving them in the story. Some ideas below:

- Read the title and ask students to predict what the story will be about.
- Stop at various points in the story and ask questions: *Why do you think she did that? Who do you think this person is? What would you do if you were in a similar situation? What do you think will happen next?*
- Give each student a word from the story. When they hear the word, ask them to raise their hand.
- Stop the story at an interesting point. Ask students to finish the story in pairs, share their endings, then read the ending to the story.
- Find out if students have heard similar stories.
- Ask students to write a dialogue between two main characters in the story.
- Ask students to write a news article based on the events in the story.



WRITE A GHOST STORY

To write a scary story, you need a scary setting, a scary plot line and plenty of scary words. Many ghost stories are set in old places which are in ruins. Castles and old houses are typical. Ghost stories also typically feature some sort of tragic event which causes the ghost to appear.

Writing a ghost story is a fun way to practice using narrative tenses and add interesting details through the use of adjectives and action verbs. Story writing is also an ideal way to differentiate, since students can write a story with as little or much detail and language variety as they can manage.

Before asking students to write a ghost story, do some preparation work to lay the foundations. You might want to review narrative tenses and pre-teach some vocabulary. To stimulate their imaginations, read or have students read a ghost story. You will find some excellent ghost stories at a range of levels in the Fantasy and Horror section in the Oxford Bookworms Library.

Use the following framework to help your students plan their story:

SETTING: (Where does the story take place?)

e.g. an old, creepy abandoned school

CHARACTERS: (Who is in the story?)

e.g. 6 friends having fun

SETTING THE SCENE: (What time of day? What's the weather like?)

e.g. It was a dark and stormy night, just after midnight

ACTION: (What happens in the story?)

e.g. The 6 friends jumped over the locked fence and made their way into the school. They started writing graffiti on the black boards, playing loud music. They broke the desks so they could make a fire.

CLIMAX: (What's the most exciting part of the story? How did the characters feel?)

e.g. The dark, menacing form of the teacher appeared along with a blood-curdling scream. The friends were petrified.



WRITE A GHOST STORY CONTINUED

RESOLUTION: (What happened as a result?)
e.g. The friends ran out the school and never went back.

The words in **bold** below can be found in the Oxford 3000.

TITLE: (What is the title of your story?)
e.g. The haunted schoolhouse

Scary adjectives:

abandoned
blood-curdling
creepy
dark
deserted
eerie
enchanted
forbidden
frightening
frightful
ghastly
ghostly
gloomy
haunted
intimidating
menacing
mysterious
old
petrifying
ruined
scary
sinister
spine-chilling
spooky
strange
terrifying
unearthly
weird

Scary verbs:

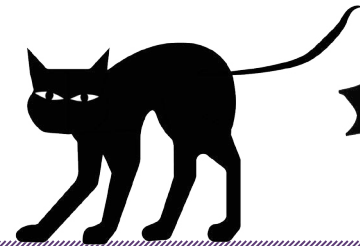
To loom
to **appear**
to **jump**
to shriek
to **scream**
to creak
to moan
to howl

Scary sounds:

Footsteps in the **night**
creaking **door**
a **scream**
rustling **leaves**

Scary things:

black cat	black bat
full moon	a blood-curdling scream
dark night	shadows
forbidden forest	nightmare
haunted house	cobwebs



SHADOWY WEB QUEST

Vocabulary:

- All these words mean 'ghost'. Can you find another on your Web quest?
ghost = spectre = spirit = _____
- All these words mean 'scary'. Can you find another on your Web quest?
scary = spooky = spine-tingling = _____

 How many of these words and phrases can you find on your 
 shadowy web quest? 

 ☐ spectre ☐ spirits ☐ spooky ☐ spine-tingling 

 ☐ scary ☐ ghost ☐ horrify ☐ nightmare 

Think about it:

1. What do you think a ghost walk or ghost trail is?
Look online to find out. Here are two websites that will help you:
www.ghosttrail.org **www.london-ghost-walk.co.uk**
2. Britain has a lot of haunted places. Look at **www.haunted-britain.com** to find out:
 - What kinds of places are haunted?
 - Why are some places haunted?
3. Look at the list of haunted castles here:
www.haunted-britain.com/haunted-castles.htm
Who are the ghosts of Taunton castle?
4. Look at one of the other castles listed. Which ghost(s) haunt it and why?
5. Name 3 books you can buy at the haunted book shop:
www.haunted-britain.com/new_page_5.htm
6. Can children go on the ghost walk in Oxford?
www.ghosttrail.org/oxford-ghost-trail
7. BONUS QUESTION: When is the Ghouls, Ghosts and Graveyards walk in London?

