



- Do the pressures come from media messages, from their peers, or both?
- How might they overcome these pressures?

Background information on masks, and mask-making may be found by using “create masks” in a search engine or visiting:

<www.masks.org/>
 <www.mpm.edu/collect/mask.html>
 <arttech.about.com/library/bl_modern_mask_making.htm>

Background information on face painting may be found by using “face painting” in a search engine.

Note: If the children plan to use the masks on Halloween, discuss the importance of having good visibility with the mask.

2. Exploring Your Neighbourhood

In the past, Halloween was a time when the social bonds of a neighbourhood were strengthened as children visited the homes of neighbours and friends to “trick-or-treat.” Children dressed up and overcame their fear of strangers in exchange for candy, while adults overcame their mistrust of strange children for the pleasure of seeing the exotic outfits and remembering their own childhood adventures (R. Seltzer; *Why Bother to Save Halloween?*) Here are a few activities that might strengthen the school community through the celebration of Halloween:

- Establish the idea that Halloween is a festival celebrated by some, but not all, cultures.
- Invite community members (e.g., seniors) into the school to tell stories of how they celebrated Halloween as children.
- Find a good storyteller in the community, and invite him or her to tell spooky stories to the class.
- Invite new Canadians to talk about their first Halloween in Canada. (Did they know about the custom, or was it a strange surprise?)
- Invite new Canadians to tell stories of how Halloween is celebrated in their country.
- Record visitors’ stories, and make them available through the school library.
- Have students retell and record stories of their own Halloween adventures.

- Share class costume parades and other Halloween celebrations with daycares, seniors’ centres, or hospitals in the community.
- Take a class walk through the community to look at outdoor Halloween decorations, and Jack-o-lantern art.
- Consider the pioneer roots of Halloween. How have they been adapted to city life?

This is an appropriate time to do a neighbourhood walk and practise trick-or-treating, respecting those apartments/houses that are not participating, avoiding hazards in the dark, like sprinklers, shrubs, and crossing the street safely.

3. Scary and TOO Scary

People like to be frightened a little, but not too much. Discuss the idea that different people find different images and ideas to be very scary (e.g., some refugees may find images of fighting terrifying). Use this unit to teach empathy and respect for the fears of others. Make the classroom a safe place for the discussion of fears that are aroused by scary images in literature, movies, and TV.

Have students create a list of scary ideas from books, movies, videos, TV, video games. Order the list from least scary to most scary. Ask the students to give their reasons for the ratings. Explore strategies students have developed to restore a sense of safety after being frightened by a story.

Ask students to create a Halloween story that is exciting, but not too scary for the students one grade below. Focus the discussion on what is scary, but not too scary, and why. Challenge the students to provide a part of the story that restores a sense of safety for their audience.

For Primary Students:

Divide the class into groups which might examine several packages from videotape/DVD and video game. Some groups might look at videotape packages, some at DVD packages, and some at video-game packages. Identify the classification labels and their locations on the packages. Discuss what the icons mean, who might have placed them there, and why they placed them there.

Redraw the classification icons on a chart that helps the students understand what they mean, and for which ages of children they are intended. Discuss why the icons are shaped the way that they are, and how their shapes and colours make them easy to understand, recognize, and remember.

The chart might be posted in the classroom or might be copied and sent home to help parents understand the classification system.

For Junior Students:

Introduce one or more of the various ratings categories. Use “rating television,” “rating video games,” “rating movies,” etc., in a search engine.

Ask students to identify the existing ratings for some movies, shows, or games they have seen or used. Consider the qualities that might have caused ratings boards to select those ratings. Discuss whether students agree with the current ratings, and why.

Apply the guidelines to a specific movie, show, or game to consider how effectively the students can apply the guidelines.

4. Ghost Stories

What would Halloween be without a few good ghost stories to set the atmosphere of excitement and participation for the night itself?

Explore the genre of the ghost story in its many forms: oral stories (told in a darkened room by a good storyteller), written stories, videos, and movies (age-appropriate).

Consider stories that contain friendly ghosts, hostile ghosts, and those that are told from the ghosts’ point of view. This activity provides a good opportunity for a cross-cultural story selection, since all cultures have a repertoire of good ghost stories.

Visit/discuss Toronto sites considered to be haunted (e.g., the Toronto Island Lighthouse, McKenzie House).

Explore ghostly special effects in movies and TV: how are they created?

Identify a simple special effect, e.g., fog made from dry ice, scars made from latex glue, or spooky faces from low-angle lighting, and create them in the classroom. Listen to the soundtrack without watching the visual image for a scary passage of a ghost movie.

- How does sound help create tension and excitement in the story?

Find or create sound effects in the classroom.

Discuss storytelling strategies that help build suspense (e.g., descriptive passages, foreshadowing). These ideas are appropriate for every medium of storytelling. Have students create their own ghost stories as books, poems, plays, video games, or movies. Discuss the presence of ghosts in Halloween literature. Add the students’ work to the school’s collection of Halloween material.