ARTICLES & ACTIVITIES

GRADES 3–5





HISTORY OF HALLOWEEN & DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS

BUNDLE!

KEEP SCROLLING TO SEE WHAT'S INSIDE!

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- 🔑 **Vocabulary Cards** with key terms
- 📜 **Posters** that define each holiday
- 📖 **Reading Passage** for both holidays
- 🔊 **Audio versions** of each passage
- 📱 **QR Codes** for extended research
- 🗒️ **Graphic Organizers** for note-taking
- ✍️ **Comprehension Activities** (Main Idea, Cause & Effect)
- 🧩 **Fact Sort** categorizing events & attributes
- 💬 **Discussion Questions**
- 📝 **Writing Page**
- ✔️ **Answer Key**



VOCABULARY CARDS

a structure set up to honor something



altar



tradition

a long-established way of doing something passed on from generation to generation

Name: _____

Halloween Vocabulary Activity

Cut out the words and definitions. Match them with the pictures.

Picture	Word	Definition
		
		
		
		

Name: _____

Día de los Muertos Vocabulary Ac

Cut out the words and definitions. Match them with the pictures

Picture	Word	Definit
		
		
		
		
		
		

Name: _____

Día de los Muertos Vocabulary Activity

Fill in the matrix for each word.

Definition	Characteristics
remember	
Examples	Non-Examples

Definition	Characteristics
memory	
Examples	Non-Examples

VOCABULARY ACTIVITIES

While You're Reading

Mark with Symbols

! — when you find something interesting

? — when you are unsure or confused by something

* — when you find something important that you want to remember

Highlight with Colors

yellow — vocabulary words or key words

green — key phrases or definitions

Make Your Own Notations

symbol or color — meaning

The History of Halloween

A combination of these practices turned into what we now know as trick-or-treating!

Traditions in the United States

When many Irish people immigrated to the United States in the 1800s, they brought their Halloween, or All Hallows Eve, traditions with them. One of those traditions was the carving of turnips, which eventually turned into the carving of pumpkins.

By the late 1800s and early 1900s, Halloween in the United States had become a night of vandalism and violent pranks. To try and prevent this violence, towns and cities turned Halloween into a community celebration. They would host festivals and parades, people would get together to carve pumpkins and eat delicious foods, and children would dress up and trick-or-treat.





Halloween Today

Today, Halloween in the United States looks much like it did in the mid-to-late 1900s. Most childr… …ress up in fun or scary costumes a… trick-or-treating … never have to do …

Some people … yards with ghos… tombstones. Oth… jack-o'-lantern… and put them … and shadows i… course, there … candy!

Now that … some of the … our Hallowe… traditions, … not look at … lanterns th…

The History of Halloween

Jack-o-lanterns, scary ghosts and skeletons, trick or treating, costumes and candy... that's Halloween! Even though Halloween has been around for hundreds of years, it wasn't always called Halloween, nor did it look exactly like today's celebration. Halloween traditions in the United States are a mix of practices that trace back to celebrations around the world throughout history.

The Origins of Halloween

Historians have many different opinions on the origins of Halloween. Many believe that Halloween dates back at least 2000 years to the Celtic festival Samhain (sow-win), which began at dusk on October 31.

The Celts, who lived in what are now Ireland and parts of the UK, celebrated Samhain to mark the end of the harvest season and the arrival of winter. They believed that during this time, spirits and the ghosts of the dead would visit the living.

To scare away evil spirits, the Celts would wear disguises. They'd also light bonfires during the festival and take some of the fire back home to light their own hearths, believing that it would keep evil away. The smoke from the bonfires attracted bats. The practices of Samhain influenced modern-day Halloween traditions, like lighting candles, bat decorations, and wearing costumes as disguises.

All Saints' Day & Mix of Practices

When Christianity had spread to the lands of the Celts in the 800s, the Christian church designated November 1 as All Saints' Day, a day to honor and remember the saints of the church with prayers.

The evening before All Saints' Day is called All Hallows Eve, and the day after eventually became known as All Souls Day, a day to remember all the dead. We get the word Halloween from All Hallows Eve. Can you hear the similarities?

Over the next few hundred years, Samhain practices mixed with practices of the Christian church and other cultures. Other traditions were added, too.

One of those was "souling" - when the poor in Britain would go door-to-door to beg for food called "soul cakes" in exchange for prayers. In Scotland and Ireland, young people dressed up and went door-to-door in a tradition called guising. Rather than praying for treats, they would sing a song, tell a joke, or perform a trick.

Día de los Muertos

…tos, or Day of the Dead, …ated in Mexico and …Mexican descent around …me to remember and …who have died. Day of the …ebrated on November 1

…s of Día de los Muertos?

…eve that Dia de Los …ts in ancient Aztec …ated with the Catholic …Day and All Souls' Day, …of both.

…rtos celebrated?

…s is not a scary holiday …tion. It is a joyful time … to share memories of … have passed away … them as if they were …e also make little … On these altars, …y members place … person and include …nd drinks. Candles … dead person's spirit

…r at gravesites to …and decorate them … flowers called

Skeletons and Marigolds

Brightly colored skeletons, from life-size paper ones to small skulls, are a familiar sight during Dia de Los Muertos. They are reminders that death is a part of life. Skeletons are often posed doing everyday things, like playing guitar or making food. People give each other sugar candy in the shape of skulls or place sugar skulls on ofrendas or graves.

Marigolds, important flowers during this celebration, symbolize the shortness of life. Marigolds have a strong scent and often decorate altars and graves, giving a sense of celebration to the holiday.

Other Celebrations

Dia de Los Muertos is generally considered a Mexican holiday. However, it is also celebrated in other Latin and South American countries. In Brazil, it is called Dia de Finados. Dia de Finados is a religious day to remember the dead and does not include festivals or celebrations. Families visit gravesites to place flowers and candles around graves.

While Dia de Los …uertos follows Halloween, it is not a …exican Halloween. It is a special holiday ce…rated by many people in Mexico and …er parts of Latin America to remember …nd honor loved ones who have died.

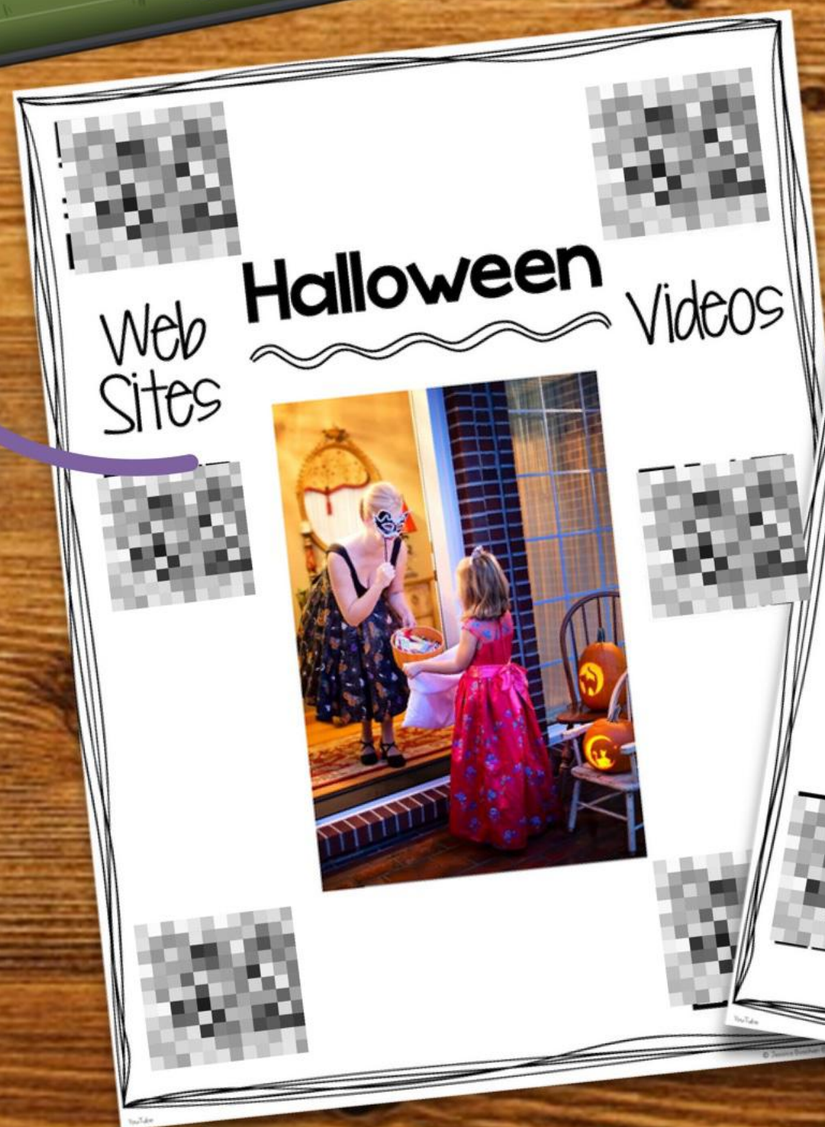
listen to it

INFORMATIONAL ARTICLE

WEBSITES


elloween - Animation
31st Oct


History
Sugar Skull
Traditions
Recipes
Mexican Culture
About
47 Days 19 Hours
DAY
OF THE
DEAD
Día de los muertos


Web Sites
Halloween
Videos


Web Sites
Día de los muertos
Videos

Dia de los Muertos Note Taking Sheet

Name:

Origins

Three Other Facts

Altars

Gravesites

Skeletons & Marigolds

Halloween Note Taking Sheet

Name:

Origins

All Saints' Day

U.S. Traditions

Today

Note Taking Sheet

Name:

What are the origins of Dia de los Muertos?

Describe how Dia de los Muertos is celebrated in homes and at gravesites

Write three facts about Dia de los Muertos:

Fact

Fact

Fact

Why are skeletons and marigolds important symbols?

Other Information:

Sequence

Name:

Cut out the significant parts in the History of Halloween and glue them in order.

1

2

3

4

6

By the late 1800s and early 1900s, Halloween in the United States had become a night of vandalism and violent pranks.

Over the next few hundred years, Samhain practices mixed with practices of the Christ church and other cultu

Main Idea & Details

Name:

Cut out the details. Sort the details and place them in order. Write a main idea for the paragraph.

M

is known for its skulls ns, especially brightly d ones that are posed doing everyday th

Dia de Los ot a scary holiday a celebration.

Day of the De ally celebr on Oct 1 and 2

Many families gather at gravesites to clean the gravestones and decorate them with brightly-colored flowers.

It is a joyful time when families gather to share memories of their loved ones who have passed away.

It is a special holiday celebrated by many people in Mexico and other parts of Latin America to remember and honor loved ones who have died.

NOTE TAKING SHEETS

COMPREHENSION ACTIVITIES

Directions: Cut apart the labels and facts. Sort the facts into the best category or do an open sort and create your own categories.

Celebrations at home

Celebrations at gravesites

Skeletons & Marigolds

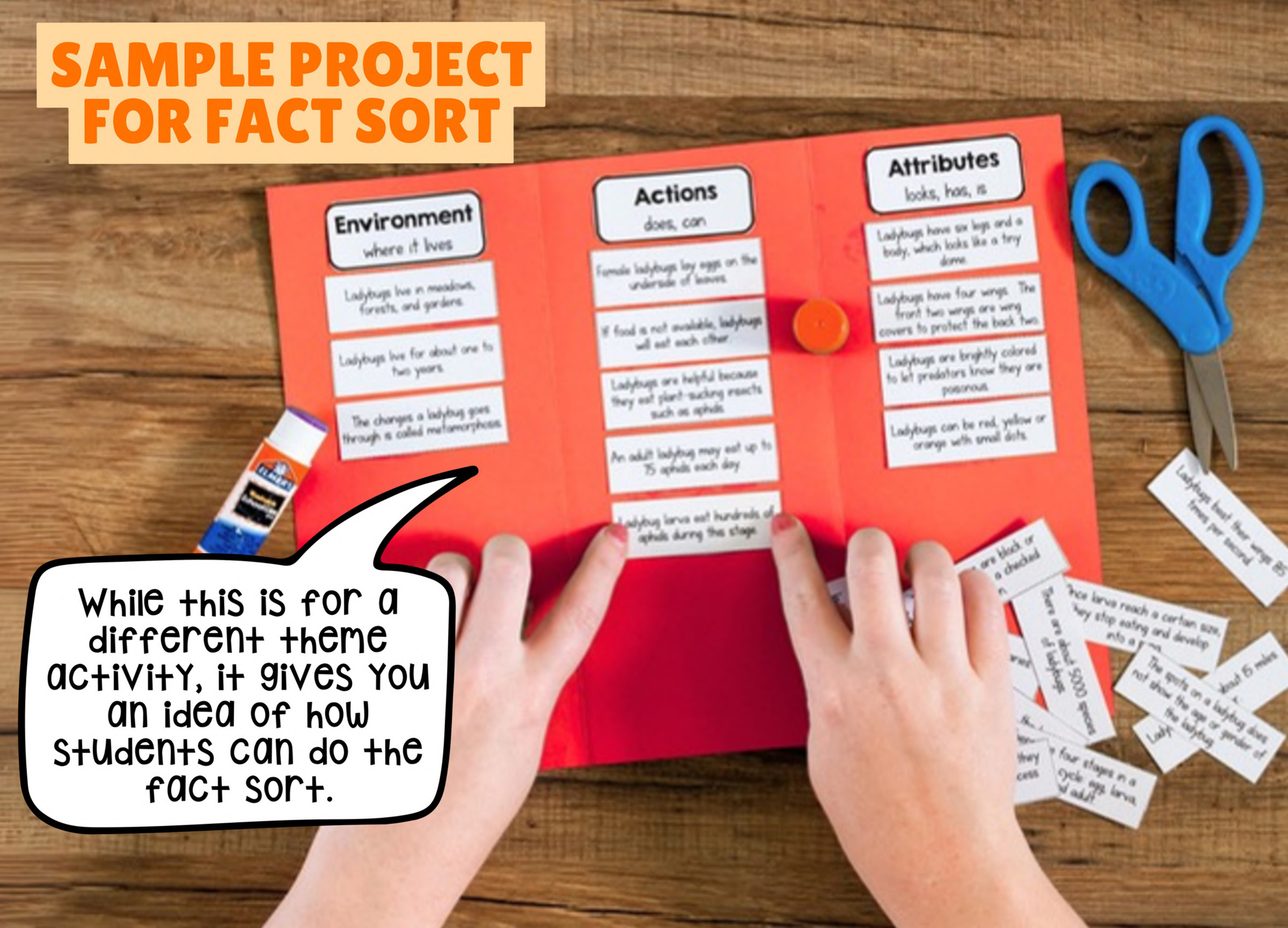
For a more advanced sort, do an open sort and make up your own categories.

Researches believe that Dia de los Muertos orginates from ancient Aztec celebrations and the Catholic holidays All Saints' Dat and All Souls.	On these altars, called ofrendas, family members place pictures of the dead person and include their favorite foods and drinks.	Skeletons are reminders that death is a part of life.
Skeletons ar… everyday thi… or making food.	brightly decorated…	It is a time to remember and honor …nes who have died. Day of …ually celebrated on …ovember 1 and 2.
It is a joyful time wh… gather to share memories of their loved ones who have passed and share meals… they were…	Dia de Los M… …y celebr…	…ve a strong scent and …orate altars and graves, …nse of celebration to the holiday.
It is a special holiday ce… many people in Mexico … parts of Latin Americ… remember and hon… who have d…	Mexi… …and …	…e also make little altars in their homes.
Many families gather … to clean the graves… decorate them with b…tly-colored flowers.	…uertos is not a scary …y but rather a celebration.	Skeletons, from life-size paper ones to small skulls, are a familiar sight during Dia de Los Muertos.
Marigolds, important flowers during this celebration, symbolize the shortness of life.	People give each other sugar candy int he shape of skulls or place sugar skulls on ofrendas or graves.	Candles light the way for the dead person's spirit to find their altar.

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FACT SORT

SAMPLE PROJECT FOR FACT SORT



ACTIVITIES FOR BOTH HOLIDAYS

Name: _____

Halloween and Día de los Muertos

Name: _____

Compare and Contrast Halloween and Día de los Muertos

What are some traditions specific to Halloween?

What are some traditions specific to Día de los Muertos?

How are some parts of the origin stories the same?

How are some of the traditions the same?

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Discussion Cards

How did the Celts celebrate the end of the harvest season?

Why do you think cultures celebrated the end of the harvest season?

Which modern-day traditions can you trace back to historical practices?

Describe the practices of souling and guising.

t is Día de los
s and how is it
lebrated?

eople honor
during Día
luertos?

Name: _____

Compare It

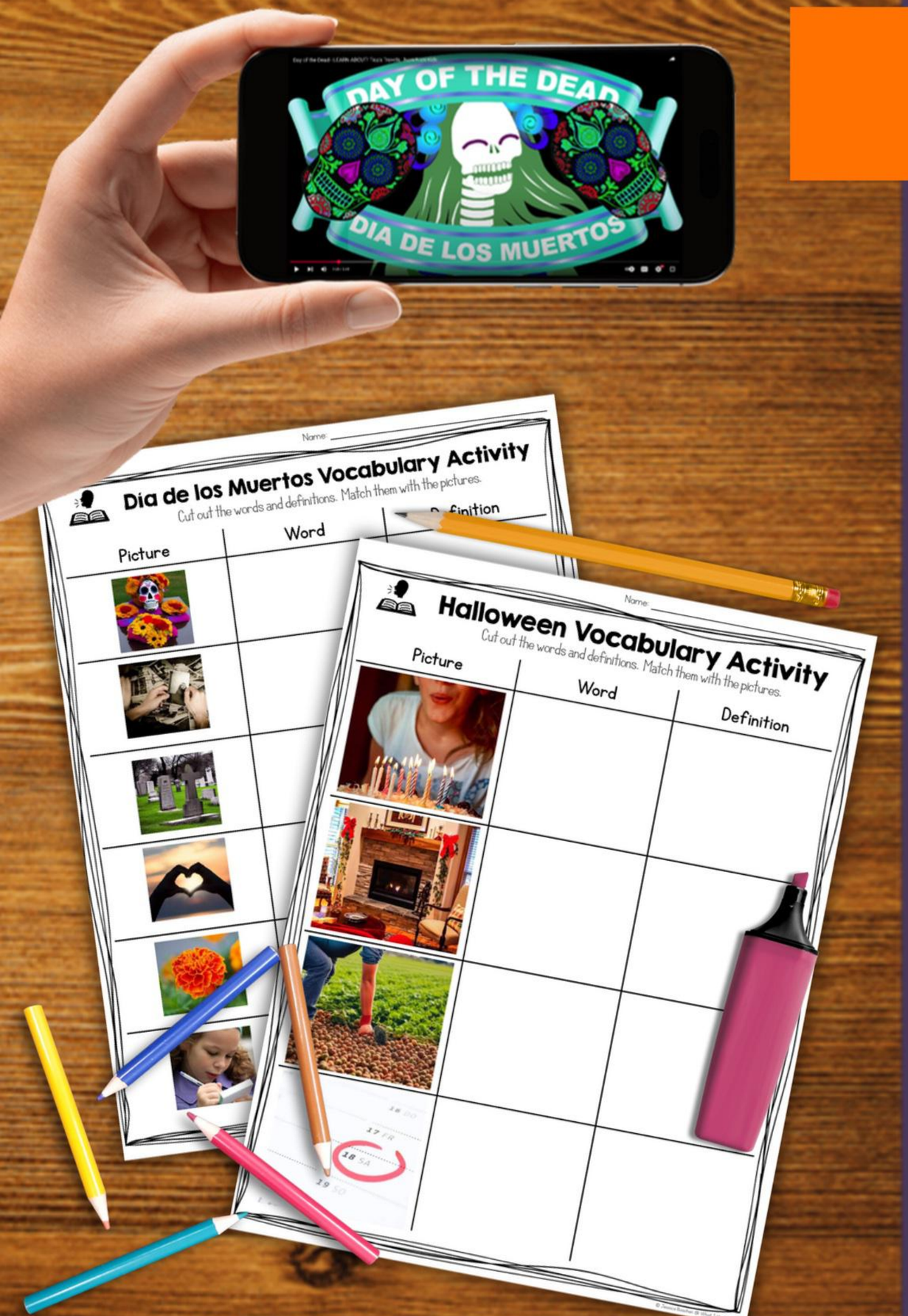
How are Halloween and Día de los Muertos alike? How are they different?

Halloween

same

Día de los Muertos

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WAYS TO USE IN THE CLASSROOM

🌅 **Morning Reading –** holiday-themed warm-up texts

👩‍🏫 **Whole-Group Lessons –** read and discuss passages

📚 **Small Group Practice –** vocabulary cards and organizers

📝 **Independent Work –** comprehension questions and fact sort

💻 **Research Extension –** QR codes and videos

🏠 **Homework –** writing page or discussion prompts

YOU WILL LOVE THIS BECAUSE



Rich Cultural Learning

Helps students explore traditions of Halloween and Día de los Muertos while building cross-cultural awareness and appreciation for diversity.



Interactive Activities

Includes fact sorts, graphic organizers, and discussion prompts that encourage active participation and deeper understanding of holiday traditions.



Time-Saving Resource

Ready-to-use materials with answer keys make it easy to prep meaningful, standards-aligned holiday lessons in just minutes.

TEACHERS LOVE IT!

This is a great way to compare Halloween and Dia de los Muertos. My students really enjoyed finding out the difference since we celebrate both here.

Amy L.

Great way to get students engaged in seasonal activities while working on compare and contrast writing!

Alayna S.



My passion is making learning accessible to all students. I love scaffolding learning, breaking down the concepts and building them up so that students can see the connections. I love figuring out the small components that build up to the big ideas and helping students see it all.

teach MATH

teach SCIENCE

teach READING

teach WRITING

What I have LEARNED