Halloween magic tricks for kids

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Halloween is the best night of the year to be a magician. These 9 magic tricks for kids all work with the lights down and things already in the house: a ghost that holds a pencil against your palm, a letter nobody can read until you paint it, and a potion that glows blue. No candles and nothing sharp anywhere in them.

Spooky magic tricks for kids

- Trick: The Ghost Pencil Trick · What they see: Levitation · Level: 1 Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 10 · You need: pencil, short pencil, hair tie · To learn: 5 minutes
- Trick: The Haunted Rubber Band · What they see: Penetration · Level: 2 Conjurer · Ages: 6 to 11 · You need: rubber band · To learn: 10 minutes
- Trick: The Spooky Floating Cup · What they see: Levitation · Level: 1 Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 10 · You need: cup, scissors · To learn: 5 minutes
- Trick: The Glowing Water Trick · What they see: Transformation · Level: 1 Apprentice · Ages: 6 to 11 · You need: glass, water, tonic water, UV light · To learn: 2 minutes
- Trick: Invisible Ink · What they see: Production · Level: 1 Apprentice · Ages: 5 to 10 · You need: white paper, baking soda, water, cotton swab, grape juice, paintbrush · To learn: 10 minutes

Tricks that turn spooky with the lights down

- The Thumb Off Trick — pull your thumb off, with a scream. Level 1, 5 minutes to learn, ages 5 to 8.
- The Disappearing Coin in Water — a coin that falls into a cursed glass. Level 1, 2 minutes to learn, ages 5 to 10.
- The Grey Elephant in Denmark — the ghost that reads minds. Level 1, 3 minutes to learn, ages 7 to 12.
- The Hole in Your Hand Illusion — a hole straight through somebody's hand. Level 1, 1 minute to learn, ages 5 to 9.

Make it a haunted magic show

Lights low, and no candles anywhere near it. A torch makes a better spotlight anyway. Running order: the ghost pencil trick ? the thumb off trick ? invisible ink ? the disappearing coin in water ? the glowing water trick. That's about 12 minutes, which is a whole show for ages 7 to 11. Open with the one that gets a scream, put the potions in the middle, and finish in the dark with the glowing one.

Give yourself a spooky magician name, turn the lights low and use a torch as your spotlight.

Magic School has the seven lessons on patter, misdirection and the big finish.

Safety for a spooky show

No real candles, ever — a torch or a battery tea light is a better spotlight and can't set a costume alight. LED tea lights hold button batteries. A grown-up checks the battery door is screwed shut, and never uses one a child can open. For the youngest, use a small flashlight that takes AA or AAA batteries. Keep sleeves and capes clear of your hands so the moves still work, and make sure a cape isn't long enough to trip on. Every step that uses something hot or a bright light is a grown-up's step, whatever the child's age, and Flick says so out loud before it. There is no fire, no flame and nothing sharp in a child's hand anywhere in the shop: scissors cut paper, card and string only, and a cutting step says to ask a grown-up. No trick asks a child to put anything in a mouth, a nose or an ear. Tricks with coins, dice, paperclips or pom-poms carry the AAP's choking note for brothers and sisters under 4, and none of them is offered below kindergarten. The kitchen-science tricks use only food-safe things, and a potion is always for looking at, not for drinking.

Questions parents ask

What Halloween magic tricks can a 5-year-old do?

Thumb Off needs nothing at all and gets a laugh every time, and the Hole in Your Hand takes a minute and a sheet of paper. Both work in a dim room.

Is the glowing potion safe?

It's tonic water under a small ultraviolet torch. A grown-up holds the torch, points it down at the table and never at anyone's eyes, and the potion is for looking at, not drinking — tonic water is a grown-up's bitter drink.

What's the best trick for a Halloween party?

The Glowing Potion, last, with the lights off. A dark room feels like an ending, which is exactly what you want from a closer.

More for the season: Halloween treats for kids to make in the Kitchen, Halloween activities for kids, and all our magic tricks for kids.

Free at peabody.kids/halloween-magic-tricks-for-kids