Trick-or-treat games for kids

Peabody · checked 2026-10-29

Trick-or-treat games make Halloween night play away from the screen: what to say at the door (“Trick or treat!”, “Thank you!”, “Happy Halloween!”), games for when kids knock at your door, Trick-or-Treat Bingo for the walk, and counting, sorting and sharing games with the candy once a grown-up has checked it.

Trick-or-treat games by place

- Place: When you knock · Cards: What to say at the door, The three magic words, Practise the door at home, A joke for your treat, Guess my costume, Say something nice, Shy? Wave and smile, The door pocket card, Door buddies, Spot the teal pumpkin
- Place: When they knock · Cards: Pick a pumpkin, Costume tally, Joke-for-a-treat sign, Roll for treats, The teal pumpkin bowl, Be the door greeter, Guess the knocks
- Place: On the walk · Cards: Trick-or-Treat Bingo, Jack-o'-lantern count, Costume I Spy, Street points, Glow check, Corner stop, Halloween color hunt, Owl echo
- Place: With your candy · Cards: A grown-up checks your bag first, Guess, then count in tens, Sort and graph, Fair shares, Candy trade rules, Candy tower, Candy tic-tac-toe, Eyes-closed taste test, Candy calendar, How many candies long?

There are 35 cards, all written for Peabody. Pick a place in the box above and press “Pick one for us”, or press Print to get every card to cut out, with four different Trick-or-Treat Bingo cards. Want a party game for after? The Halloween party games page has mummy wrap, pumpkin bowling, Monster Says and more.

What to say when trick-or-treating

- When: Walking up · Say or do: Only go to a house with its porch light on. Knock or ring once, then step back.
- When: The door opens · Say or do: “Trick or treat!”
- When: They hold out the bowl · Say or do: Take one treat, or as many as they say.
- When: You have your treat · Say or do: “Thank you!”
- When: Going · Say or do: “Happy Halloween!” and a wave. Say something nice: “I like your pumpkin!”
- When: Too shy to talk · Say or do: Hold out the bag, wave and smile, or hold up a door card that says the words.

Those are the three magic words: trick or treat, thank you, happy Halloween. Practise them at home with a grown-up behind a door playing a silly neighbor, and the real door is much easier.

The cards, written out

When you knock: at someone's door

What to say and do at someone's door.

• Card: What to say at the door · Ages: 3+ · Players: 1 or more · How to play: You need: A costume and a bag. Go to a door with the porch light on. Knock or ring the bell one time, then take a step back. When the door opens, say “Trick or treat!” Take one treat, or as many as they say. Say “Thank you!” and “Happy Halloween!” as you go. Grown-up: Wait at the end of the path where you can see the door, and skip any house with its light off. Safety: Stay on the porch. Never go inside a house or a car.
• Card: The three magic words · Ages: 3+ · Players: 1 or more · How to play: You need: Nothing. The three magic words are “Trick or treat!”, “Thank you!” and “Happy Halloween!” Say them in a tiny mouse voice. Now say them in a big friendly monster voice. Say them in your own voice. That's the one for the door! Grown-up: Play it on the way to the first house, so the words are ready when the door opens.
• Card: Practise the door at home · Ages: 3+ · Players: 2 or more · How to play: You need: A door at home. A grown-up goes behind a door at home and pretends to be a neighbor. Knock, step back and say “Trick or treat!” The neighbor might be silly, sleepy or very surprised. Say “Thank you!” every time, then swap jobs. Grown-up: Play it before you go out. A child who has done the door five times at home walks up to a real one more easily.
• Card: A joke for your treat · Ages: 4+ · Players: 1 or more · How to play: You need: One short joke. Pick one Halloween joke before you go out. Practise it on the walk to the first house. At the door, ask “Can I tell you a joke?” If they say yes, tell it. Try: “What do ghosts eat for breakfast? Boo-berries!” Laugh, say “Trick or treat!” and “Thank you!” Grown-up: If there's a line of kids behind, the joke can wait for the next house.
• Card: Guess my costume · Ages: 4+ · Players: 1 or more · How to play: You need: A costume. After “Trick or treat!”, ask “Can you guess what I am?” Give one clue if they are stuck, like “I say moo.” When they guess, do your costume's move or sound. Say “Thank you!” and wave goodbye. Grown-up: A quick game for a quiet street with no line at the door.
• Card: Say something nice · Ages: 3+ · Players: 1 or more · How to play: You need: Your eyes. Look at the house while you walk up. Find one thing you like: a pumpkin, a bat, a big spider web. After your treat, tell them: “I like your pumpkin!” Watch how happy that makes them. Grown-up: Neighbors put work into their porches. Being noticed is the treat they get back.
• Card: Shy? Wave and smile · Ages: 3+ · Players: 1 or more · How to play: You need: Nothing. You don't have to talk at the door. Hold out your bag, wave and smile. A grown-up or a friend can say “Trick or treat!” for you. Try saying “Thank you” in a whisper. A

whisper counts! Grown-up: Stand a little closer for a shy child and say the words together. Every child does the door their own way.

• Card: The door pocket card · Ages: 3+ · Players: 1 or more · How to play: You need: A small card in your pocket. Write or print a card: “Trick or treat! Thank you! Happy Halloween!” Keep it in your pocket or on a string. At the door, hold it up so they can read it. Smile and wave when you go. Grown-up: Good for a child who doesn't speak, is learning English or just feels shy tonight.

• Card: Door buddies · Ages: 4+ · Players: 2 or more · How to play: You need: A friend. Walk up to the door together. One buddy says “Trick or treat!” The other buddy says “Thank you!” Swap jobs at the next house. Grown-up: Brothers and sisters can be door buddies too, which helps a younger one who is still shy.

• Card: Spot the teal pumpkin · Ages: 4+ · Players: 1 or more · How to play: You need: Your eyes. Some houses put out a teal (blue-green) pumpkin. It means they have treats that are not food, like stickers or pencils. If you have a food allergy, those houses are extra good to visit. Say “Thank you for the teal pumpkin!” Grown-up: The Teal Pumpkin Project (FARE) helps kids with food allergies join in. You can put one out too.

When they knock: giving out treats

Games for the grown-up and kids giving out treats.

• Card: Pick a pumpkin · Ages: 3+ · Players: Every visitor · How to play: You need: 3 paper cups with pumpkin faces, treats. Draw a pumpkin face on three paper cups. Turn them upside down with a treat under each one. Each trick-or-treater picks a pumpkin and lifts it. Every cup has a treat, so every pick is a good one! Grown-up: Refill the cups out of sight between visitors. It slows the porch down in a fun way.

• Card: Costume tally · Ages: 4+ · Players: 1 or more · How to play: You need: Paper and a pencil by the door. Make columns: animals, superheroes, ghosts and monsters, something else. Make a tally mark for every costume that comes to the door. Cross every fifth mark over the other four. At the end of the night, count each column in fives. Grown-up: Ask the next morning: which column had the most? How many more than the smallest?

• Card: Joke-for-a-treat sign · Ages: 4+ · Players: Every visitor · How to play: You need: A sign and an extra bowl. Make a sign: “Tell us a joke, get an extra treat!” Put it on the door where visitors can see it. When someone tells a joke, laugh and give an extra treat. No joke? That's fine. Everyone still gets a treat. Grown-up: Kids at home can keep a list of the jokes they hear. The silliest one goes on the fridge.

• Card: Roll for treats · Ages: 4+ · Players: Every visitor · How to play: You need: A big dice (or a foam one), two bowls. Put out an orange bowl and a purple bowl. Each trick-or-treater rolls the dice. An odd number picks from the orange bowl, an even number from the purple bowl. Everyone gets one treat, whatever they roll. Grown-up: A big foam dice is easy for small hands and won't roll off the porch.

• Card: The teal pumpkin bowl · Ages: 3+ · Players: Every visitor · How to play: You need: A second bowl, non-food treats. Fill a second bowl with treats that are not food. Stickers, pencils and bookmarks are good ones. Put a teal pumpkin or a teal sign by the door. Let every visitor choose a bowl. Grown-up: This is the Teal Pumpkin Project (FARE). Glow sticks and bouncy balls are for 3 and up. Safety: Keep small toys out of the bowl for little ones: anything that fits in a toilet-paper tube can choke a child under 3.
• Card: Be the door greeter · Ages: 3+ · Players: 1 or more · How to play: You need: A costume, if you like. Take a turn at the door before or after you go out. Say “Happy Halloween!” when someone knocks. Hold the bowl low for the little ones. Tell each visitor one thing you like about their costume. Grown-up: Stay at the door with your child, and keep the bowl out of reach of family pets.
• Card: Guess the knocks · Ages: 5+ · Players: 2 or more · How to play: You need: Paper and a pencil. Before dark, everyone writes a guess: how many trick-or-treaters will knock? Make a tally mark each time the door opens. At the end, count the marks. The closest guess picks the bedtime story. Grown-up: Talk about why guesses were too big or too small. That's estimating.

On the walk: games between houses

Games between the houses.

• Card: Trick-or-Treat Bingo · Ages: 4+ · Players: 1 or more · How to play: You need: A printed bingo card and a pencil. Print a bingo card for each child. Cross out a square when you see that thing on the walk. The middle square is free. Five in a row, across, down or corner to corner, is BINGO! Keep going and try to fill the whole card. Grown-up: A clipboard or a hard book makes it easy to mark on the move. A grown-up can hold the pencil between houses.
• Card: Jack-o'-lantern count · Ages: 3+ · Players: 1 or more · How to play: You need: Nothing. Guess how many jack-o'-lanterns you will see tonight. Count every glowing pumpkin face out loud. Count the plain pumpkins in a different voice. At home, compare your count with your guess. Grown-up: For older kids: count by twos for pumpkins in pairs, or keep a tally on your hand.
• Card: Costume I Spy · Ages: 4+ · Players: 2 or more · How to play: You need: Nothing. Pick a costume you can see, but don't say which. Say “I spy a costume with…” and give one clue, like a cape. Everyone guesses which costume it is. The one who guesses picks the next costume. Grown-up: Keep it kind: clues are about the costume's colors and parts, never about the person.
• Card: Street points · Ages: 5+ · Players: 1 or more · How to play: You need: Nothing (or a pencil to keep score). Play as one team and add up points together. 1 point for a pumpkin, 2 for a bat or spider web, 3 for a skeleton. 5 points for a teal pumpkin or a black cat. Add the points as you go. How high can the team get? Grown-up: Mental math on the

move. Older kids can make the point rules for the next street.

• Card: Glow check · Ages: 3+ · Players: Everyone · How to play: You need: A flashlight or glow stick for each child. Before you go, everyone gets something that glows. At every corner, a grown-up calls “Glow check!” Everyone holds up their light. Count the lights. Is everyone here? Grown-up: A head count at every corner, made into a game. Reflective tape on costumes and bags helps drivers see kids too. Safety: Glow sticks are for ages 3 and up and are not for chewing.

• Card: Corner stop · Ages: 3+ · Players: Everyone · How to play: You need: A grown-up. Walk on the sidewalk, not the street. At every corner, stop and freeze like a statue. Look left, look right, then look left again. Hold a grown-up's hand and cross together. Grown-up: Cross at corners and crosswalks, never between parked cars. Kids under 12 walk with a grown-up. Safety: Walk, don't run, from house to house.

• Card: Halloween color hunt · Ages: 3+ · Players: 1 or more · How to play: You need: Nothing. Find something orange. Then find something purple. Then green, then black, then white. When you find all five, start again in a new order. Grown-up: For the littlest walkers: one color per street is plenty.

• Card: Owl echo · Ages: 3+ · Players: 2 or more · How to play: You need: Nothing. A grown-up makes a soft night sound: an owl's “hoo”, a cat's “meow”. Everyone echoes it back, just as softly. Take turns being the leader. Keep it quiet so you can still hear cars. Grown-up: A calm game for the walk home, when everyone is tired and full of sugar.

With your candy: Halloween candy games

Counting, sorting and sharing games at home.

• Card: A grown-up checks your bag first · Ages: 3+ · Players: Everyone · How to play: You need: A clean table and a grown-up. Wait to eat anything until you're home. Tip your bag out on a clean table. A grown-up looks at every piece. Anything open, torn, homemade or without a wrapper goes out. Then the candy games can start! Grown-up: Check wrappers for holes or tears, set aside anything a young child could choke on, and read labels for allergies. Safety: Under 4? No hard candy, gum, nuts, popcorn or small round pieces: they can cause choking. Read the label for allergies.

• Card: Guess, then count in tens · Ages: 4+ · Players: 1 or more · How to play: You need: Your candy. Guess how many pieces are in your bag. Say it out loud. Make piles of ten. Count the piles: 10, 20, 30… then count the extras: 31, 32, 33. Was your guess too big, too small or close? Grown-up: Piles of ten are place value you can touch: 3 piles and 4 extras is 34.

• Card: Sort and graph · Ages: 4+ · Players: 1 or more · How to play: You need: Your candy, paper. Sort your candy into groups: chocolate, chewy, lollipops, other. Line each group up in a row, one piece per square. That's a bar graph made of candy! Which row is longest? Which is shortest? How many more? Grown-up: Older kids can draw the graph on

paper with a scale, then guess what the next bag would look like.
• Card: Fair shares · Ages: 5+ · Players: 2 or more · How to play: You need: Some candy, plates. Put out one plate for each person. Deal the candy out one piece at a time: one for you, one for you… When there aren't enough left for everyone, stop. The leftovers go in the family bowl. Grown-up: This is dividing with a remainder. Try 13 pieces for 4 plates: 3 each and 1 left over. Safety: Under 4? No hard candy, gum, nuts, popcorn or small round pieces: they can cause choking. Read the label for allergies.
• Card: Candy trade rules · Ages: 4+ · Players: 2 or more · How to play: You need: Your candy. Both people have to say yes to a trade. Say what you will give and what you want back. “No thanks” is always OK. No grabbing, and no trading back later. Grown-up: Three small pieces for one big one? Talk about what makes a trade fair. Safety: Under 4? No hard candy, gum, nuts, popcorn or small round pieces: they can cause choking. Read the label for allergies.
• Card: Candy tower · Ages: 4+ · Players: 1 or more · How to play: You need: Boxed or flat candy. Stack flat candy bars and little boxes into a tower. Count each piece as you add it. Put one more on top of the stack, and one more… When it falls, count the pieces. Can you build it taller? Grown-up: Flat, wrapped pieces stack well. Ask which shapes make a strong bottom layer.
• Card: Candy tic-tac-toe · Ages: 4+ · Players: 2 · How to play: You need: Paper, two kinds of candy. Draw a tic-tac-toe grid on paper. One player uses one kind of candy, the other a different kind. Take turns putting one piece in a square. Three in a row, across, down or corner to corner, takes the round. Grown-up: Wrapped pieces only, and the candy goes back to its owner after the game.
• Card: Eyes-closed taste test · Ages: 4+ · Players: 2 or more · How to play: You need: A few pieces of checked candy. A grown-up unwraps one small piece from the checked pile. Close your eyes and taste it. Guess what it is: chocolate? fruity? sour? Open your eyes and see if you were right. Grown-up: Only candy the child already knows is safe for them, and keep the pieces small. Safety: Under 4? No hard candy, gum, nuts, popcorn or small round pieces: they can cause choking. Read the label for allergies.
• Card: Candy calendar · Ages: 4+ · Players: 1 or more · How to play: You need: Small bags or an egg carton, a pen. Write the days of the week on small bags or the cups of an egg carton. Pick one or two pieces for each day. Each day, open that day's treat. Count how many days are left. Grown-up: It makes the candy last, and it is a calendar and counting-back lesson on the side. Safety: Under 4? No hard candy, gum, nuts, popcorn or small round pieces: they can cause choking. Read the label for allergies.
• Card: How many candies long? · Ages: 4+ · Players: 1 or more · How to play: You need: Wrapped candy. Lay candy end to end next to your shoe. How many candies long is it? Now measure a spoon, a book and your hand. Which is longest? Try again with a different candy. Grown-up: Measuring with the same-size piece every time is the first step

to rulers.

Trick-or-Treat Bingo

Each card has 24 of these 30 things to spot, in a different order, and a free pumpkin in the middle. Cross out what you see. Five in a row, across, down or corner to corner, is BINGO. Print makes four different cards.

Porch light · Jack-o'-lantern · Ghost · Bat · Black cat · Witch hat · Skeleton · Spider web · Spider · Superhero · Crown · Dinosaur · Unicorn · Pirate · Flashlight · Something that glows · Moon · Star · Owl · Hay bale · Fall leaves · Teal pumpkin · Doorbell · Dog in a costume · Robot · Astronaut · Fairy · Mummy · Candy bowl · Blow-up decoration

Trick-or-treat safety

From the American Academy of Pediatrics' Halloween safety tips on HealthyChildren.org, in short:

- Be seen. Bright costumes, reflective tape on the costume and the bag, and a flashlight or glow stick for every child.
- See out. Face paint instead of a mask that covers the eyes, and a costume short enough not to trip on.
- Go together. A grown-up goes with young children. Older kids stay in a group, on a route a grown-up has checked, home by an agreed time.
- Porch lights only. Visit houses with the light on, stay on the porch, and never go inside a house or a car.
- Walk, don't run. Use sidewalks, cross at corners and crosswalks, look left, right and left again, and never cross between parked cars.
- Check the candy first. A grown-up checks every piece before anyone eats. Anything open, torn or homemade by someone you don't know goes out.
- Little ones and choking. Under 4? No hard candy, gum, nuts, popcorn or small round pieces: they can cause choking. Read the label for allergies.
- Allergies. Look for a teal pumpkin: it means treats that aren't food.
- Light pumpkins with batteries. A battery LED light or a glow stick inside a jack-o'-lantern, and a grown-up does any carving while kids draw the face. 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.

Questions parents ask

What do you say when trick-or-treating?

Say “Trick or treat!” when the door opens, “Thank you!” when you get your treat, and “Happy Halloween!” as you leave. Knock once, step back, take one treat unless they offer more, and only visit houses with the porch light on.

What games can you play with Halloween candy?

Guess how many pieces, then count them in piles of ten; sort them and line them up as a bar graph; deal fair shares onto plates; trade with clear rules; build a candy tower; play tic-tac-toe with two kinds of candy; or make a candy calendar so it lasts all week. A grown-up checks the candy before any game that ends in eating.

How do you play Trick-or-Treat Bingo?

Print a card for each child. On the walk, cross out each thing you see: a porch light, a black cat, a superhero, a teal pumpkin. The middle square is free. Five in a row is bingo; keep going to fill the card.

What if my child is shy at the door?

Let them hold out the bag, wave and smile while you or a friend say the words. A pocket card that says “Trick or treat! Thank you!” works for children who don't talk at the door. Practising at home first helps too.

What games can you play when trick-or-treaters come to your door?

Hide treats under three pumpkin-face cups and let each visitor pick one, keep a costume tally, put up a joke-for-a-treat sign, let visitors roll a dice to pick a bowl, or set out a teal pumpkin bowl of non-food treats for kids with allergies.

Can I print the cards?

Yes. Press Print in the box and every card prints two across with dashed lines to cut along, followed by four different Trick-or-Treat Bingo cards. They're free to print for home or class.

More Halloween: Halloween HQ, Halloween jokes for a treat and charades.

Free at peabody.kids/holidays/halloween/trick-or-treat-games