

# Halloween Creatures



## *Witches*

In past generations, most people believed in witches. They believed there were special evil spirits that had given witches magical powers. Witches were supposed to have two meetings a year. The most important meeting was on October 31. They often flew to this meeting on their broomsticks. When they got to their meeting, they conjured a special brew in a large, black pot called a cauldron. Sometimes when they stirred the mysterious potion, a cloud formed above the pot. This was supposed to increase their powers of sorcery. Animals associated with witches are owls, bats, cats, and frogs. Maybe when you are out on Halloween night, you will see the silhouette of a witch on her broomstick as she flies across the moon!



## *Black Cats*

Black cats are a symbol of Halloween because they were thought to be the companions of witches. They rode to the witches' meetings on the witches' broomsticks. Sometimes, they were thought to be witches in disguise. This is why people think it is bad luck to have a black cat cross their path. Hundreds of years ago, the Celts believed that black cats had at one time been people. They thought bad magic had changed them into cats. Stories are told of witches who owned cats of other colors, but, on Halloween night, they all appear to be black because they lurk in dark shadows.



## *Ghosts*

People used to think that ghosts, the spirits of dead people, returned to their old homes each year between the sunset of October 31 and the sunrise of November 1. The ghosts who could not find their former homes had to walk alone all night. People believed that the ghosts could play scary tricks on them. Ghost stories were told around bonfires. It was believed that the fires would welcome home the friendly ghosts and would frighten the bad ones away.