“A Dream Is a Wish Your Heart Makes” was the one thing I remember from my childhood because Princess Cinderella would sing it. When I was a little girl, I always wanted to grow up and be a princess. It was a dream that all the girls in my preschool had. So, every Halloween, we dressed up as princesses for as long as I can remember. As I got older, I couldn’t wait until prom. As the second semester of my junior year approached, prom became the center of attention for me; I got to become that princess once again. I knew the dress when I saw it, and I knew it just felt right when I tried it on. Even though they’re two completely different nights, Halloween and prom have similarities. You can dress up, they’re both parties, and they both have unique origins.

Whether you’re going to be a ghost, zombie, fairy, or a princess, you are dressing up. Finding the right costume, using the right make-up, and doing your hair the right way is just part of Halloween. After your costume is flawless, you are ready to go get all the candy from the neighbors. Halloween night is the one night of the year you can be whoever you want to be, and no one will care. It’s one of the aspects of the whole holiday. Prom is almost the same way, by finding that perfect dress to the right hairstyle and the best flowers. Girls debate and then primp for hours so every detail is just right. When I had prom, I always wanted to look perfect. I had to get the one dress that I fell in love with the moment I tried it on, then go find the right shoes and jewelry. When I was done, I would go into the make-up store and spend hours looking for the...
right make-up. It sounds like such a tedious process now, but I feel like it was completely worth it. I may not have been myself, but I felt beautiful at that very moment.

As a child growing up, I never understood why you would throw a Halloween party. There was so much candy to get while trick-or-treating, so why have parties? Now that I am a college student and I don’t go trick-or-treating, the party is the next best thing. You get to hang out with all your friends being someone you’re not. Some people play the part well, and you may not know who they are until the end of the night. Halloween festivities can be just as fun as any other festivities. Dancing, games, and food are always a good time. But, the word prom to many people just means party. I went bowling, rode around town blasting music, ran around Wal-Mart playing hide and seek in the racks, and almost went cow tipping. It was so much fun with all my friends. It wasn’t exactly a real party, but it was better than going to the popular kid’s house and getting too drunk to remember how important this occasion was to me.

The origin of Halloween and prom are very different. The way Halloween came about is not the way most people would think it would be. “In AD 835, Pope Gregory IV designated November 1 as all Saints Day…. The night before November 1, October 31, was known as all Hallows’ Evening” (Ankerberg 9). You then go into the Pagan beliefs because “Halloween itself originated in paganism” (14). But how did all of this turn into children getting candy and dressing up? Trick or treating has been around for years since “there are several ancient practices that point to this tradition… As already noted, Halloween was thought to be a night when mischievous and evil spirits roamed freely… [m]ischievous spirits could play tricks on the living—so it was advantageous to ‘hide’ from them by wearing costumes. Masks and costumes were worn to either scare away the ghosts or to keep from being recognized by them…. [g]oing from door to door seeking treats may result from the Druidic practice of begging material for the
great bonfires” (Ankerberg 16-17). Prom wasn’t always a high school dance; in fact, it was a college dance to begin with. “The word prom is short for promenade… The prom can be traced back to the simple co-ed banquets that 19th century American universities held each year’s graduation class. A growing teenage culture pushed proms younger and younger, and by the 1940s the adolescent dance we know today had almost entirely taken hold” (Suddath para. 3).

Prom has also had some interesting locations and had some famous people reschedule dinners for them. For example: “President Kennedy rescheduled a 1963 $1000-a-plate fundraiser at the Beverly Hilton to accommodate a local school whose prom had been booked for the same time. In 1975, President Ford’s daughter Susan held her high school’s senior prom at possibly the best prom location ever: the White House” (Suddath para. 5). Prom is not just a high school dance, but, if you know the right people, you could probably have your prom at an exciting place with prominent people instead of just the high school gym or trade center.

In conclusion, Halloween and prom can be very different, but both have similarities. From getting the best costume on that spooky Halloween night to finding that perfect dress for one of the most magical nights in high school, whether you are being yourself or someone else, we learn that society and our identities always change, no matter the time period. Both events are a big part of growing up, so don’t miss out because you think they may be dumb or a waste of time. Go get candy for as long as you want, and remember you’re never too old to dress up. Prom is a big part of being social, so go with a lot of friends and have fun. Go be a crazy teenager for one night at least. If you don’t do one or the other, then you may regret it in the long run.
Work Cited


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