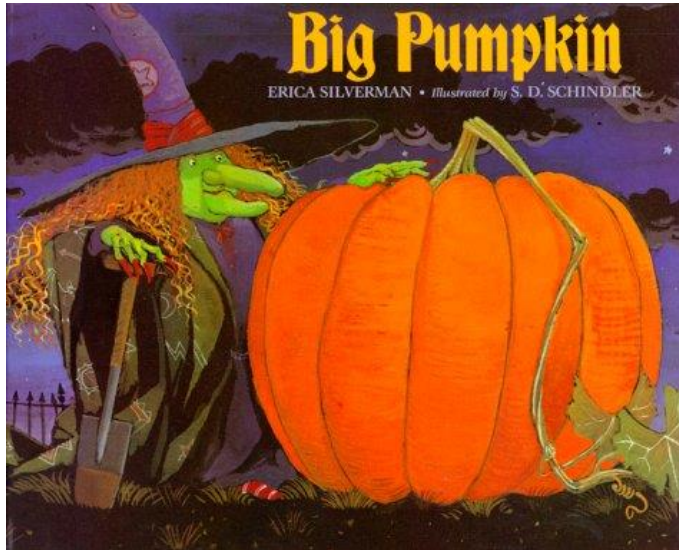


## OCTOBER



A great story we read in October is **Big Pumpkin** written by Erica Silverman and illustrated by S.D. Schindler. In this story, a witch plants a pumpkin seed with the intention of growing a pumpkin so she can make a pumpkin pie. The seed grows into a VERY BIG pumpkin! The witch tries to pick the pumpkin and cannot pull it off the vine. A ghost comes along and offers to help but he is also unable to pick the pumpkin. A vampire and a mummy also come to help but neither can pick the pumpkin. A little bat

offers to help and the other characters laugh at him. The bat assures them that although he is not big or strong, he has an idea. He tells them what to do—the bat pulls the mummy, the mummy pulls the vampire, the vampire pulls the ghost, the ghost pulls the witch, the witch pulls the pumpkin and it comes off the vine (of course)! The witch makes pumpkin pie for everyone.

### Questions:

**Who** planted a pumpkin seed? The witch

**What** grew? A pumpkin

**What** did the witch want to **do**? Make pumpkin pie

**What** did the witch try to **do**? Pick the pumpkin

**Who** came to help? The ghost, the vampire, the mummy, and the bat

**What** did he/she try to **do**? Pick the pumpkin

**What** did he/she **say**? Drat!

**Where** did the pumpkin land? In front of the witch's house.

**Where** did everyone go? To the witch's house.

**What** did they **do**? Eat pumpkin pie

### **Story vocabulary:**

Characters: witch, ghost, vampire, mummy, bat

Places: pumpkin patch, witch's house

Describing words: big, strong, bigger, stronger

Special describing words: SNAP, WOOSH, THUD

Position words (spatial concepts):

Sequential words: first, then, next, last

Action words: pulled, tugged

Story themes: this is a good story when talking about **not giving up** and **working together**.

### **Tips for reading a book and asking questions:**

Some children can pay attention while all of the words in a book are read. Others (many preschoolers) will need the book simplified. You can summarize each page after reading the words **OR** just use fewer words in the first place! For example, a page in the book says:

*Once there was a witch who wanted to make pumpkin pie. So she planted a pumpkin seed. She weeded and watered, and after a while, a sprout poked through. And then a pumpkin grew. And it grew. And it grew. Then it grew some more.*

This can be simplified to:

***There was a witch. She wanted to make pumpkin pie. She planted a seed. She watered. A pumpkin grew. It grew more.***

Sometimes I go through a book and place sticky notes on each page with a simplified version of the text on each page. Children who are minimally delayed in language may benefit from hearing all of the vocabulary in a story, but children with more language delay need the text broken down/simplified so they can fully understand it.

**Asking questions:** Ask questions while I am reading the story so that there are pictures to help cue the answers.

Point to the picture of a character and ask a question about the character, for example,

**"Who tried to pick the pumpkin?"** (the witch, the vampire)

Give the answer first then immediately ask the question, for example,

**"The pumpkin landed in front of the witch's house. Where did the pumpkin land?"**

Gesture or pantomime an action while asking a question, for example...pretend to eat then ask,

**"What did the friends do at the witch's house?"** (eat pumpkin pie)

## OCTOBER ACTIVITIES:

- go to the pumpkin patch and pick a pumpkin
- carve or draw a jack-o-lantern; have your child describe the jack-o-lantern using size, shape and other descriptive words *for example*, my jack-o-lantern is big and round, he has square eyes, the nose is a small triangle; the teeth are pointy; my jack-o-lantern looks funny, scary, silly, etc.
- use Mr. Potato Head pieces with a small pumpkin; talk about *how many* with regards to face parts, i.e. 2 eyes, 1 nose, 1 mouth, 2 ears.
- collect Fall leaves and sort them into colors-yellow, orange, red, brown
- download the FREE pumpkin carving app from Parents Magazine  
<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/carve-pumpkin-from-parents/id394900607?mt=8>
- sing 5 Little Pumpkins with your child  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cm1qvX1ygOo&list=RDcm1qvX1ygOo#t=25>
- make a 5 Little Pumpkins book (from DLTK)  
<http://www.dltk-teach.com/minibooks/halloween/index.htm>