Is Halloween big business?

Reading + Grammar: describing data — approximation, comparison and change

1 KEY VOCABULARY

survey	*n.*	questions asked to many people about their opinions or plans
affordability	*n.*	how cheap or expensive something is for buyers
retailer	*n.*	a business that sells directly to the public
promotion	*n.*	a special offer to increase sales
repurpose	*v.*	to use something again for a different purpose
margin of error	*n.*	how much a survey result may differ from reality
spending priority	*n.*	something people choose to spend money on first
comparative shop	*v.*	to compare prices in different shops before buying
early shopper	*n.*	a person who buys long before an event
on par with	*phr.*	at the same level as

2 USEFUL PHRASES & EXPRESSIONS

- **About half of consumers start shopping in September.** — *approximate a percentage*
- **This is on par with last year.** — *say a result is similar*
- **The figure rose from 34% to 49%.** — *describe a change*
- **Candy accounts for $4.1 billion.** — *give a share of a total*
- **almost double the figure of 2016** — *compare with a multiple*
- **prices too good to pass up** — *describe an attractive offer*

3 THE KEY POINT

To describe data: approximate with **about / nearly / almost** + fraction; compare with **on par with / in line with**; describe change with **rise / fall from X to Y** (the difference: **by**); give a share with **account for**.

Nearly half of consumers (47%) use AI tools.
Average spending of $115.14 is **in line with** last year's $114.45.
Greeting card purchases **rose from** 38% **to** 42%. · Costumes **account for** $4.4 billion.

4 QUICK PRACTICE

Choose the correct option.

1. Spending on pet costumes is (nearly / double) $1 billion.
2. Greeting card purchases increased (from / to) 42% this year.
3. Average spending of $115.14 is (accounts for / in line with) last year's figure.
4. Interest in local businesses has almost (doubled / double) since 2016.

5 ANSWERS & EXPLANATION

Answers: 1 nearly · 2 to · 3 in line with · 4 doubled

Nearly + number = a little less than it ($0.92 billion); **increase to** + new figure; **in line with** = similar to; after *has almost* we need a past participle: **doubled**.

6 CULTURE & BUSINESS INSIGHT

★ **A day that became a season**

In the US, consumers expect to spend $13.5 billion on Halloween in 2026. About half start shopping in September or earlier, and nearly a third compare prices when costs rise. Retailers respond with products at different price points — and 47% of shoppers now use AI tools to plan.

Today's resource: NRF Halloween Survey Shows Consumer Spending Expected to Reach $13.5 Billion (National Retail Federation) · https://nrf.com/media-center/press-releases/nrf-halloween-survey-shows-consumer-spending-expected-to-reach-13-5-billion

> *Behind every seasonal celebration, there is a business plan.*



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