

The Lottery Discussion Questions

Name _____ Block _____

1. Were you surprised by the ending of the story? _____
If not, at what point did you know what was going to happen? _____

How does Jackson start to foreshadow the ending in paragraphs 2 and 3?

Conversely, how does Jackson lull us into thinking that this is just an ordinary story with an ordinary town?

Where does the story take place? _____ In what way does the setting affect the story?

Does it make you more or less likely to anticipate the ending? _____
2. In what ways are the characters differentiated from one another? _____

Looking back at the story, can you see why Tessie Hutchinson is singled out as the "winner"? _____

3. What are some examples of irony in this story? For example, why might the title, "The Lottery," or the opening description in paragraph one, be considered ironic?

5. Jackson gives interesting names to a number of her characters. Explain the possible allusions, irony or symbolism of some of these:

iDelacroix _____

iGraves _____

iSummers _____

iBentham _____

iHutchinson _____

iWarner _____

iMartin _____

7. Take a close look at Jackson's description of the black wooden box (paragraph 5) and of the black spot on the fatal slip of paper (paragraph 72). What do these objects suggest to you? Why is the black box described as "battered"? Are there any other symbols in the story?

8. What do you understand to be the writer's own attitude toward the lottery and the stoning? _____

Exactly what in the story makes her attitude clear to us?

9. This story satirizes a number of social issues, including the reluctance of people to reject outdated traditions, ideas, rules, laws, and practices. What kinds of traditions, practices, laws, etc. might "The Lottery" represent?

10. This story was published in 1948, just after World War II. What other cultural or historical events, attitudes, institutions, or rituals might Jackson be satirizing in this story?