

“The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson

Please read these focus/discussion questions before you reread the short story “The Lottery.” As you read through the text, number the area where you find the answer with the corresponding number of the question. Answer the question briefly on this handout. You may practice summarizing your answers (level 2/comprehension). (Summary: a factual account of what happens.) Please use present tense.

Focus questions:

- 1) Who conducts the lottery?
- 2) What is his occupation?
- 3) What is the postmaster’s name?
- 4) Who comes late to the square?
- 5) Why is she late?
- 6) Name three pieces of paraphernalia used for the lottery.
- 7) Why does the village continue to conduct the lottery?
- 8) How does Old Man Warner feel about the lottery? Why do you think he feels this way?

Discussion Questions

For these items, be ready to answer the question to the best of your ability. On this paper, write down your opinion and provide at least one (shoot for two) citations from the text as evidence of why you think the way you do. Be prepared to discuss aloud. You may be called at random and need to justify your answer with the evidence you have recorded here. **In order to participate in the discussion, you must have prepared your responses ahead of time and come ready to contribute with CITED evidence to support your opinion.**

9) What is your gut reaction to the ending of the story?

10) How does Jackson start to foreshadow the ending in paragraphs two and three? Conversely, how does Jackson lull us into thinking that this is just an ordinary story with an ordinary town?

11) 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?

12) How do the townspeople feel about making changes to the lottery? How do you know (evidence)? What do you think about their opinions?

13) How does Tessie react to the chosen names at the lottery? What is shocking, surprising, or interesting about her reaction (think critically!)? What does this say about the level of morality and/or level of thinking at which Tessie operates?