

“The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson Lesson Plan

Pre Reading: Tea Party

1. From the text, choose meaningful vocabulary words, phrases, or sentences. Copy down these words, phrases, or sentences onto index cards or printer paper. (A note about the number: choose half of the amount of your class, so you can provide a copy to each student with room for duplicates).
2. Present the cards/papers to the students. Explain that each student will have his or her own card, and that there are different words, phrases, and sentences on each set of cards.
3. Review the directions for the activity with the students:
 - After the cards are distributed, each student will orally share his or her card with another student. Students should only share with one other student at a time.
 - When you have finished reading your card, listen carefully as your partner shares his/hers the same way.
 - Discuss how the cards are related and what the words might mean.
 - Move to a new partner and go through the same steps—share your card by reading it aloud and then listen carefully to the contents of your new partner’s card.
 - Each time partners change, talk about any how all the cards are related and what they collectively all might be about or mean.
 - Add any new ideas you have based on your prior experiences

Adapted from Kyle Beers *When Kids Can’t Read and*
<http://spedlit.k12.hi.us/Strategies/TEA%20PARTY.htm>

Pre Reading: Journal Prompt

What are the traditions in your family and where did they come from? Do you think you’ll continue this tradition or make new ones for your future family? Why are traditions important, in your opinion?

Reading/Note taking Activity: Punctuation Notes

Give each student a paper (or have them use their own paper) with a table of three rows. The first row is the comma (.). In the comma row, students should notate any moment in the story that makes them stop and think. It could be a connection to real life or another text, or something that they found interesting.

The second row is the exclamation (!) row. This is where students notate any moment that surprised, angered or shocked them.

The third and final row is the question mark (?) row. This is where students write questions they have throughout the story or at the end. These should be level 2 and 3 questions.

Post Reading: Fishbowl Discussion

Have a fishbowl discussion the day after reading *The Lottery*. Students should come prepared with punctuation notes. Students should have this group discussion independent from the teacher, meaning unless absolutely needed, the teacher should not interfere with the discussion. Have outside circle student write on their reflection sheet for the person sitting in front of them.

Guiding questions (if needed):

1. Is the lottery a collective act of murder? Is it morally justified? Is tradition sufficient justification for such actions? How would you respond to cultures that are different from ours that perform "strange" rituals?
2. Some critics insist that the story has an added *symbolic* meaning. Do you agree? If so, what is Shirley Jackson trying to tell us about ourselves? (Hint: Consider that this story was written during the height of the rise of Communism and the Soviet Union.)
3. What is the significance of Tessie's final scream, "It isn't fair, it isn't right"? What aspect of the lottery does she explicitly challenge; what aspect goes unquestioned?