**Name: Color group: Date:**

**\*DIRECTIONS: Use this information & the RACECES handout to generate a written response describing a (choose ONE theme in “The Lottery” \*SHORT STORY/FICTION**

***“The Lottery” (summary) via 🡪*** [***https://www.shmoop.com***](https://www.shmoop.com)

On a warm day in late June (the 27th, to be exact), villagers gather in the square to participate in a lottery run by Mr. Summers, who officiates at all the big civic events. Oooh, this sounds fun.

The children arrive first and begin collecting stones until their parents call them to order. Mrs. Hutchinson arrives late and chats briefly with her friend, Mrs. Delacroix. It's just another day in an idyllic small town.

Mr. Summers calls each head of the household (always a grown man) forward to a black wooden box, where each selects a slip of paper. Once the men have chosen, Mr. Summers allows everyone to open the paper and see who's been selected. The lucky person selected: Bill Hutchinson.

His wife immediately starts protesting—so we get the sense, somehow, that they're not about to win a couple million dollars. What kind of lottery is this, exactly?

There are five people total in the Hutchinson family. Mr. Summers places five slips of paper into the box and each member of the family draws. Tess (Mrs. Hutchinson) draws a slip of paper with a big black dot in the center. Not good.

The villagers advance on her, and it becomes crystal clear what the prize for the lottery really is: a stoning! Tess protests in vain as the villagers attack her.

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~**”The Lottery” THEME(S)**

* **[Society and Class:](https://www.shmoop.com/lottery-shirley-jackson/society-class-theme.html)** On a basic level, "The Lottery" asks us to think about the rituals and traditions we unthinkingly follow as members of our society. Beyond critiquing the ways in which custom obscures right and wrong, the lottery also becomes a way of analyzing "traditional" social and gender divisions: the random distribution of paper means some families are fortunate and others aren't.
* **[Tradition and Customs:](https://www.shmoop.com/lottery-shirley-jackson/tradition-customs-theme.html)** "The Lottery" tells the story of an annual tradition practiced by the villagers of an anonymous small town, a tradition that appears to be as vital to the villagers as New Year celebrations might be to us. Yet, subtle hints throughout the story, as well as its shocking conclusion, indicate that the villagers' tradition has become meaningless over time. What's particularly important about tradition in "The Lottery" is that it appears to be eternal: no one knows when it started, and no one can guess when it will end. Its apparent lack of history is what makes tradition so powerful: it's like a force of nature, and the people of the village can't even imagine rebelling against it.
* **[Hypocrisy:](https://www.shmoop.com/lottery-shirley-jackson/hypocrisy-theme.html)** "The Lottery" explores sudden shifts in opinion and loyalties—in other words, hypocrisy. But it's worth asking whether changes in allegiance during the lottery are conscious enough to be construed as hypocrisy: the ritual of the lottery appears to be so naturalized that the villagers can't think rationally or critically about what they are doing.
* **[Family:](https://www.shmoop.com/lottery-shirley-jackson/family-theme.html)** ["The Lottery" plays around with the concept of family in interesting ways. The thing is, each person in the lottery must draw by household, so this is the moment, each year, when belonging to a given family has the most socially recognized significance. In the midst of this collective ritual, though, it's during the lottery that the emotional bonds that connect mother to child, husband to wife, and friend to friend, become completely insignificant.](https://www.shmoop.com/lottery-shirley-jackson/family-theme.html)