

"The Lottery" Guided Reading Questions & Possible Answers

Answers may vary.

1. The young boys in the town are collecting and stockpiling rocks before the lottery takes place in the town square. How does Jackson use this event as an element of foreshadowing to the culminating events?

Possible Answer: The children collecting stones appears to be innocent child's play, but it is actually a clue to the violent event that occurs at the end of the story.

2. Mr. Summers asks, "Watson boy drawing this year?" Watson responded, "I'm drawing for my mother and me." In a town that thrives on tradition and family structure what can you infer about the father in the Watson family? (Pay attention to the responses in the crowd and the history of this town.)

Possible Answer: Mr. Watson may have "won" last year's lottery.

3. In literature, the color black often symbolizes death. Explain the symbolism of the black box and elaborate on the symbolism of the box's battered condition.

Possible Answer: The black box holds the "winning" paper that will result in someone's death. The box is black to symbolize the approaching death and the battered condition symbolizes the stoning that will ensue after the lottery.

4. Why do the village people keep their distance from the black box? Why are they hesitant in giving Mr. Summers a hand with the stool and box?

Possible Answers: Fear of dying. The black box symbolizes tragic death.

5. When Mr. Summers makes mention of someone making a new black box no one responds. According to Jackson no one wants to create a new black box because, "no one liked to upset even as much tradition." Based on this information what can you infer about the yearly lottery and why it is still held every year?

Possible Answer: People of the town are afraid of change. They fear upsetting tradition; therefore, everything remains the same.

6. How does Old Man Warner feel about the lottery? What is his response to the north village no longer having a lottery?

Possible Answers: Old Man Warner feels that the lottery is necessary every year. He criticizes progression and blames the termination of the lottery in the north village on young people, stating "young folks, nothing's good enough for them."

7. Mrs. Hutchinson was late to the lottery. Mr. Summers said, "Thought we were going to have to get on without you Tessie." Explain how Jackson's use of this statement is the use of foreshadowing.

Possible Answers: Tessie's community will have to go on without her presence because she is the lottery winner.