

Example of essay on the lottery by shirley jackson

[Art & Culture](#), [Symbolism](#)



\n[[toc title="Table of Contents"](#)]\n

\n \t

1. [THE LOTTERY](#) \n \t
2. [THE STONES](#) \n \t
3. [THREE-LEGGED STOOL](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

The lottery by Shirley Jackson was published in 1948 in the New Yorker. It contains a historical context that made it be ranked among the best short stories in the American Literature. The lottery is termed as " a chilling tale of conformity gone mad." The author has used symbolism and imagery throughout the story to provide insight of the activities that happened in the tradition setting. In the paper below, I will discuss the use of imagery and symbolism in the story, and this includes the lottery, the stones, the three-legged stool, and the black box.

THE LOTTERY

The lottery is the title of the story, and it can be compared to an 800-pound gorilla. The lottery intends at giving the readers expectations. In the lottery, the word can be associated with good things like winning prizes and signifying annual celebrations. The title is used to show a flourishing and cheerful village, and it illustrates that there is nothing wrong with the people. In fact, the lottery operates as a symbol of life in the village. In the beginning, life seems sweet and harmless but smiles starts to disappear, and piles of stones are observed making the reader wonder what is happening. Being an allegory of the village, the reader assumes that it must signify the

real-life elements experienced by the people. Jackson gave heavy symbolic tags careful, the reason he develops lottery as an allegory in the village. The lottery is a representation of actions, behaviors and ideas that are inflicted from one generation to the other in an acceptable manner without considering whether the issue is illogical, cruel or bizarre. It has been happening in the village since time immemorial. It symbolizes an annual ritual that goes unquestionable in the village. It is an embraced culture in the village as the adage goes, " Lottery in June, corn be heavy soon." The village is expected to remain loyal to the lottery despite the situation that shows that it has lost its meaning compared with the past.

However, the lottery is practiced, merely because it has always been there. The lottery shows the importance of viewing traditions critically because of the harm they induce to people if not controlled. The new generation must take steps to avoid tradition that will destroy their state of well-being since the lottery ensured that the murder was observed on annual bases.

An issue that is conspicuous in the lottery is the preliminary breakdown of the residential of the villagers to households. The family head dictates the rules that members of the family abide to. The breakdown intends to make the household a significant unit of contact, and the only option is to follow the directions and rules from the head of the family. This is metaphorical since the wives and children have no rights to remain autonomous.

Lottery origin is gloomy and hard to understand; Warner, the old man, cannot even trace its origin. The linking of lottery with a corn illustrates that human life was to be taken away so that the villagers could benefit from plenty harvest. The old man said, " The original paraphernalia for the lottery

[has] been lost long ago" (5). Generations have always been forgetful of the real intentions of the lottery. The new generations had a problem to stop the lottery since they never understood where it began.

It is illogical for the lottery to take away human life as it fails to address its intention. The lottery had turned to be self-perpetuating since the new generations were forced into savagery. The kids were trained to perceive the lottery as a ritual accepted by the society.

THE STONES

Evidently, the narrator says, "[the villagers] still [remember] to use the stones" (76). The stones were not only intended to symbolize horrific death but also it was used to gather a large crowd to stone an individual to death. In other words, the stones give everyone in the village the right to participate in the ritual event where human sacrifice was practiced. The stone is also a symbol of a weapon of destruction since the leading human tools came from stones. The lottery can also be used as a symbol a violent ritual and tries to explain that the ancestors had an upper hand of starting the ritual. Since stoning was associated with the Abrahamic religions, it symbolized forms of early death. The community perceived the ritual as a proper way to punish the offenders who break the traditions and taboos of the village. The stoning ritual was a typical way to expel people who were considered outcasts in the way of life of the villagers. **BLACK BOX**

In The Lottery, the black box features prominently and is a manifestation of the people/villagers connection to custom. Jackson is unequivocal on this point, when the topic of substituting the box props. He says, " No one liked to upset even as much tradition as was represented by the black box" (06). The

people's belief is that the box is made of remains of the original boxes and is a significant part of the black box. This vividly reminds the readers of the exercise of collecting the Christian remnants such as pieces of cross, hair, and skeletons from the bodies of the saints. Apparently, Jackson likes toppling Christian iconography. The point of the black box representing the villagers' culture is further reiterated by how the pretty villagers use relics of an earlier time to perpetuate their unsparing, violent traditions.

Just like The Lottery, the black box is not used in any other time excluding two hours of each month of June. " It had spent one year in Mr. Graves's barn and another year underfoot in the post office and sometimes it was set on a shelf in the Martin grocery and left there." Its tenacity is incomprehensible with time. Just like The lottery, the people do not want to let it go. No people can easily accept to leave their culture. Apparently, the author skillfully uses the black box to represent the people's culture.

THREE-LEGGED STOOL

The Three-Legged Stool represents the three pillars of the holy trinity.

Christianity believes in the holy trinity made up of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Rather than only representing the Christian faith, the stool might also be representing the trinities of the society according to their myths.

Traditionally, every society held onto certain beliefs that were of utter importance to its members and the stool could have been used to represent their specific beliefs. The fact that the stool supports the black box implies the use of religion to reinforce collective vehemence. Additionally, the Three-Legged Stool emphasizes the ceremonial importance of The Lottery to the society described in the story.