

The lottery

Literature



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Below you will find four outstanding thesis statements for “ The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson that can be used as essay starters or paper topics. All five incorporate at least one of the themes in “ The Lottery” and are broad enough so that it will be easy to find textual support, yet narrow enough to provide a focused clear thesis statement. These thesis statements offer a short summary of “ The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson in terms of different elements that could be important in an essay. You are, of course, free to add your own analysis and understanding of the plot of “ The Lottery” or themes to them for your essay.

Using the essay topics below in conjunction with the list of important quotes from “ The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson at the bottom of the page, you should have no trouble connecting with the text and writing an excellent essay. [Click Here for a Detailed Plot Summary of “ The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson](#)
Thesis Statement / Essay Topic #1: A Delightful Village Conducting Civic Activities : Contrast in “ The Lottery” One of the most devastating and skillful aspects of Shirley Jackson’s “ The Lottery” is that it consistently topples reader expectations about what should happen next or even at all. At first glance, the reader is given a story title that invokes, quite naturally, a sense of hope—the expectation that someone is going to win something.

The first few paragraphs further confirm the sense of hope; it is a beautiful summer day, the grass is green, the flowers are blooming, kids out of school are playing...but then we start to see that something is amiss in this land of perfection, plenty, and hope. We are then told by the narrator of “ The Lottery” that the official of the lottery is doing a “ civic” duty, which we come

to find out is aiding in the selection of someone to be stoned by his or her peers, perhaps even to death.

Throughout the short story, contrast is everywhere, even from the names of Mr. Summers and Mr. Graves. For this essay on “ The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson, choose a few instances that provide contrast of reader expectations versus the grim reality and analyze them carefully. Thesis Statement / Essay Topic #2: “ Lottery in June, Corn Be Heavy Soon” The ritual and traditions of the lottery in Shirley Jackson’s story seem to be just as old as the town itself, especially since most of the residents don’t recall any of the old rituals, even the Old Man Warner, who is “ celebrating” his 77th lottery. This means that they are archaic in some ways and rooted in traditions of superstitions that seem to involve crops and human sacrifice.

During the Salem Witch Trials in early America, one of the most common complaints about presumed “ witches” was that they were responsible for bad harvests, thus in many ways “ The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson can be seen as a metaphor for the trials in colonial New England. Thesis Statement / Essay Topic #3: Tradition and Ritual in “ The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson There is a great degree of tension about the rituals that surround the Lottery in Shirley Jackson’s short story. On the one hand, there is great enough reverence for this ages-old tradition to continue on as it has for years even though there were some murmurs of dissent among the crowd as some recognized that other communities had done away with their lotteries. Still, almost out of fear or superstition or both, the lottery continues to exist but most of the ceremony behind the ritual has been lost. What emerges is a

little shoddy, there is no formal chant and the box itself doesn't even have a place of honor, instead it is just scooted around the village.

So much has been lost about the initial ritual that the oldest man in the village gets upset that things are not like they used to be. In short, the lottery is more of a tradition rather than a ritual at the point we witness in the story but out of respect and fear for tradition, the townsfolk are more than willing to commit an act of mass violence, simply for the sake of a tradition. There is talk of right or wrong, just tradition and standard. Discuss what this may mean and how it acts as a metaphor for other outdated or outmoded cultural practices. professional writing service

Thesis Statement / Essay Topic #4: The True Horror of “ The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson Although there is certainly suspense in “ The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson, it is mostly based on the fact that the reader doesn't know, at least the first time around, what is in store for the “ winner” of the lottery. On a second and third reading, however, it becomes clear that this story is full of horrific possibilities and it is these possibilities that make the tale more frightening after the first reading. For instance, the young boy Davy—too young to even hold his slip of paper properly—could have been the one selected instead of his mother. Or the fact that the children take part in ritual violence against their own friends and family. Or even the fact that there is no emotional goodbye to the woman being stoned; it just, well, is what it is.

For this essay on “ The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson, reflect on the subtle horrors that add up only after the reader has made a second pass through the text. Do a close reading of a few instances such as these that magnify the possibility for a much darker ending. Click Here for a Detailed Plot <https://assignbuster.com/the-lottery-essay-samples/>

Summary of “ The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson Or go here for a literary analysis of “ The Lottery”

This list of important quotations from “ The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson will help you work with the essay topics and thesis statements above by allowing you to support your claims. All of the important quotes from “ The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson listed here correspond, at least in some way, to the paper topics above and by themselves can give you great ideas for an essay by offering quotes and explanations about other themes, symbols, imagery, and motifs than those already mentioned and explained. Aside from the thesis statements for “ The Lottery” above, these quotes alone with page numbers can act as essay questions or study questions as they are all relevant to the text in an important way.

‘ The lottery was conducted—as were the square dances, the teenage club, the Halloween program—by Mr. Summers, who had time and energy to devote to civic activities” (212). “ Because so much of the ritual had been forgotten or discarded, Mr. Summers had been successful in having slips of paper substituted for the chips of wood that had been used for generations” (212). “ The rest of the year the box was put away, sometimes one place, sometimes another; it had spent one year in Mr. Graves’ barn and another year underfoot in the post office, and sometimes it was set on a shelf in the Martin grocery and left there” (213).

“ There had been, also, a ritual salute, which the official of the lottery had had to use in addressing each person who came up to draw from the box, but this had also changed with time, until now it was felt necessary only for the official to speak to each person approaching” (213). “ Listening to the <https://assignbuster.com/the-lottery-essay-samples/>

young folks, nothing's good enough for them. Next thing you know they'll be wanting to live in caves, nobody work anymore, love that way for a while. Used to be a saying ' lottery in June, corn be heavy soon'. First thing you know, we'd all be eating stewed chickweed and acorns. There's always been a lottery" (215). " Be a good sport, Tessie...we all took the same chance" (216). " Although the villagers had forgotten the ritual and lost the original black box, they still remembered to use the stones" (216).