

Figure 7.8: Learning Task C for Students Who Need Extension

Answer your choice of the following seven questions. You must answer number 5 or number 7. Answer in complete sentences and support answers with examples from the story, as applicable.

1. How did Shirley Jackson (1948) change the tone throughout the story "The Lottery"? Give specific examples to support your answer.

2. What does the following quote reveal about the villagers and their beliefs about tradition?

The original paraphernalia for the lottery had been lost long ago, and the black box now resting on the stool had been put into use even before Old Man Warner, the oldest man in town, was born. Mr. Summers spoke frequently to the villagers about making a new box, but no one liked to upset even as much tradition as was represented by the black box. (Jackson, 1948)

3. What does Tessie Hutchinson's reaction in the following paragraphs say about her character and the lottery?

"You got any other households in the Hutchinsons?"

"There's Don and Eva," Mrs. Hutchinson yelled. "Make them take their chance!"

4. What does Bill Hutchinson's reaction say about his character and the lottery?

5. Think of a time in American history when public response was driven by tradition, whether good or bad. Describe that time and compare/contrast it with this story.

6. Many readers demanded an explanation of the situation described in the story, and a month after the initial publication, Shirley Jackson responded in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (July 22, 1948):

Explaining just what I had hoped the story to say is very difficult. I suppose I hoped, by setting a particularly brutal ancient rite in the present and in my own village, to shock the story's readers with a graphic dramatization of the pointless violence and general inhumanity in their own lives. (as cited in North Bennington, n.d.)

Jackson lived in North Bennington, Vermont, and her comment reveals that she had Bennington in mind when she wrote "The Lottery." Describe real-life Bennington as you think it is represented in this story.

7. Defend or dispute the following quote:

"The Lottery" was published at a time when America was scrambling for conformity. Following World War II, the general public wanted to leave behind the horrors of war and genocide. They craved comfort, normalcy, and old-fashioned values. Jackson's story was a cutting commentary on the dangers of blind obedience to tradition, and she threw it, like a grenade, into a complacent post-war society. (Dan Saltzstein, as cited in Aldrich, 2011)

Source for quotations: Jackson, 1948.