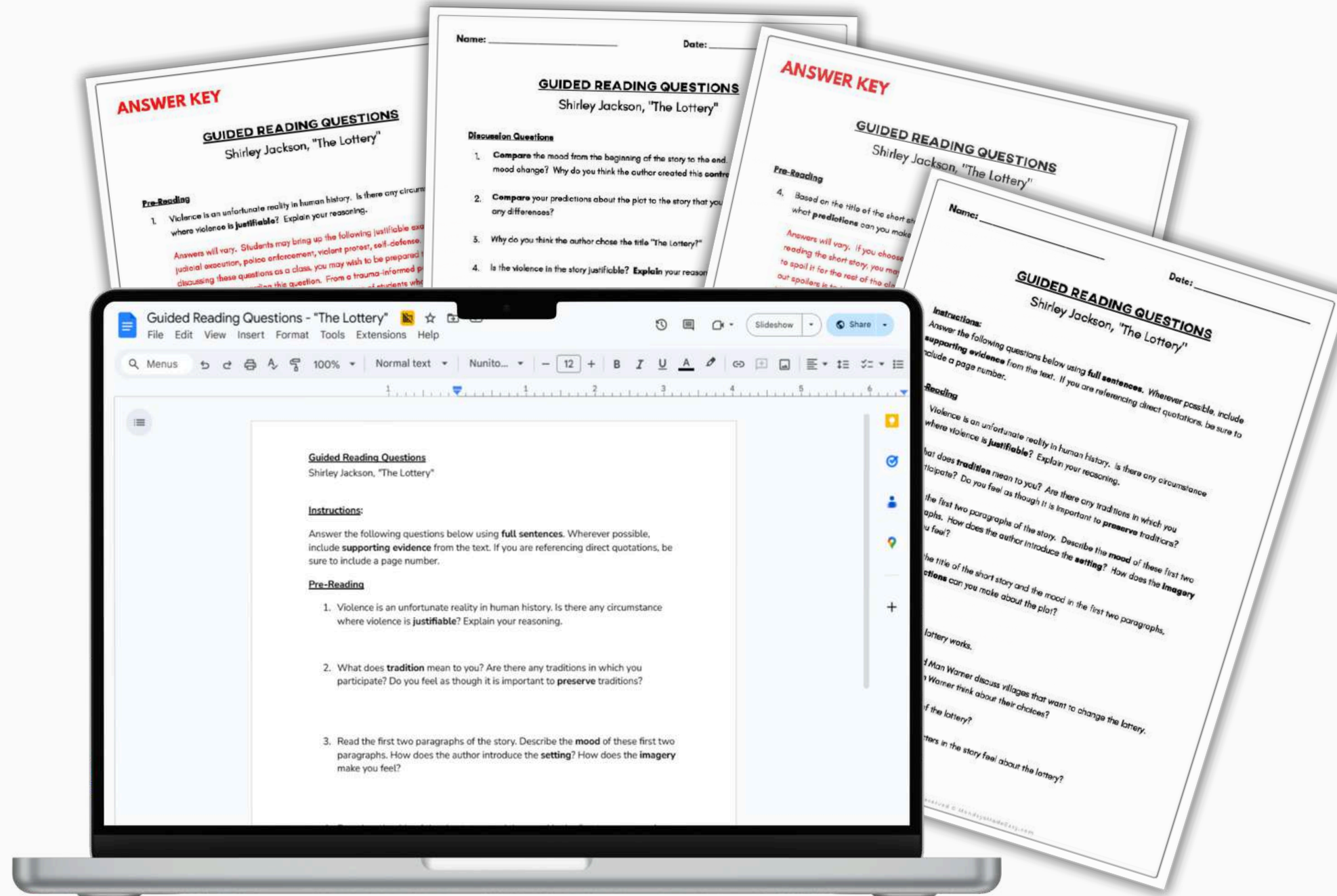


Reading Questions for “The Lottery”

Help students gain a deeper understanding of Shirley Jackson’s “The Lottery” with these comprehension questions and discussion prompts



- **Use thought-provoking questions** to promote critical thinking on themes, characterization, and literary devices in “The Lottery”
- **Cater to diverse learning environments with digital and print formats**, suitable for classrooms or online use with Google Classroom®
- **Save time with a detailed answer key and teacher instructions** for effective discussions and text-based analysis

Facilitate a guided reading of this classic short story!

PURCHASE HERE

Included with this resource:



Comprehension Questions for Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery"

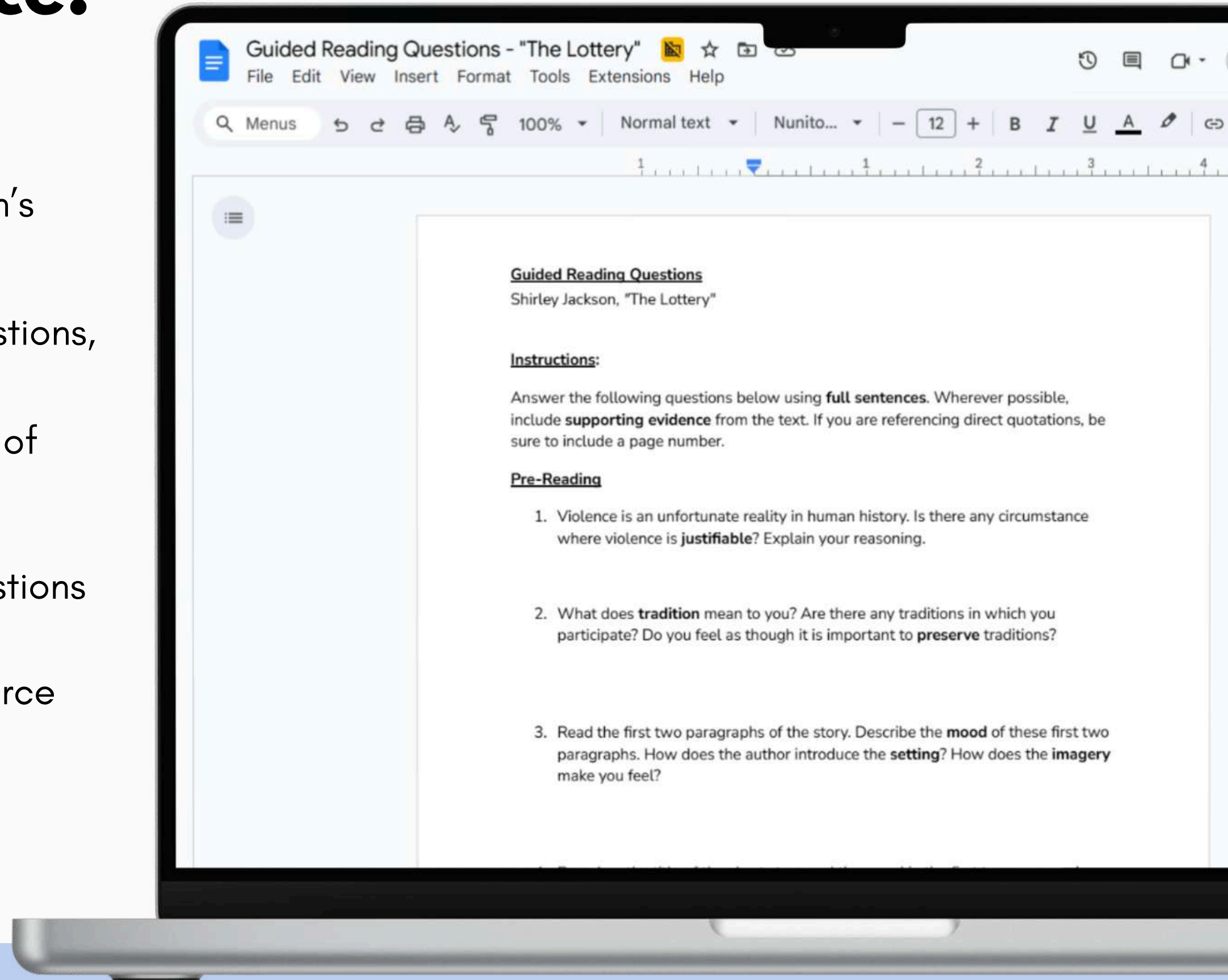
- Pre-Reading Questions, Post-Reading Questions, and Discussion Questions
- Guide students to a deeper understanding of the text and analyze major themes



Detailed **Answer Key** for Comprehension Questions



Teacher Instructions for how to use this resource



Includes Digital Workbook for Google Drive®

Comprehension Questions and Discussion Prompts

Facilitate a guided reading of Shirley Jackson's classic short story, "The Lottery"

Worksheet 1: GUIDED READING QUESTIONS
Name: _____ Date: _____
GUIDED READING QUESTIONS
Shirley Jackson, "The Lottery"

Discussion Questions

1. **Compare** the mood from the beginning of the story to the end. How does the mood change? Why do you think the author created this **contrast**?
2. **Compare** your predictions about the plot to the story that you read. Were there any differences?
3. Why do you think the author chose the title "The Lottery?"
4. Is the violence in the story justifiable? **Explain** your reasoning.
5. Mrs. Hutchinson repeatedly expresses that the lottery is unfair. Do you **agree** with her?
6. **Explain** how a seemingly pointless ritual like the lottery could continue to exist.
7. Consider the **symbolism** of the black box. What does it represent?
8. "The Lottery" was first published in *The New Yorker* on June 26th, 1948. It was met with overwhelming **criticism** from readers. Why do you think this story would make people so upset?
9. Does the practice of the lottery **remind** you of any senseless practices in the real world?

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Worksheet 2: ANSWER KEY
GUIDED READING QUESTIONS
Shirley Jackson, "The Lottery"

Instructions:
Answer the following questions below using **full sentences**. Wherever possible, include **supporting evidence** from the text. If you are referencing direct quotations, be sure to include a page number.

Pre-Reading

1. Violence is an unfortunate reality in human history. Is there any circumstance where violence is **justifiable**? Explain your reasoning.
Answers will vary. Students may bring up the following justifiable examples: self-defense, riot, police enforcement, violent protest, self-defense. If you answer these questions as a class, you may wish to be prepared to handle questions regarding this question. From a trauma-informed perspective, it is okay to skip this question if you are aware of students who have personal experience with any of these examples.
2. What does **tradition** mean to you? Are there any traditions in which you participate? Do you feel as though it is important to **preserve** traditions?
Answers will vary. Traditions may include religious, cultural, or family traditions. Students may feel as though it is important to preserve traditions because they provide a sense of identity and continuity.
3. Read the first two paragraphs of the story. Describe the **mood** of these first two paragraphs. How does the author introduce the **setting**? How does the **imagery** make you feel?
Students may bring up their own cultural or religious traditions, customs, or practices. They may also mention other cultures and religions of which they are aware. If you answer these questions as a class, you may wish to be prepared to handle questions pertaining to individual beliefs.
4. Based on the title of the short story and the mood in the first two paragraphs, what **predictions** can you make about the plot?
Students may predict that the lottery is a ritual that is performed in the town. They may also predict that the lottery is a tradition that is passed down from generation to generation.

Post-Reading

1. Explain how the lottery works.
The lottery is a ritual that is performed in the town of the story. It is a tradition that is passed down from generation to generation. The lottery is held on June 27th of each year (or June 26th if the town is small). The eldest able male representative - typically the father - of each family draws a paper slip from a black box. If the eldest able male representative is under 16, the eldest female will draw. The night before the lottery, paper slips are prepared by the lottery official and the postmaster - in this case, Mr. Summers and Mr. Graves - and are stored securely someplace in the town. The paper slips used to be wooden chips until Mr. Summers switched to paper slips because they were more easily slipped into the black box to accommodate the large number of families in the town.
2. Mr. Adams and Old Man Warner discuss villages that want to change the lottery. What does Old Man Warner think about their choices?
Old Man Warner is a character in the story who is a member of the lottery. He is a traditionalist and believes that the lottery is a necessary part of the town's culture. He is skeptical of the changes that other villages are making and believes that the lottery is a tradition that should be preserved.
3. What is the **purpose** of the lottery?
The purpose of the lottery is to ensure that the town's population remains stable and that the town's traditions are preserved. The lottery is a ritual that is performed in the town of the story. It is a tradition that is passed down from generation to generation.
4. How do the other characters in the story feel about the lottery?
The characters in the story have different feelings about the lottery. Some characters, like Mr. Summers and Mr. Graves, are in charge of the lottery and see it as a necessary part of the town's culture. Other characters, like Old Man Warner, are traditionalists and believe that the lottery is a necessary part of the town's culture. Some characters, like Mrs. Hutchinson, are unaware of the true nature of the lottery until it is too late.

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Worksheet 3: ANSWER KEY
GUIDED READING QUESTIONS
Shirley Jackson, "The Lottery"

Pre-Reading

1. Based on the title of the short story and the mood in the first two paragraphs, what **predictions** can you make about the plot?
Answers will vary. If you choose to discuss these questions as a class before reading the short story, you may wish to remind students who are aware of the plot to keep it for the rest of the class. A great strategy to prevent students who blurt out answers is to incentivize keeping plotlines to themselves by assigning another student to be the "plot spoiler" when the plot has been revealed prematurely.

Post-Reading

1. Explain how the lottery works.
The lottery is a ritual that is performed in the town of the story. It is a tradition that is passed down from generation to generation. The lottery is held on June 27th of each year (or June 26th if the town is small). The eldest able male representative - typically the father - of each family draws a paper slip from a black box. If the eldest able male representative is under 16, the eldest female will draw. The night before the lottery, paper slips are prepared by the lottery official and the postmaster - in this case, Mr. Summers and Mr. Graves - and are stored securely someplace in the town. The paper slips used to be wooden chips until Mr. Summers switched to paper slips because they were more easily slipped into the black box to accommodate the large number of families in the town.
2. Mr. Adams and Old Man Warner discuss villages that want to change the lottery. What does Old Man Warner think about their choices?
Old Man Warner is a character in the story who is a member of the lottery. He is a traditionalist and believes that the lottery is a necessary part of the town's culture. He is skeptical of the changes that other villages are making and believes that the lottery is a tradition that should be preserved.
3. What is the **purpose** of the lottery?
The purpose of the lottery is to ensure that the town's population remains stable and that the town's traditions are preserved. The lottery is a ritual that is performed in the town of the story. It is a tradition that is passed down from generation to generation.
4. How do the other characters in the story feel about the lottery?
The characters in the story have different feelings about the lottery. Some characters, like Mr. Summers and Mr. Graves, are in charge of the lottery and see it as a necessary part of the town's culture. Other characters, like Old Man Warner, are traditionalists and believe that the lottery is a necessary part of the town's culture. Some characters, like Mrs. Hutchinson, are unaware of the true nature of the lottery until it is too late.

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Analyze Key Literary Elements

Engage students in literary analysis through exploring various themes, characterization, and literary devices

3. Read the first two paragraphs of the story. Describe the **mood** of these first two paragraphs. How does the author introduce the **setting**? How does the **imagery** make you feel?
4. Based on the title of the short story and the mood in the first two paragraphs, what **predictions** can you make about the plot?

- Explore literary devices such as **symbolism**, **setting**, and **mood**
- Examine **imagery** and think critically about **themes** presented in "The Lottery"

Answer Keys Included!

See what others are saying...

Here's what teachers like you are loving about these **Reading Questions!**

 **Extremely Satisfied**

Perfect for teaching "The Lottery!" Thank you!

- Sarah Z.

 **Extremely Satisfied**

These study questions helped my students grasp the depth of this short story. Once again, the answer key was really great to have on hand.

- Julia S.

 **Extremely Satisfied**

Excellent Resource! My students were very engaged.

- WellSoul Classroom