

Lit Analysis Example and Quiz

The following prompt was used for this example: Write about the setting: 1) How is it unusual or unfamiliar? 2) Where are you most comfortable in this setting and why? 3) How is the setting in this novel an important part of the plot?

The writer focused on the *unusual* aspect of the setting, on the fact that while the town seems normal, an awful thing happens there. Remember, setting is the location, the time, the details of place, even how the people talk (their customs, accents, etc.).

The small town of 300 people in Shirley Jackson's story *The Lottery* initially seems like a nice place, not unlike many small towns in Wisconsin. **But the calm, otherwise ordinary setting stands in sharp contrast to the horrific event that happens there each June 27, when residents stone to death the one person who "wins" the lottery.** Jackson describes the day of the lottery as "clear and sunny." It is a summer day that is full of life with profusely blooming flowers and rich green grass. The kids are out of school for the summer, and in most towns, this time of year is joyful and happy. Other elements of the setting make Jackson's town seem ordinary. The people seem to be mostly working class. The men talk of "planting and rain, tractors and taxes." The women are not fancy, but wear "faded house dresses and sweaters." The town has a teen club and a Halloween program, which shows that the community tries to provide fun outlets for its young people. And when Mr. Summers calls the others "folks," he seems so friendly. But this small town friendliness is not so generous on June 27, when each person is as glad as the next not to have drawn the black dot. The stereotypical small town is also one where people are not just friendly, they are also concerned for others; they look out for each other. However, when Nancy and Bill Hutchinson Jr. realize they're free, they smile and laugh and hold their blank slips of paper above their heads for the crowd to see. Instead of being solemn or even outraged because they know their own mother is to die, Bill and Nancy are simply happy for themselves. The people, like the town, are not what they should be. (300 words)

Test your knowledge

1. Where is the **thesis**? Circle it and label it T.
2. Find examples of direct and indirect **evidence** (full or partial quotations or paraphrase). Highlight in pink. Label the direct with a D and the indirect with I.
3. Find examples where the writer sets up the evidence or when the writer gives the **context** for the evidence. Underline those.
4. When does the writer **explain** the evidence or further argue the thesis? Highlight in green.
5. Write a short **reflection** explaining what you learned from this activity. Be specific. You can write your reflection on the back of this paper.