

What a Lottery!

Aims

- To introduce students to the four main characters in the story.
- To introduce the concept of life being 'a lottery' (a matter of chance).

1 Ask students if they know what a lottery game is. Explain it to them in general terms if they don't know. When they have understood, ask them to explain how you play the lottery in their country.

Possible answer: A lottery is a national gambling game, where you have to choose some numbers and pay some money to play. If you get the correct numbers you can win a lot of money.

Ask students if they've ever done the lottery and if anyone has ever won any money.

Explain to students that we can also use the word 'lottery' in a wider sense, to refer to other situations where what happens is a matter of chance. Illustrate with some examples: So many people applied for the job that it was just a lottery which person got it. You can also talk about life being a lottery.

2 Ask students if they think that 'chance' has been important in their life in any way. Ask them to make a list of things that have happened to them by chance – for example, meeting people, finding things. Ask them to share their list with a partner. Call back some of the events from the whole class. Ask the class to decide whose story involves the greatest chance.

3 Tell students that this story is called *What a Lottery!* and it's about Rick Drummond, who is married to Mary. Ask them to read Extracts 1 and see what they can find out about Rick.

Answers: He plays the guitar and writes songs; he wants to become a famous rock star; he's a dreamer; he is the same as ten years ago; his wife seems angry with him.

4 Tell students that another character in *What a Lottery!* is called Barry Green. He is running away from the police. Ask students to read Extracts 2 and decide what things happen because of chance.

Answers: By chance, the taxi driver leaves his keys in the car while he pays for the petrol, so Barry Green can steal it; by chance, when Rick needs a taxi to get to Glasgow, the first taxi he finds is the one driven by Barry Green.

5 Tell students that Barry Green and Rick have a fight in a café. Rick falls and hits his head and then can't remember anything. A girl called Sarah helps him. She sees a picture of Rick playing a guitar. Ask them to read Extract 3 and see how the 'chance' theme is continued.

Answers: Sarah needs a guitarist and she meets Rick; Rick wants to go to Glasgow and Sarah is singing in Glasgow; Rick wanted to be a rock star and now he can perform with Sarah.

6 Based on what they know of the story, ask students what they think happens to Rick, Barry Green, Sarah and Rick's wife Mary at the end of the story.

7 Ask students to decide what they would do if they won a lot of money on the lottery. Ask them to discuss their ideas in a group of four. Call back some suggestions from the whole class. Whose idea is the most interesting?

What a Lottery!

Extracts 1

- Rick Drummond is going to buy a lottery ticket. He's walking down the street and listening to music. The music is very loud. Rick is singing as he listens.
- He walks into an ice-cream shop . . . 'Can I have a lottery ticket, please?'
- The shop assistant smiles. 'This is an ice-cream shop,' he says. 'We don't sell lottery tickets.'
- Rick turns and smiles at the man. 'I play the guitar and I write songs. I'm going to be a famous rock star one day.'
- Mary looks at a photo of Rick by the bed. 'You see this?' she asks. 'This photo is ten years old. Look at you. The same Rick – no changes. You write your stupid songs and buy your lottery tickets and wait.'

Extracts 2

- Then a taxi comes down the street . . . The taxi stops at a petrol station and the driver puts petrol into the taxi. Then he goes into the shop. Barry walks across the street and looks in the taxi . . . The keys are still in the car . . .
- It's midnight. Rick wants to go to Glasgow but doesn't know how to get there. It's late and there are no trains or buses. He leaves his flat. Then he sees a taxi.
'Taxi! Stop!' Rick runs in front of the taxi and it stops. The driver is Barry Green . . .

Extracts 3

'You play the guitar?' Sarah says. 'Can you play this?' she asks. She gives him a guitar.

Rick takes the guitar and starts to play. Very well.

'Wow, you're good!' Sarah says . . . 'I'm a singer and I'm going to sing tomorrow. But my guitar player isn't coming . . . Do you want to come and play with me?'

'Rick thinks for a moment . . . 'Where are you singing?'

'In Glasgow,' says Sarah.