

*Big Winner!* - Suitable for Grades 5 to 8

Created 1999

This series of activities can be used in whole or in part to have students explore:

- ♣ The odds of winning at gambling.
- ♦ What money can and can not buy.
- ♥ What problems money can and can not solve.

**PART ONE: The odds of winning & what money can and can not buy.**

**Introductory Activity:** Simulate the changing odds of a lottery draw with your students to generate thinking & discussion on the "odds" of winning; the consequences of gambling and what money can and can't buy.

**Supplies:** ✓ Several rolls of draw tickets with matching numbers, sufficient for total school population.

✓ A list with the numbers of students in each class for the whole school.

✓ Monopoly money, in \$10 denominations, one for each student.

✓ A box for the draw.

✓ Telephone directories (city, town, provincial) & Postal Code directory

**Method:**

- ✓ Distribute one \$10 bill of monopoly money to each student. Tell them this is their spending money for one month and have them brainstorm how they might spend it. Have them brainstorm what money can and can't buy. Have a class discussion on the differences between the two lists.
- ✓ Introduce the idea of a \$10 Lottery Ticket for a \$1 million prize. Have students make a "mental choice" as to whether they might purchase a ticket. Have students brainstorm what they know about a lottery & how it works; specifically with reference to the "odds of winning". Record questions they would like answered to be researched as an enrichment activity.
- ✓ Divide the school list, have groups of students count out appropriate number of tickets for each class. Have them separate the tickets - one set for the draw; one set for representing ticket holders.
- ✓ Have each group deposit the tickets they have counted for every class in the school; have students calculate the changing odds as each class is added.
- ✓ Ask students to imagine adding in a ticket for each person in the telephone directories and/or postal code books - what might the odds become?
- ✓ Use the Background Info sheet to generally describe the odds of winning a lottery.
- ✓ Given their new understanding of the "odds" and what money can and can not buy; have students re-visit their "mental choice".

**PART TWO: What problems money can and can not solve.**

Ask your students to imagine that their parents have just won the lottery! The grand prize is \$1,000,000. What will your family do with all that money? Will your parents quit work? Buy a new house? Buy a new car? What changes might happen to you? New clothes? Vacations? Lots of people fantasize about winning the lottery; believing that if they won \$1 million it would solve all their problems. But is this really true?

**Method:** ✓ In small groups, ask your students to discuss the following statements. Provide each group with a piece of chart paper and a marker. Have them select a recorder who will record the discussion in point form. Have each small group display and report its findings.

- ♣ 1. Problems that would disappear if I won a million dollars.
- ♦ 2. Problems that wouldn't disappear, no matter how much money I had (e.g. individual, family, school, neighbourhood issues).
- ♥ 3. Problems that could get worse if I won a million dollars.
- ♣ 4. New problems that could develop if I won a million dollars.

Have class discuss small group findings and ask what they've learned from this exercise.