

WHAT ARE YOUR CHANCES OF WINNING THE LOTTERY?



Wouldn't you like to win a million dollars? A lot of people would! That's why lotteries are so popular. In fact, half the adults in America have bought a lottery ticket in the last year.

A lottery is a gambling game. It involves no skill and no smarts, but plenty of luck. You buy a ticket with some numbers on it. You have the choice of picking your own numbers or getting a set of numbers generated by a computer. If your ticket numbers match the prize numbers, you win. Sometimes you have to match five or six numbers to win big.

Richard Lustig is one lucky guy. He won the lottery seven times! Stefan Mandel relied on math instead of luck. He figured out a sure system for winning the Virginia State Lottery in 1992. He bought 7 million tickets with every possible number combination. It cost him millions, but it paid off. He won 27 million dollars. And that's not even the biggest win these days. Three winners shared the biggest prize in history. It was the Powerball Jackpot of 1.5 billion dollars in 2016.

Unfortunately, there's a catch. Your chances of winning a really big jackpot are over 1 in 100 million. In fact, you are about 20,000 times more likely to be struck by lightning.

But if you do win, your life will be changed forever. And not always for the better. Many winners have learned the hard way that money can't buy happiness. Evelyn Adams is one. She is the only person to win the New Jersey State lottery twice. Suddenly she was surrounded by friends she didn't know she had. They all had their hands out for money and she had trouble saying no. Plus, she thought her good luck would stick. She gambled away almost a million dollars at a casino.

Experts say that buying lottery tickets is not a smart habit, especially if you need that money for other things. Unfortunately, few people stop at just one ticket. Most spend a lot more than they ever win.

But Richard Lustig says, "If you have two dollars available and buying that ticket lets you enjoy a dream of your own private island, consider it a cost of entertainment." Just make sure you can spare that two dollars. And don't count too much on that private island. Remember that you're more likely to be struck by lightning.



BEFORE READING:

What do you know about lotteries? Mark each of these statements True or False.

True – False: You don't have to be smart to win the lottery.

True – False: No one has ever won a lottery jackpot more than once.

True – False: Most lottery winners spend more than they ever win.

True – False: You will live happily ever after if you win the lottery.

DURING READING:

Read the passage to see if your True/False answers are right. Put a check mark beside the evidence to prove each one.

AFTER READING:

Some things to think about:

1. Which of the before-reading statements were true and which were false? Change the false statements to make them true.
2. There is a famous saying: "Monday can't buy happiness." Do you think that's true or not?
3. Why do experts say buying lottery tickets is not a good habit?
4. Sometimes long sentences are hard to read. But they're a lot easier if you break them into chunks. Try this one from the last paragraph:

But Richard Lustig says, / "If you have two dollars available, / and buying that ticket lets you enjoy a dream of your own private island, / consider it a cost of entertainment."

Something to do: PLAN A STORY ABOUT A LOTTERY WINNER

Imagine that you won the lottery! Tell your story. How did you win? How much did you win? What did you do with the money? What advice do you have for other winners?

Use the planner on the next page to plan your story.



B-M-E PLANNER

Imagine you were the winner of a big lottery! What did you do with the money? Use this chart to plan a story about your win.

BEGINNING: Who, what, when, where, why?
How much money did you win? How did you win it?

MIDDLE: What are three things you used your money for? Be sure to include one UNUSUAL thing. Give at least two details for each.

END: What advice do you have for future lottery winners?

