

Gambling and the National Lottery

Task 1 – How likely is it?

Guess the answer to these questions:

- Which country will win the next football World Cup?
- Will it snow in London on Christmas day?
- Who will win the Oscar for best actor next year?
- Will man walk on Mars by the end of the decade?
- Which country will host the Olympics in 2028?
- Who will win the next general election in the UK?

Which answers do you feel confident about?

Look at this probability line. The word ‘likely’ means the same as ‘probable’.



Talk about your predictions and compare them with your partner’s.

“I don’t think it’s very likely to snow on Christmas day in London, but it’s very likely that Brazil will win the next World Cup.”

In the UK you can bet on all of these questions, as well as football matches, horse races, and many other things. Now think about where you live and discuss the following questions:

- What can you bet money on?
- Is there an age limit for betting?
- Have you ever bet on anything?
- Is there a National Lottery or anything similar in your country?

Task 2 – Vocabulary Bingo!

Have you ever played Bingo? It’s very popular in the UK. Listen to your teacher, eyes down and good luck!

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Task 3 – Are you a risk taker?

Do you like taking risks or do you prefer to play it safe? Answer these five questions to find out how risky you are.

Are you a risk taker?

1. In an exam of 6 topics where only 2 will appear, what do you do?
 - a) Study all 6, just in case.
 - b) Study 4 of them. Chances are that 2 will be in the exam.
 - c) Study 2 and cross your fingers!

2. What would you prefer to do at the weekend?
 - a) Stay at home.
 - b) Hitch hike to a nearby town for the day.
 - c) Go on an activity weekend to do extreme sports, like rock climbing or mountain biking.

3. Imagine you are given some money for your birthday. What do you do with it?
 - a) Put it in the bank – you may really need it one day.
 - b) Spend it all
 - c) Use it to bet with your friend about the results of your local football team.

4. Would you like to do a bungee jump?
 - a) No way! Not for all the money in the world.
 - b) Maybe, if it was a low bridge with deep water underneath.
 - c) Any time. That's what bridges are for!

5. When you cross the road, what do you do?
 - a) Always go to the traffic lights and wait for the green man.
 - b) Find a safe place to cross and look both ways.
 - c) Cross anywhere – cars will stop for me!

Now count the number of As, Bs and Cs you put and read the results:

- Mostly As – You like to play it safe and hate taking risks.
- Mostly Bs – You take risks from time to time but are quite sensible.
- Mostly Cs – you like to live life on the edge! Take care!

Task 4 – The UK National Lottery

The National Lottery began in the UK in 1994 and is very popular. A UK radio station asked listeners the question “Has the National Lottery changed your life?”. Here are some of the answers:

Jackie: “It hasn’t changed my life at all. I did buy a few tickets at the beginning but I never won anything so I gave up. I felt like I was throwing my money away. I mean, what are the odds that you’ll win? It’s nearly impossible. A friend of mine says, “You’ve got to be in it, to win it”, but I think it’s better to save the money.”

Paul: “I was the first jackpot winner! I couldn’t believe it when my numbers came up on the TV screen on the first night. I think most of Britain was glued to their telly that night. Anyway, since then my life has never been the same. My wife and I decided to build a mansion in the country and we both gave up our jobs. We went crazy, bought five cards each and went on hundreds of holidays. We decided to only buy the best of everything; marble floors, pure gold taps, Persian carpets. In the end we couldn’t finish the house and we had to sell it. We lost everything. Our relationship changed and we split up. In fact, I haven’t got any of the money now. I’m back at work and I live in a small flat on my own. I wish I’d never bought that first lottery ticket. I’ve had a taste of the rich life, but to be honest I was much happier before.

Clare: “I work for a charity that runs an after-school club for children. We were given some money from the Lottery fund six years ago and it has made a big difference to us. We have moved the club to a bigger building and we built a special room for the children to do crafts and cookery. We also built a sports centre so now there’s lots of things for the children to do after school when they are waiting for their parents to finish work.”

Ben: “I’ve bought a lottery ticket every Saturday for the past ten years. I always play with the same numbers. So far I’ve only won a small prize but I’m sure that one day I’ll win the jackpot! I can’t stop playing now. Just imagine if one week I don’t buy a ticket and my numbers come up – I’ll regret it forever! When I go on holiday I have to get my neighbour to buy the ticket for me and I phone her to check she has bought it. I guess I’m addicted, but as some of the money goes to charity, I don’t feel guilty about it.

Simon: “Since the lottery started in 1994 they’ve made it easier and easier to play. Now you can use a mobile phone to play by text message or you can play online. I reckon this tempts people who haven’t got the money to spare to spend it on lottery tickets. It’s always the poorer people who gamble more anyway. They live in the hope that one day they’ll win and their lives will improve. It’s all rubbish – money can’t make you happy.”

- Do you agree with Jackie’s friend that ‘you’ve got to be in it to win it’?
- Do you agree with Simon that ‘Money can’t make you happy’?
- In the UK National Lottery, 28% of all money made goes to charity organisations. Do you think that playing the lottery is a good way of giving money to charity?
- Work in pairs and choose two of the people from the radio programme. Don’t tell each other who you are. Imagine you meet at the radio station and start a conversation. Try to guess who each other is.

Task 5 – Lottery winner

You have won £ 10,000,000 in a lottery! How much money is this in your currency?

Work in pairs or small groups and think about what you would do if you won this much money. Think about the following questions and be prepared to share your ideas with the class.

- How would you feel?
- What would you buy?
- Would you give any money to charity? If so, how much and to which charity?
- Would you share the money with family and friends?
- Would you stay in the same town or in the same country?
- Would you save any of the money?
- Do you think you would be happier?