

Definition: **lottery** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

Form of gambling whereby participants pay to enter and winners are picked by a method based on chance. This method often involves participants choosing numbers. They win if their numbers correspond to numbers picked randomly by the lottery organizer during a subsequent draw.



Image from: [The Lottery in Piazza di Montecitorio in National Gallery Collection](#)

Summary Article: **lottery**
from *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

scheme for distributing prizes by lot or other method of chance selection to persons who have paid for the opportunity to win. The term is not applicable when lots are drawn without payment by the interested parties to determine some matter, e.g., the distribution of property among heirs. The absence of any element of skill or play distinguishes the lottery as a form of gambling. Under common law in England and the United States lotteries were lawful.

They paid for many public buildings and founded and supported educational, charitable, and religious enterprises. Private lotteries, which were particularly susceptible to fraudulent practices, were first generally prohibited in the early 19th cent. Most publicly sponsored lotteries were discontinued not long afterward. With the adoption in 1890 of a federal statute prohibiting the transportation of lottery tickets or prizes by mail or in interstate commerce, the largest American state lottery—that of Louisiana—came to an end. It was not until more than 50 years later that state lotteries were again legalized in the United States, when New Hampshire authorized (1963) a sweepstakes lottery, the proceeds of which were to go to education. With the assistance of computers, 42 states and the District of Columbia now operate daily and weekly lotteries with huge payoffs; states also participate in regional and multistate lotteries, ranging from Tri-State Megabucks (Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont) to Powerball (with 31 states and territories). Often the lottery drawings are televised. Lotteries are also lawful in many other countries, some of which jointly operate multinational lotteries.

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