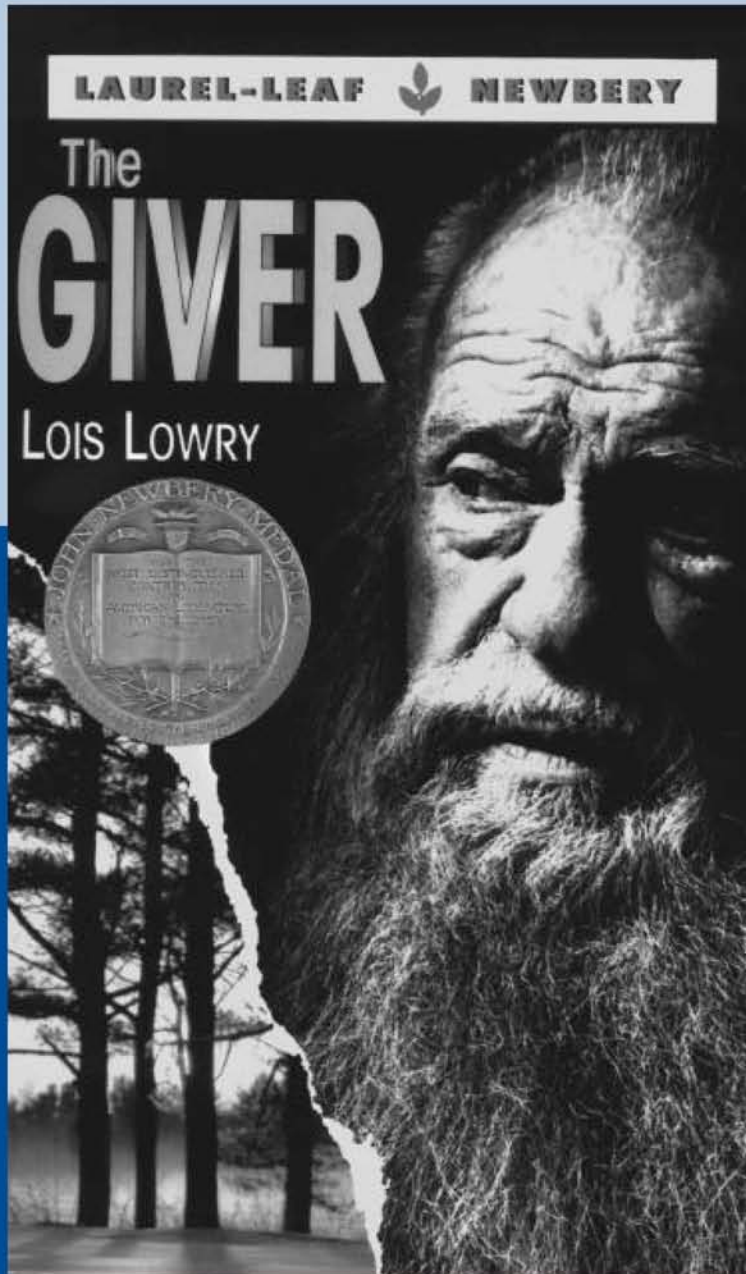


A TEACHER'S RESOURCE *for*



PART OF THE "WITNESSES TO HISTORY" SERIES PRODUCED BY

FACING HISTORY AND OURSELVES & VOICES OF LOVE AND FREEDOM

A TEACHER'S RESOURCE *for*

The Giver

by Lois Lowry

Part of the "Witnesses to History" series produced by
Facing History and Ourselves & Voices of Love and Freedom

Acknowledgments

Voices of Love and Freedom (VLF) is a nonprofit educational organization that promotes literacy, values, and prevention. VLF teacher resources are designed to help students:

- appreciate literature from around the world
- develop their own voices as they learn to read and write
- learn to use the values of love and freedom to guide their lives
- and live healthy lives free of substance abuse and violence.

Voices of Love and Freedom was founded in 1992 and is a collaboration of the Judge Baker Children's Center, Harvard Graduate School of Education, City University of New York Graduate School, and Wheelock College.

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For more information, contact FHAO, National Office, 16 Hurd Road, Brookline, MA 02445; 617-232-1595; <http://www.facing.org>.

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Witnesses to History

It has been said that memory is the imprint of the past upon us as individuals and as members of a family, an ethnic or religious group, a community, even a nation. Our memory is also the keeper of what is most meaningful to our deepest hopes and our greatest fears. *Voices of Love and Freedom* and *Facing History and Ourselves* have created teacher resources for six literary works that focus on individual encounters with history in ways that deepen our understanding of the connections between past and present. Each also reveals the importance of confronting history in all of its complexity, including its legacies of prejudice and discrimination, resilience and courage.

Voices of Love and Freedom and *Facing History and Ourselves* have developed a teacher resource for each of the following titles:

The Giver by Lois Lowry—a futuristic novel that explores the relationship between past and present, between identity and memory. **The Central Question:** How do our individual and collective memories shape who we are today and influence our futures?

Night by Elie Wiesel—a memoir that focuses on the final year of the Holocaust—a year the author spent at Auschwitz, a Nazi death camp. **The Central Question:** What is the relationship between our stories and our identity? To what extent are we all witnesses of history and messengers to humanity?

Farewell to Manzanar by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston—an account of a young girl's experiences at an internment camp in the United States during World War II. It reveals how the time Jeanne Wakatsuki spent at Manzanar shaped her identity—her sense of who she is and what she might become. **The Central Question:** How do our confrontations with justice and injustice help shape our identity? How do those confrontations influence the things we say and do?

Warriors Don't Cry by Melba Pattillo Beals—a first-hand account of the integration of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957. The book explores not only the power of racism but also such ideas as justice, identity, loyalty, and choice. **The Central Question:** What can we do alone and with others to confront racism? How can we as individuals and as citizens make a positive difference in our school, community, and nation?

Kaffir Boy: The True Story of a Black Youth's Coming of Age in Apartheid South Africa by Mark Mathabane—a first-person narrative about the impact of racism and segregation on a young black South African in the 1970s. The book can be used to deepen an understand not only of racism but also of such concepts as identity, resilience, and resistance. **The Central Question:** What are different ways we struggle for freedom?

The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan (coming in fall, 1999).

Teacher Resources

Each teacher resource is organized around a central theme or question related to the theme of the work. The following strategies are used to develop the central question and related ideas and promote literacy and social skills.

Central Theme or Question

While several themes from the story are explored in the teacher resource, the central theme has been selected to assure that activities build upon one another and provide students with a deep understanding of a key aspect of the story.

To Connect

The activities in the *To Connect* sections of the resources are pre-reading activities. They include suggestions for introducing the central theme, using teacher and student stories to encourage a connection with the central theme, discussing key concepts, and providing an historical and conceptual context for understanding the literary work. One of the primary purposes of these activities is to help students *to connect* their own personal experience to the issues raised in the story prior to reading the story.

To Discuss

After reading the story or a section of the story, a variety of discussion questions help teachers foster a lively conversation that deepens comprehension and widens students' perspectives. These questions also encourage interpretation of the text and develop important concepts as well as reinforce speaking, listening, and critical thinking skills.

To Practice

After students have read and discussed a story (or section), a variety of interactive activities provide practice in key literacy and social skills. Some of these activities involve the whole class in reenactments of key scenes, role playing, and debates. Others are partner or individual activities that provide opportunities to practice literacy skills (listening and speaking) and/or social skills (perspective taking and conflict resolution).

To Express

Students are encouraged to reveal their understanding of the story through the use of journals and structured writing activities. These activities help students appreciate the author's craft as well as develop their own writing skills. At the end of each teacher resource, the Final Writing Activity helps students express their understanding of the book and their responses to the Central Question.

To Participate

Some teacher resources contain suggestions for engaging students in community service projects at school, in the home, or in the neighborhood. These activities build on insights and values developed through reading and discussing the story.

Voices of Love and Freedom

Voices of Love and Freedom is a K–12 educational organization that helps students appreciate literature from around the world, develop their own voices as they learn to read and write, learn to use the values of love and freedom to guide their lives, and live healthy lives free of substance abuse and violence.

Facing History and Ourselves

Facing History and Ourselves is an educational organization that helps teachers and their students find meaning in the past and recognize the need for participation and responsible decision making. By providing an interdisciplinary framework for examining the meaning and responsibilities of citizenship, Facing History expands knowledge, challenges thinking, and stretches students' imagination.

About the Book

Story Summary

The Giver by Lois Lowry is a compelling story about a futuristic society in which all the needs of its citizens seem to have been met. Protected from poverty, hunger, disease, and violence, people appear happy and content, obediently following the many rules and rituals the society requires. Jonas doesn't question his role in society and is eagerly awaiting his Assignment—the job he will do as an adult—when he turns twelve. At first he is stunned when he learns that he is to be the next Giver, the most honored position. But as he receives what The Giver has to offer—the “memories of the whole world”—Jonas realizes that *his* world is far from perfect. In order to achieve “Sameness” and security, the society has also sacrificed feelings, color, music, sensation, love, and choice.

Gradually, Jonas becomes convinced that he and The Giver must change the society and “release” their memories back into society. He sets off on a dangerous journey and it is unclear, in the end, whether he is able to achieve their goal. The ambiguous ending is a thrilling culmination to a book rich in profound themes and issues. Beautifully written and superbly crafted, *The Giver* is a book destined to remain a classic.

Critical Responses to the Book

The Giver is Lois Lowry's twenty-first novel for young people. Published in 1993, it became an almost instant classic, winning critical accolades and the 1994 Newbery Award. The *New York Times Book Review* (October 31, 1993) called it “powerful and provocative.” In her young-adult literature column, *The Sand in the Oyster* (*The Horn Book Magazine*, November/December 1993), Patty Campbell calls *The Giver* an “intricately constructed masterwork” and describes the excitement it has generated among adults as well as young readers:

Once in a long while a book comes along that takes hardened young-adult reviewers by surprise, a book so unlike what has gone before, so rich in levels of meaning, so daring in complexity of symbol and metaphor, so challenging in the ambiguity of its conclusion, that we are left with all of our neat little everyday categories and judgments hanging useless.

She goes on to note Lowry's skill in “mastering the creation of a subtext by innuendo, foreshadowing, and resonance.” Comparing the book to Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, Campbell describes the power of Lowry's style: “Lowry plays with our perceptions and our emotions, creating tension by presenting details of this community that win our approval, and then hinting at something terribly wrong.”

Lois Lowry provides a trenchant explanation of the creation of *The Giver* in her eloquent Newbery Award acceptance speech (reprinted in the Appendix). Her insights are shared with students in an activity described at the end of the unit (see page 35).

In an interview in *The Reading Teacher* (December 1994/January 1995), Lowry is asked how she would envision *The Giver* being used in a literature classroom. She

replies that teachers have told her that “they’ve never before had a book that promotes discussion in the way this book does. That seems very exhilarating for that age group of kids [junior high students].” Lowry goes on to comment, “I’ve never been a teacher, and I am so in awe of the skills and knowledge they bring to their students. I do think that there is an important analogy that can be drawn from *The Giver*: Teachers, parents, and librarians become the givers of knowledge that children will carry with themselves on whatever journey they take in life.”

About the Author

Lois Lowry was born in Honolulu in 1937 to Robert and Katherine Hammersbergh. Her father, a career army officer, was stationed near Pearl Harbor. Because of World War II, her family was separated, and Lowry spent the rest of the war years with her mother’s family in the Amish Country in Pennsylvania. Lowry recalls her childhood as “quiet, well-ordered, predictable, safe and happy.” When Lowry was eleven, her family was reunited in Japan, where they lived for several years.

After a brief college career, Lois married Donald Lowry, settled in Boston and then Maine, and had four children in five years (the couple later divorced). Lowry eventually returned to college, finished her degree, and began working as a freelance photographer. She also began writing short stories; her first novel for young adults, *A Summer to Die*, published in 1977, was written at the encouragement of a Houghton Mifflin editor. Lowry now lives in Cambridge and New Hampshire, and spends her time writing, traveling, and speaking at schools and conferences.

Lowry has often translated her life into fiction, although not always in precise autobiographical detail. Some of her experiences during the war formed the background for her fourth novel, *Autumn Street*. The tragic death of her sister Helen, when Lowry was twenty-five, provided the inspiration for *A Summer to Die*. In *Something About the Author* (Volume 70), Lowry notes, “Very little of [*A Summer to Die*] was factual, except the emotions.”

Although her books have tackled difficult, even somber, subjects, Lowry is perhaps best known for her humorous novels. The ever-popular Anastasia Krupnik books, beginning with *Anastasia Krupnik*, are based on memories of her childhood, as well as her experiences as a parent. *Rabble Starkey*, one of Lowry’s personal favorites, combines the serious with the humorous and presents fully realized characters grappling with “issues” (e.g., teenage motherhood, stereotypes, love, loyalty) seamlessly blended into a narrative that is both captivating and thoughtful.

It is Lowry’s ability to capture adolescent concerns that makes her one of the most well respected and well read young-adult authors. As her editor, Walter Lorraine, has remarked, “Lois’s writing is always accessible to a very broad audience....[Lois] accepts all people and attitudes as being necessary to life, and harbors no deep or hidden prejudices....She listens, not superficially, as most of us do, but with attention....” In *Something About the Author* (Volume 70), Lowry says that she gauges her success as a writer by her ability to “help adolescents answer their own questions about life, identity, and human relationships.”

Lowry has received numerous awards and critical acclaim for her writing, including the 1990 Newbery Award for *Number the Stars*, the Children's Literature Award (IRA) for *A Summer to Die*, and the Boston Globe–Horn Book Award and Child Study Award for *Rabble Starkey*. Other books by Lois Lowry include the following:

Find a Stranger, Say Goodbye (1978)
Anastasia Krupnik (1979)
Anastasia Again! (1981)
Anastasia at Your Service (1982)
Taking Care of Terrific (1983)
Anastasia Ask Your Analyst (1984)
Us and Uncle Fraud (1984)
The One Hundredth Thing About Caroline (1985)
Anastasia on Her Own (1985)
Anastasia Has the Answers (1986)
Anastasia's Chosen Career (1987)
All About Sam (1988)
Your Move J.P.! (1990)
Anastasia at This Address (1991)
Attaboy, Sam! (1992)
Anastasia, Absolutely (1995)
See You Around, Sam (1996)

Context of the Story

You may wish to share with your students information about literary genres, and specifically the literary genre to which *The Giver* belongs. Although *The Giver* is sometimes classified as *science fiction* and sometimes as *fantasy*, it can best be seen in the context of a distinguished tradition of *utopian* and *dystopian* (or anti-utopian) literature.

Genre

Utopia is the name commonly given to any society (fictional or experimental) in which everything is perfect; economic and social conditions are ideal. The adjective *utopian* is often used to connote any plans of reform which are thought to be impractical and/or visionary. The word *utopia* comes from the title of a famous book by Sir Thomas More, first translated from Latin into English in 1551. It is derived from two Greek words meaning “no place.” More's *Utopia* describes an idyllic society supposedly discovered by a companion of Amerigo Vespucci. Written in part as a dialogue, More's book was also a criticism of the social and economic evils of his time. More built on a tradition going back to ancient Greece. His most famous predecessor was Plato, who envisioned a self-contained city in *The Republic*, with a societal hierarchy based on justice.

During the nineteenth century, sometimes called the “golden age” of utopias, several energetic and idealistic thinkers attempted to put their theories into practice. Various utopian communities in Europe and North America were designed and begun, such as New Harmony, Indiana, in 1825 and the Oneida community in New

York State in 1848. Another important influence on the development of utopian writing were various social reform theories and movements, such as the egalitarian vision of worker equality proposed by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in *The Communist Manifesto*, published in 1848.

The Transcendentalists also embraced various utopian ideals. Brook Farm, a cooperative society established in West Roxbury, Massachusetts, in 1841, was home to Nathaniel Hawthorne and other nineteenth-century writers and thinkers. Ten-year-old Louisa May Alcott briefly lived in a “utopian” community known as the Con-Sociate Family, an experiment her father, Bronson Alcott, and other Concord Transcendentalists enthusiastically helped to form. (The eighteenth-century farmhouse they lived in is now part of the Fruitlands Museum in Harvard, Massachusetts; the site of Brook Farm may also be visited.)

From about 1850 on, most utopias included some commentary on the benefits or dangers of technology. Edward Bellamy’s influential utopian novel *Looking Backward* (1888) viewed the rise of technology as a positive force, as did B. F. Skinner in *Walden Two* (1948). Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1932) and George Orwell’s *1984* (1949) are two of the best-known novels that express anti-utopian or dystopian views. In the societies envisioned by these writers, technology has become oppressive and deadly. Nature is controlled, the family structure is sublimated and contorted, and the individual’s rights are denied.

The society outlined in *The Giver* has much in common with other literary utopias. As Northrop Frye notes in his essay “Varieties of Literary Utopias” in *Utopias and Utopian Thoughts*, edited by Frank Manuel (Houghton Mifflin, 1965), “in most utopias the state predominates over the individual: property is usually held in common and the characteristic features of individual life, leisure, privacy, and freedom of movement are as a rule minimized.” He goes on to point out that “the utopia, in its typical form, contrasts, implicitly or explicitly, the writer’s own society with the more desirable one he describes.” Other well-known books that present critiques of their own society in the form of satire are *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726) by Jonathan Swift, Kurt Vonnegut’s *Player Piano* (1952) and his short story “Harrison Bergeron,” and Anthony Burgess’s *A Clockwork Orange* (1962). Many students may be familiar with *A Wrinkle in Time* (1962) by Madeleine L’Engle, which explores similar themes as *The Giver*, as well as books such as *The Keeper of the Isis Light* (1981) by Monica Hughes and books by Ursula LeGuin. Adult readers may find *The Giver* reminiscent of Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451* (1967) and Margaret Atwood’s *A Handmaid’s Tale* (1986).

As Michael Holquist points out in his essay “How to Play Utopia: Some Brief Notes on the Distinctiveness of Utopian Fiction” in *Science Fiction*, edited by Mark Rose (Prentice-Hall, 1976), “The truth that each utopia exists as a value system to challenge other such systems is self-evident.” Exploring the world of *The Giver* will allow students to reflect on their own society, the values we hold, the rules and rituals we engage in, as well as the role they play in society.

Names

Many of the characters in *The Giver* have names with significant literary or other connotations. You may wish to provide students with information about the derivation of the characters' names.

Jonas is the Latin form of Jonah, from the Hebrew, meaning “dove.” The Old Testament tells the story of Jonah, to whom God gives the task of telling the people of Nineveh that because of their greed and selfishness, their city will be destroyed in forty days. Through a series of events, Jonah is swallowed by a whale, rescued, and goes on to deliver his message. The people ask for forgiveness and are saved from destruction. In *The Giver* Jonas is the main character. He is also charged with the task of bringing important news and perhaps “rescuing” his people.

Lily is the name of a flower and has long symbolized purity and innocence. In *The Giver*, Jonas's younger sister Lily's childish innocence is contrasted with Jonas's growing disillusionment.

Rosemary, the name of a fragrant herb, has long been associated with love, memory, fidelity, and death. In the famous scene from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (Act IV), Ophelia, who has gone mad, is busy scattering flowers and says, “There's rosemary, that's for remembrance.” In *The Giver*, Rosemary is Jonas's predecessor as the recipient of The Giver's memories. She not only symbolizes remembrance but also goes “mad” and asks to be “released.”

Gabriel, from the Hebrew, is one of two archangels identified in the Old Testament. He is considered a prophetic messenger. In *The Giver*, the “newchild” with whom Jonas forms a bond is named Gabriel. Although we never learn whether Jonas or Gabriel actually survive at the end of the story, either may be considered a prophet or messenger.

About the Teacher Resource

Exploring the Central Question

- Q • How do our individual and collective memories shape who we are today and influence our future(s)?**

The Central Question, which is one of several important themes explored throughout the story, focuses on memory. We are told that The Giver is the most honored position in Jonas’s world. Presumably, then, the society highly values memory, which is what The Giver is trained to receive, preserve, and then convey to his or her successor. However, the society has chosen to control exactly what memories people are allowed to have. As the story unfolds, we come to understand that Lowry uses “memory” in a particular way. In this society, memory is not just recalling what happened in the past; in fact, the citizens have short-term memories (e.g., Jonas’s parents remember past Ceremonies). What they are not allowed to have are genuine personal memories (a sense of one’s own family and cultural history) and societal memories (an understanding of history and events of the past).

Memory is imperfect, messy, and hard to control. We all have memories that are sad as well as happy, painful as well as healing. We all edit and alter our memories to some extent, choosing to forget the bad and trying to remember the good. But the sum total of our memories—of our childhood, family and cultural history, and society’s past—are an integral part of what makes each of us unique and special. Society’s “memory” (history) helps us to understand our past and hopefully learn from it to create a better future. Denied those kinds of memory, the people in Jonas’s society are unable to form individual identities and make real connections to others.

By helping students see how individual (personal, family) and collective (cultural, historical) memories shape who we are, we can help them gain insights about themselves and their relationships with others. This in turn can empower them to better envision and articulate their own hopes and dreams for their futures.

Resource Overview

This teacher resource explores the Central Question by focusing on several connected ideas—memory, identity, choice, and history. The activities and discussion questions in Reading 1 and Reading 2 are designed to introduce students to Jonas and his world. Students are encouraged to express their views about society’s problems and how they would correct such problems in an “ideal” or “utopian” society. After learning more about Jonas’s society, students are asked to re-think their initial ideas and to consider the possible consequences of living in a world in which there are no genuine feelings or memories.

Although the notion of memory is touched upon earlier, the focus of discussion in Reading 3 is the Central Question. Students explore what “memory” is, why it is important, and the differences between personal and societal memories. The Writing

Activity continues the memory theme by asking students to write about the memory they would choose to share with Jonas.

In Reading 4 and Reading 5, students continue to reflect on the value of memory, as well as to compare and contrast themselves with Jonas. They are asked to think about the pros and cons of living in Jonas's world and how *The Giver* might be considered a commentary on our world. After they read Lois Lowry's Newbery acceptance speech, in which she describes some of the motivations—and memories—that led her to write the book, they are asked to choose a memory that helped to shape their lives. This Final Writing Activity helps students to synthesize the activities and discussions they have had and to express the personal meaning of the book.

Literary Analysis

In *The Giver* Lois Lowry skillfully uses a variety of literary techniques to advance and enhance her story. The discussion questions and activities help to explore these in greater depth, and focus on the following:

Theme: The story offers many different and complex themes. In addition to the Central Question concerning memory, these themes include the following:

- The needs of society versus the needs of the individual
- “Sameness” versus difference
- Conformity versus obedience
- Security versus risks
- The power and importance of language
- The “truth shall set you free”
- How to create a “just” society
- The power of music, art, and creativity
- The value of freedom

Style: Lowry's writing style is a key factor in making the story believable, powerful, and compelling. Some of the literary techniques she so skillfully employs include foreshadowing, symbolism, and the effective use of imagery. Discussion questions and journal suggestions invite students to explore these literary aspects.

Plot: The plot builds carefully and slowly, and then gathers momentum to a stunning climax, almost like a mystery or suspense story. Lowry achieves this by carefully revealing certain details about Jonas and his world. Students will be guided in understanding how the author provides information about the events of the story while maintaining suspense and interest.

Characterization: Despite the fact that the story is set “elsewhere,” all of the characters manage to be believable in the context of this imaginary world. Students may

find it useful to examine the ways in which the characters are presented, and why we are able to identify so easily with the main character, Jonas. In addition, as they explore how the main character grows and changes, they will gain a deeper understanding of motive and decision making.

Setting/Context: One of the most convincing aspects of the novel is its completely realized world. Lowry has not only created a society that seems plausible, she has endowed the society with enough complexity to make it both appealing and disturbing. Utilizing all the conventions of the dystopian tradition, she has managed to re-formulate it in a fresh and contemporary style, completely accessible to young readers.

Social Skills and Values

The social skills and values emphasized in this teacher resource are perspective taking, cultural awareness, and social awareness.

Perspective taking: The major social skill emphasized in this resource is perspective taking. Students are encouraged to view events from Jonas's perspective. In a sense, he is initiating the reader into his world.

Social and cultural awareness: Students are encouraged to explore Jonas's community and examine the ideas, events, and experiences that shaped his identity and the identities of others in his world.

Cross-Curricular Activities/Facing History and Ourselves

The Giver offers many opportunities for cross-curricular activities in social studies, including units on government, citizenship, and the Facing History and Ourselves (FHAO) program. Because it contains so many basic elements in the FHAO program, the cross-curricular activities section might best be used prior to the FHAO unit, to examine issues of identity, membership, memory, conformity, obedience, legacy, and participation. The ideas explored in this unit can also be revisited throughout the year. Other cross-curricular connections include suggestions for art, music, and drama activities.

Jonas and His World

(Chapters 1–5, pages 1–39)

Overview

Life is very orderly in Jonas’s world—there are rules and regulations governing feelings, language, and behavior. Obedience is expected and essential. There is no privacy; even the smallest details of one’s life (such as keeping hair ribbons neat) is overseen by the larger society. Jonas, who is about to turn twelve, lives with his parents and seven-year-old sister, Lily. Jonas is a thoughtful, quiet, but likable person. Unquestioning in his acceptance of the society in which he lives, Jonas is nevertheless disturbed by a vague sense of unease—*apprehensive* is the word he carefully chooses to describe his feelings. Although the society appears benign (everyone’s needs seem to be met), there is an underlying sense of unease created by the fact that the society completely controls the individual.

Teaching Focus

The Whole-Class Activity establishes the setting of *The Giver*. It is set in a futuristic or imagined society.

To Connect

Whole Class/Partner Activity: Create Your “Ideal” Society

Ask students to brainstorm problems they perceive in society today (e.g., violence, hunger, homelessness). Write these on chart paper or the chalkboard. Ask students to imagine that they’ve been hired to plan and create an “ideal” society. Working first by themselves, then in pairs or small groups, ask students to explain how they would solve at least two specific problems in their new society. Distribute Reproducible 1.1 so students may take notes on their own and then with their classmates.

After students have spent some time developing their ideas together, ask them to reassemble for a class discussion. Have them present their ideas. Ask them to describe some of the “rules” of their “new-and-improved” society. How would these rules affect individuals? Schools? Families? Governments? You may want to list the various solutions on the classroom chart and compare and contrast the different kinds of societies the students have envisioned.

*Pre-reading activities that help students **to connect** to the story*

To Read

Because *The Giver* is set in a futuristic (or imagined) society, it may be confusing at first for students. It is recommended that the first two chapters be read aloud in class by the teacher. This will help ensure that students understand the sequence of events. The next two chapters can then be read by students in class or at home. You may wish to continue alternating chapters read aloud in class with assigned reading to be done at home.

To Discuss

The discussion questions, to be used during and after reading, have been grouped to help focus discussion. The questions will help students develop their critical thinking and reading comprehension. While conducting the class discussion, ask students to find passages or examples from the book, whenever possible, to explain their answers.

*Open-ended questions that help students **to discuss** the most important themes and issues*

Analyze the structure of the society Jonas lives in.

- What are some of the rules of the society that Jonas lives in? How do the rules make people feel? How does Jonas feel about the rules?
- What happens if you don't follow the rules? Who gets punished and how? Why were rules "very hard to change" (page 14)?
- What do you think it means to be "released" (page 2)? When does it happen? How do people feel about it?
- To what extent are the rules of Jonas's society like those of your society? What differences are most striking?

Discuss the character traits of Jonas.

- What are your initial impressions of Jonas? What are some of his character traits?
- What words does the author use to help us get to know him?
- How is Jonas like or unlike Lily? His father and mother? Asher?

Explore whether or not this is a fair society.

- Why was it "considered rude to call attention to things that were unsettling or different about individuals" (page 20)?
- Why do you think mirrors were "rare" (page 21)?

- What were “Stirrings”? Why was it necessary for Jonas to take a pill as soon as he experienced them?
- To what extent are people all the same in this society? To what extent are they equal?
- Is a society in which everyone is treated the same fair or just? What is the relationship between equality and justice?

Consider the importance of language in Jonas’s world.

- Why is Jonas “careful about language” (page 3)? Why does he often search for just the right word to describe how he is feeling?
- What is the “standard” response to Asher’s apology? How do you think hearing the standard response makes Asher feel?
- Why do you think it’s important to be precise about language in this society? How important is it in our society?

Examine how the author’s writing style conveys mood and meaning.

- “It was almost December, and Jonas was beginning to be frightened. No. Wrong word, Jonas thought.” What does the author suggest by this opening line?
- “But there was a little shudder of nervousness when he thought about it, about what might happen. *Apprehensive*, Jonas decided. That’s what I am.” (page 4) How does this passage make the reader feel? What does it reveal about Jonas and his world?
- Why do you think the author chose to describe the “newchild” as having “pale, solemn, knowing eyes” (page 25)?

Whole Class Activity: *Story Organizer*

As an optional whole-class activity, distribute Reproducible 1.2. Have students work in pairs or small groups and complete a Story Organizer for the first five chapters. Reassemble the class and summarize students’ work in a “Master Story Chart,” to be updated throughout the unit. A similar organizer is provided for each reading.

*Interactive activities that help students **to practice** literary skills, social skills, and values*

To Practice

Whole Class Activity: *Real or Ideal?*

Return to the chart students created when brainstorming problems in our society. Review what problems Jonas’s society has solved and how. Compare and contrast Jonas’s society with the ideal societies the students created: How do their solutions compare with the ones used by the organizers of Jonas’s society? Which society do they prefer so far—ours, their “ideal” society, or Jonas’s?

Have students list what they think is attractive or appealing about the society they’ve chosen (Reproducible 1.3). Then have them use the information to create a radio, television, newspaper, or other advertisement (billboard, poster, etc.) promoting the society they have chosen as a great place to live. They may use a combination of art, captions, and other graphics.

Ask students to share their ads with the class. They are welcome to “perform” them if appropriate. Ask students for feedback on the assignment: How difficult was it to make the choice? Were there unappealing aspects of the society they had to ignore in order to write their ad? What were they?

Whole Class Activity: *Mapping It Out*

Working cooperatively, have students begin a map of Jonas’s world. This activity may be repeated after each reading, so that the map builds and expands as more information from the book is revealed.

To Express

*Writing activities that help students **to express** their understanding of what they have read and learned*

Students’ literature notebooks may include literary journals (these journals may also be kept separately). Because they invite personal reflections, responses, and creative writing and thinking, journals can provide an open forum for students. Journal writing may be assigned every night or a few times during the course of the unit. A variety of suggestions are provided in each reading. Teachers may choose to assign all or some of the suggestions. Reader’s response, predictions, key words, vocabulary, and drawing are all standard suggestions that can be used after each reading.

Journal Suggestions

- Reader’s response—write your responses to the story so far.
- Predictions—what do you think will happen next?

- Create an Identity Web (Reproducible 1.4) for Jonas.
- Select two passages that really intrigue you or make you feel a certain way and explain why.
- Choose five “key” words—words that are important in understanding the story—from any of the first five chapters and define them. How does each word contribute to the mood or tone of the story?
- Choose five vocabulary words. After looking up each word in the dictionary, use it in a sentence. Then see how the author has used the word and compare meanings.
- Draw a picture of the following elements from the story (choose one or more): Jonas, Jonas’s family, Jonas’s home, the House of the Old.
- Imagine you’ve just arrived for a visit to Jonas’s world and are writing a short letter home. What would you say about your visit so far?

Rites and Rituals

(Chapters 6–9, pages 40–71)

Overview

Jonas and his family attend the various ceremonies leading up to the Ceremony of Twelve. From the earliest ceremony at age one, at which the “newchildren” are named, each age milestone is recognized and acknowledged, culminating in the Assignments for those turning twelve. Every element of behavior, past, present, and future, is determined by the rules and rituals of the society, “You Elevens have spent all your years till now learning to fit in,” the Chief Elder explains, “to standardize your behavior, to curb any impulse that might set you apart from the group....But today we honor your differences. They have determined your futures.” (page 52)

As the Assignments are announced, however, Jonas is shocked to realize that his “number” has been skipped, and then is amazed to hear that he has been selected to be the Receiver of Memory, the most honored position.

Teaching Focus

Many of the activities and some of the To Discuss questions focus on the importance of rituals and milestones in a society—particularly those that mark passages from childhood to full membership in the society.

To Connect

Teacher Activity: *Coming of Age*

The sharing of personal stories is an excellent way to help students make personal connections to the story they are reading, as well as to help them begin to articulate ideas and thoughts connected to the Final Writing Activity. (See page 27 of the teacher resource.)

Share a story with your students about a ritual or milestone you (or someone you know) experienced. If possible, choose a coming-of-age ritual, such as a bar or bat mitzvah or graduation from high school. You can also choose an occasion such as losing your first tooth, attending your first day of kindergarten, getting your own house key or driver’s license, etc.

Explain what you know about the ritual—how it came to be, how you learned about it, the familial, cultural, or other significance of it. If you choose a milestone, explain how this incident or occasion helped to mark a transition in your life. How did it make you feel? How did it alter

your image of yourself? Did it change your relationship to others? To help develop your story you may want to bring in a photograph, object, or other artifact connected to your experience.

After you have told your story, explain how participating in this ritual or passing this milestone made you feel. What did you like about it? What didn't you like about it? How did it change your sense of identity? Did it give you a sense of membership in your family, culture, or society? Did it make you feel as though you "fit in"? Why or why not?

Partner Activity: *In My Life*

After you have shared your story, assemble the class into partner pairs and distribute Reproducible 2.1. Have each partner think about and reflect on a societal or cultural ritual he or she has experienced. The Reproducible will help students organize their thoughts and ideas. Then have students tell their partners their stories. After they have told their stories to each other, assemble the class together and ask for volunteers to share their stories or their partners' stories. Help students note similarities and differences among the stories.

To Read

You may wish to have individual students read aloud to the class as a whole the first three pages in Reading 2 (pp. 40–71) and then have students silently read the remainder of this section on their own or you may wish to distribute Reproducible 2.2 (optional) and have students continue their story organizers. When they have finished, add their work to the Master Story Chart.

To Discuss

After students have completed this reading, encourage their comments and questions before focusing on the questions raised here.

Examine the importance of ritual in Jonas's community.

- What changes are associated with each ritual or milestone?
- How do the children feel about reaching these milestones?
- Most people seem to accept that the rule about learning to ride a bicycle is often broken. (page 13) Why do you think this is so? Are there similar rules in our society that are routinely "broken"?

- How do rituals and milestones foster a sense of belonging in Jonas's society? In our own?

Discuss how the society controlled the individual.

- Why does everyone have the same birthday? Why does everyone have a number? How does this make people feel?
- What happens if a Twelve doesn't like his or her assignment?
- Do you think all the Assignments are equal and respected? Why or why not?
- Are the Assignments fair? Why or why not?
- The Chief Elder says, "Today we honor your differences. They have determined your futures." (page 52) Does the society value difference or sameness? What clues help you decide?

Consider the importance of language in Jonas's society.

- The society uses many euphemisms and labels. Find examples of these and explain why the society uses these techniques.
- "Precision of language was one of the most important tasks of small children." (page 55) How precise is the language of this society?
- "He was so completely, so thoroughly accustomed to courtesy within the community." (page 69) How does the careful use of language affect people's behavior? Their feelings?

Discuss the author's ability to maintain suspense and believability as the plot unfolds.

- How does the author use foreshadowing to create a sense of foreboding and suspense?
- Why does the author use so much detail in describing the Ceremonies?
- As more is revealed about the society, how do your feelings about the society change? Why?

Explore why Jonas is chosen as Receiver of Memory.

- What qualities does the Chief Elder describe as being essential to the position?
- Does Jonas possess these qualities? How do we know?

- What is the capacity to “see beyond”? How does this make Jonas the same or different from others?
- Why is the Receiver of Memory the most honored position? Who are the “Receivers of Memory” in our society?

Think about what the assignment of Receiver of Memory reveals about Jonas’s society.

- “He had been trained since earliest childhood . . . never to lie. It was an integral part of the learning of precise speech.” (page 70) Why is it so important to be truthful in this society? Is everyone truthful?
- Which instructions concern Jonas the most? Why?
- How do you think you would feel if you received Jonas’s Assignment?

To Practice

Family Activity: *Remember When*

Help students recall earlier discussions about ritual and milestones. Explain that they will now have the opportunity to interview an adult family member (or friend) about a ritual or milestone he or she experienced. It may be the same one the student chose to tell about (see Partner Activity, above) or one that was mentioned during the class discussion.

Distribute Reproducible 2.3 and review the instructions. The questions are designed to help students gain perspective on the ways such rituals and milestones develop and change in a society. The activity also gives students the opportunity to act as “Receivers of Memory.”

After completing the interview, students will share, with their family members’ permission, the story with the class. Note commonalities among the stories, as well as the diversity of experiences. Compare and contrast the family members’ stories with the stories students have chosen to tell.

Whole Class Activity: *Survey on Adolescence*

In Jonas’s community, twelve is a pivotal age. In our society, adolescence (beginning roughly at the age of twelve) is also an important time. Lead the class in a general discussion about adolescence. What are some of the characteristics of adolescence? What are some common adolescent concerns? What are the personal hopes and dreams of young people for the

future?

Use a K–W–L chart (Reproducible 2.4) with the class to develop a survey about adolescent concerns and issues that students will conduct with five to ten friends. Ask students to list what they **know** about the dilemmas and issues of adolescence (e.g., school, parents, siblings, dating, peer pressure, pop culture). Then have them list in question form things they may **want** to know more about (e.g., Do boys and girls have the same concerns?). Distribute Reproducible 2.5, which contains sample survey questions and instructions for students to use in developing their own questions.

Allow sufficient time for students to survey their friends. After the students have completed their surveys, have them share their results with the class. Using tally marks or other method, determine what has been **learned**: which issues are most frequently mentioned. List the five most common concerns or issues, hopes and dreams. You may wish to construct a graph to chart the results of the survey.

Next, compare and contrast these concerns with Jonas's. Which ones does he worry about? Which are not important to him because of the rules and regulations of his society? What dreams and hopes has the class expressed? Which does Jonas share, if any? Help students create a Venn diagram (Reproducible 2.6) to compare and contrast Jonas's experiences in his world with those of the students.

Whole Class Activity: *Mapping It Out*

Continue the cooperative mapping activity. (See page 4 of the teacher resource for description.)

To Express

The writing activities require more formal preparation, editing, and revising than the journal suggestions. Provide sufficient time for first draft, peer editing, teacher feedback, and revising for these writing activities. Occasionally the writing activity includes a performance or artistic option. You may wish to review outlines, notes, or other written preparation if you include or assign this option.

Writing/Art Activity: *In My Life Revisited*

Review Reproducible 2.1 and ask students to recall the story they shared about a family or cultural ritual or personal milestone. Have students polish their story through the creative writing process to write their story as a narrative.

Students may also opt to perform a dance, song, or brief skit about the event in their story. They may also “tell” the story by drawing a picture or cartoon strip, or creating a collage or collage box, filled with artifacts or other items connected to the story.

Journal Suggestions

- Reader’s response—write your responses to the story so far.
- Predictions—what do you think will happen next?
- Add additional information to Jonas’s Identity Web.
- Write a letter to the Chief Elder explaining why your Assignment is incorrect.
- Select ten vocabulary words and use a dictionary to find their definitions. For each word find a synonym and antonym in the dictionary or in a thesaurus.
- Respond to one (or more) of the following questions:
 - Would you like to be transported to this society? Why or why not?
 - If you lived in Jonas’s society, what do you think your Assignment would be? Why?
 - What do you think your future holds for you? What will it take to achieve your dream?

Related Readings and Viewings

You may wish to explore the themes and subthemes in this section using music, poetry, and related readings.

- Obtain a copy of the song “Little Boxes” by Malvina Reynolds, recorded by Pete Seeger and others. Discuss how the suburban society Reynolds satirizes is like or unlike Jonas’s society.
- Read the short story “Harrison Bergeron” by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. (in the *Facing History and Ourselves Resource Book*). Compare and contrast Harrison Bergeron’s world with that of Jonas.
- Share with the class *Kinaaldá: A Navajo Girl Grows Up* by Monty Roessel (Lerner, 1993), which describes a coming-of-age ceremony for girls. How are the rituals described in this culture like other coming-of-age ceremonies? How do they differ? How do they compare with the Ceremony of Twelve?

- Read the poem “My Bird Day” by Janet S. Wong in *Good Luck Gold and Other Poems* by Janet S. Wong (McElderry, 1994), which describes a birthday celebrated according to Chinese custom.
- Read the poem “Been” by Lee Bennett Hopkins in *Been to Yesterdays: Poems of a Life* by Lee Bennett Hopkins (Boyd's Mill Press, 1995) about turning thirteen. Ask students to bring in other examples of poems or short stories which describe coming-of-age (or other) rituals.

Memories and Feelings

(Chapters 10–15, pages 72–120)

Overview

Jonas begins his instruction as the Receiver of Memory. He meets The Giver, who explains that his job is to transfer to Jonas all the memories he has stored and kept for society. The first memory The Giver transmits is of snow and cold. It becomes apparent that the society has sacrificed many things—color, sensation, true feelings—to achieve stability and security. Jonas is shocked, amazed, and exhilarated by his training. Not only does it call into question his entire upbringing, but, even as he experiences what is pleasurable (color, fun), he must grapple with what is painful and difficult (pain, war, thirst).

Teaching Focus

The first To Connect activity introduces the Central Question. The other activities focus on related ideas including memory and identity.

To Connect

Introduce the Central Question

- Q • How do our individual and collective memories shape who we are today and influence our future(s)?**

You may want to write the question on the chalkboard or poster board so that you can display it in the classroom; students will be revisiting this theme later. The information provided in the description of the Central Question (see page xiv) may also be helpful.

Invite students to come up with a class definition of memory. You may want to use a dictionary definition to start with and expand that definition. Help students understand the distinction between individual or personal memories and collective or societal memories. Ask students to explore and explain the following quotation by the poet and novelist Y. L. Peretz:

Not only an individual, but a people, too, must possess a memory. A people's memory is called history. A people without memory is like an individual with amnesia.

What would our lives be like without our memories? Without our

history? The following questions may also help to direct the discussion:

- What is memory?
- What are the different kinds of memory?
- Why are memories important?
- Where do individuals keep their memories? Where do groups of people keep their memories?
- How are memories passed from generation to generation?
- In our society, who decides whose memories are valid and worth saving, telling, or teaching?
- What can we learn from our own memories? From those of others?
- Which of our memories are cherished? Why are others more difficult or troubling?

Psychologist and writer Rollo May, in *Man's Search for Himself*, said, "Memory is not just the imprint of the past upon us: it is the keeper of what is meaningful for our deepest hopes and fears." Ask students to offer their responses to this quotation. How does it relate to the way memory is treated in *The Giver*?

Partner Activity: *From Me to You*

Assemble the class into partner pairs. Ask students what would be the first memory they would share with someone like Jonas, who has no memories. Give students a few minutes to think on their own. It could be a memory that is personally significant or a "societal" memory. Have students consider what the memory would "teach" the other person—about the student, his or her family, or world. How would transmitting the memory make the other person feel? How would it make the student feel?

After students have chosen a memory, have them share it with a partner. They may take notes as they listen to their partner's story. Ask for volunteers to share their "memory" (or their partner's, with their partner's permission) with the class.

Continue the class discussion by asking students to compare and contrast their memories. How many students chose personal memories? How many chose collective or "societal" memories? Were there different interpretations or versions of the same "memory"? Ask students to think about how the collective memories of a society become "official"—accepted as "truth" and passed along through textbooks and other means. What happens when individual or family memories differ from the standard version? How are those memories preserved?

To Read

You may wish to have individual students read aloud to the class as a whole all or parts of Reading 3 (pages 72–120). Or you may wish to distribute Reproducible 3.1. Have students work in pairs or small groups and complete a story organizer for chapters 10 through 15 and add their results to the Master Story Chart.

To Discuss

After students have completed Reading 3, encourage their comments and questions before addressing the questions raised below.

Explore what memory is and how it influences people.

- What happens when The Giver transmits a memory? Why do you think this is?
- The Russian writer and dissident Alexander Solzhenitsyn said, “Literature transmits incontrovertible condensed experience . . . from generation to generation. In this way literature becomes the living memory of a nation.” Why is The Giver allowed to have many books while the other citizens are only allowed three? How are books and memory related?
- Why have memories been eliminated for everyone else?
- The Giver says, “Without the memories it’s all meaningless.” (page 112) What do you think he means? What is he suggesting about his own society?
- Why does The Giver say that to have memories is a “burden”? (page 105)

Examine the connection between memory and feelings.

- How does the first memory The Giver transmits make Jonas feel? Why do you think Jonas must experience the memories rather than just hear about them?
- What is missing in Jonas’s society? Why do you think these things were eliminated?
- What are the pleasurable things Jonas experiences? How do they make him feel?
- Why does The Giver transmit pain? How does it make Jonas feel?

- Poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson said, “’Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.” What do you think he meant? Would The Giver agree? Do you?

Discuss how the absence of color has affected the society.

- Why has color been eliminated in this society? How has the absence of color helped this society? How has it harmed it?
- What would happen if color did not exist in our society? What would be different? How would we benefit? What would we miss?
- Jonas says, “It isn’t fair that nothing has color!” (page 103) Discuss his reaction. How does the presence of color create choice?
- What does The Giver mean when he says that the society “went to Sameness”? (page 84) Is “Sameness” the absence of difference?

Explore the author’s use of imagery and symbolism.

- How does the author make the memories that The Giver transmits vivid and realistic? Find examples of descriptive words and images.
- Why do you think the author chose snow and a sled ride as the first memory for The Giver to transmit?
- Where has the author used the color red in the story? How is “color” symbolic in the story?

Consider how Jonas’s training changes him.

- Why does Jonas suggest that Gabe start sleeping in his room?
- How do you think Jonas feels now about the society he lives in? How have your feelings about it changed?
- Why does The Giver ask for forgiveness when he transmits the memory of war and thirst?

To Practice

Whole Class Activity: *How Did It Happen?*

Ask the class to choose an event at school that everyone experienced, such as a special assembly, a class picnic, or a speech by the principal. Distribute Reproducible 3.2 and have each student write his or her memory of the event. Then ask students to read aloud their recollections of the event.

Compare and contrast the various versions. Does everyone interpret the event in the same way? Is any one version more valid or truthful than any other?

Have the students imagine that they are writing a history of their school. Now they must collectively try to write an account that reflects everyone's experiences. Explore the difficulties the class encounters in trying to create a "societal" memory or history. Ask students to reflect on the similarities and differences between individual and societal memories.

Whole Class Activity: *Mapping It Out*

Continue the cooperative mapping activity. (See page 4 of the teacher resource for description.)

To Express

Writing Activity: *Memories*

Have students write about the memory that they chose to share in the To Connect section. Ask them to provide details of the memory: what happened, who was involved, why is the memory important or meaningful. What other interpretations might there be of the memory? How has their recollection of the "memory" changed over the years?

This Writing Activity may be considered as a first draft of the *Final Writing Activity: Autobiography* (see page 27). However, note that students may also choose a different incident or memory to write about in their Autobiography.

Journal Suggestions

- Reader's response—write your feelings and reactions to the book so far.
- Predictions—what do you think will happen next in the story?
- Choose ten vocabulary words that were unfamiliar or difficult. Find their definitions in the dictionary and use them in sentences.
- Update your Identity Web for Jonas. What new character traits can you add?
- If you could choose three books for each person to have, what would they be and why? If you were stranded on a desert island and could only have three books with you, what would they be and why?

- Imagine that you are running for president on a platform of “Same-ness” for society. Write a campaign speech as to why your ideas would improve today’s society.
- Illustrate one of the memories The Giver transmits to Jonas.
- Write a poem about snow, sunshine, or your first sled ride.

Related Readings and Viewings

You may wish to explore the themes and subthemes in this section using music, poetry, and related readings.

- Share with the students the poem “This Is Just To Say” by William Carlos Williams (in *Visions of America by the Poets of Our Time*, edited by David Kherdian, Macmillan, 1973). Discuss how the poet evokes eating plums. Could this poem have been written by a member of Jonas’s society?
- Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston’s essay “Colors” (in *Under Western Eyes: Personal Essays from Asian Americans*, edited by Garrett Hongo, Anchor, 1995) contains many wonderful examples of how color has shaped her life and memories. Read the sections “Red” and “Violet” aloud in class and discuss.
- Read the poem “Oranges” in *A Fire in My Hands* by Gary Soto (Scholastic, 1990). How are memory and color woven together in this poem?
- Read the first chapter, “Earliest Memories,” from Nicholasa Mohr’s memoir, *Growing Up Inside the Sanctuary of My Imagination* (Simon & Schuster, 1994) for inspiration.
- Read the poem, “Give Me A Book” by Myra Cohn Livingston (in *Good Books, Good Times!*, selected by Lee Bennett Hopkins, Harper-Collins, 1990). How are books, memory, and history related?
- View an episode of the television series *The Prisoner*, starring Patrick McGoochan. The series takes place in a society somewhat similar to that of *The Giver*—all needs are taken care of and everyone seems happy, but life is rigidly controlled. (Available from Image Entertainment, 933 Oso Avenue, Chatsworth, CA 91311.)
- Discuss the following quotation by Franklin Delano Roosevelt: “Books cannot be killed by fire. People die but books never die. No man and no force can abolish memory.”

Questions and Decisions

(Chapters 16–20, pages 121–162)

Overview

Jonas is so disturbed by the memory of war that he wants to reject his training and go back to before—when he knew nothing and followed orders. But there is no turning back (“Memories are forever”). To compensate for the pain and suffering, The Giver transmits a memory of a family sharing the love and warmth of a Christmas Eve together. Jonas realizes that segregating a society by age contradicts the whole notion of family and begins to see not only the hypocrisy of the society (denying difference isn’t the same as equality) but also the shallowness of his existence. When he learns the true meaning of being Released, he is spurred to action. He and The Giver devise a plan to release memories to everyone.

Teaching Focus

The Whole-Class Activity explores the literary genre of *The Giver*. Many of the activities that follow focus on related themes and concepts.

To Connect

Whole Class Discussion: *Utopia and Dystopia*

Begin a class discussion about Jonas’s society. Do students share Jonas’s growing discomfort with the rules and regulations? How might they feel if they lived in his world? Note that every society controls individual behavior to some extent. Ask students to brainstorm ways in which our individual behavior is controlled by society. What controls do they consider necessary or useful? When do such controls become abusive?

Introduce the term *totalitarianism* and explain that a totalitarian state carries control to an extreme by trying to manage every aspect of a person’s life. Describe some other basic aspects of totalitarianism (e.g., censorship of ideas, discrimination). Is Jonas’s society totalitarian? What information supports your answer? Ask students to think of examples of countries or governments that have tried to apply some of the ideas implemented in Jonas’s world. What happened?

Introduce the tradition of utopian (or dystopian) literature by providing a brief background about utopian thought (see *Context of the Story*, page xi). Explore how *The Giver* is a part of this literary genre. Ask students to share other books they have read that present an idealized world. Have students discuss whether or not they think *The Giver* is a

commentary on modern society. What might Lois Lowry be criticizing about our society? What might she be praising? Ask for a student volunteer to summarize the discussion and record the class's responses.

To Read

You may wish to have individual students read aloud to the class as a whole all or parts of Reading 4 (pages 121–162). Or you may wish to distribute Reproducible 4.1. Have students work in pairs or small groups and complete a story organizer for chapters 16 through 20 and add their work to the Master Story Chart.

To Discuss

After students have completed Reading 4, encourage their comments and questions before addressing the questions below.

Explore the pros and cons of Jonas's world.

- What are the benefits of living in this society? What are the costs?
- What memory does The Giver transmit to Jonas after the horror of war? Why?
- What does Jonas realize about the way his society sets old people apart from young people?
- What is the only memory The Giver has kept for himself? Why do you think he has saved this memory?
- Do you consider Jonas's world "advanced"? Why or why not?

Explore Jonas's growing sense of rebellion.

- How does Jonas's accumulation of memories (and knowledge) make him feel? How do they change his understanding of the society he lives in?
- Why does Jonas ask his parents if they love him? What do they say? How does he feel?
- Why doesn't Jonas take his pill? What might happen to him now?
- Why can't Jonas join in with his friends' game?
- Philosopher and statesman Francis Bacon said, "Knowledge is pain." Do you agree? Would Jonas? Why or why not?

Discuss the significance of being Released.

- What does Jonas learn about being Released? How does this affect how he thinks?
- To what extent does Jonas's father know what his son is doing?
- What would you do with Gabriel if you were his father?
- Why and how does the society shield its citizens from the true meaning of "Release"? What might happen if everyone knew what Release really meant?

Think about how and why The Giver and Jonas decide to act.

- What happened to Rosemary? What were the implications for the society?
- What do Jonas and The Giver decide to do? Do you think they are right? Why or why not?
- Why doesn't The Giver leave?

To Practice

Whole Class Activity: *The Great Debate*

The Giver tells Jonas, "Life here is so orderly, so predictable—so painless." (page 103) Jonas says, "We really have to protect people from wrong choices." (page 98) Write these quotations on the board. Ask students if they agree or disagree. Do these two explanations defend or justify the society?

Now add the following statement: "A just society is one in which everyone is the same." Organize the class into two debate "teams." Briefly explain the debate format: one team will argue *for* the statement and the other team will argue *against* it. Give students enough time to meet before the debate to outline their arguments. Have them find examples from the book as well as from their own knowledge and experience to enhance or defend their arguments.

After the two teams have debated, ask students to summarize the arguments and list the "pros" and "cons" on the board. See if the class can reach a consensus on a mutual viewpoint. Discuss whether it was easy or hard to take a particular point of view and whether or not the view they were asked to take reflected their personal opinion.

Whole Class Activity: *Mapping It Out*

Continue the cooperative mapping activity (see page 4 for description).

To Express

Journal Suggestions

- Reader's response—write your feelings and reactions to the book so far.
- Predictions—what do you think will happen next in the story?
- Update your Identity Web for Jonas.
- Write a poem using one or more of the vocabulary words.
- In the television series *Star Trek*, the mission of the starship *Enterprise* and its crew is to “seek out and explore strange new worlds and new civilizations.” However, according to regulations, the captain and crew are forbidden to ever interfere with the normal development of another culture. Imagine that you are a Star Fleet commander and discover the planet with Jonas's society on it. After finding out about what “Released” means, what would you do?
- What memory of happiness would you transmit?

Related Readings and Viewings

You may wish to explore the themes and subthemes in this section using music, poetry, and related readings.

- Read *A Matter of Obedience?* (from the *Facing History and Ourselves Resource Book*) which describes the famous experiment by Stanley Milgram in the 1960s exploring how far people would go in order to “follow orders.” If possible, view the video *Obedience*, a documentary about the experiment (available from the FHAO Resource Center). How does understanding the Milgram experiment help the students understand the actions of Jonas's father?
- Obtain the video *Medicine at the Crossroads* from the FHAO Resource Center, which contains resources and information about the eugenics movement in the United States and euthanasia. Explore how this movement and the current debate about biological engineering and assisted suicide could make “Releasing” possible in the future.

Escape to Freedom

(Chapters 21–23, pages 163–180)

Overview

Jonas is forced to abandon the careful plan he and The Giver have devised to return memory to the people. He learns that Gabe is scheduled to be Released the next morning, and so he escapes, taking the child with him. As the landscape changes, Jonas experiences the beauties and wonders of nature, but also the problems of being unprotected and uncertain: he sprains his ankle, runs out of food and water. It's possible that he and Gabe will not survive. Suddenly, Jonas finds himself at the top of the hill, in the snow, in the very same scene that The Giver first transmitted. Jonas is sure that the house at the bottom of the hill is filled with warmth, love, and light. He and Gabe take off on the sled down the hill toward the house. The reader is left pondering the ambiguous ending.

Teaching Focus

The Whole Class Activity and many of the questions that follow focus on the concept of freedom and related ideas.

To Connect

Whole Class Discussion: *What Price Freedom?*

Writer Anaïs Nin said, “[It’s] not easy to achieve freedom without chaos.” Ask students to react to her statement:

- What does she mean?
- Can chaos ever be a good thing?
- How would Jonas respond to the statement?
- How would The Giver react to it?

Ask students to reflect on the meaning and importance of “freedom” for Jonas and in their own lives. What does freedom mean for Jonas? What does it mean for each of us? Create a Freedom Word Web and have students brainstorm various meanings of the word. Encourage students to contribute definitions, phrases, and clichés they associate with the word. What are the differences between personal freedom and societal freedom? Can you have one without the other?

To Read

You may wish to have individual students read aloud to the class as a whole all or parts of Reading 5 (pages 163–180). Or you may wish to Distribute Reproducible 5.1. Have students work in pairs or small groups and complete a story organizer for chapters 21 through 23 and add their work to the Master Story Chart.

To Discuss

After students have completed Reading 5, encourage their comments and questions before addressing the questions below.

Examine the consequences of Jonas's escape.

- What happens when Jonas leaves? Where does he go? What does he find?
- Why does Jonas take Gabe with him?
- How has Jonas's life changed? How does he react to his new experiences?
- Do you think Jonas regrets leaving? Why or why not?

Explore the meaning of the book's conclusion.

- What do you think happens in the end of the story?
- How do you think Jonas's "escape" and its aftermath will affect the society he left behind? What do you think will happen to The Giver?
- Why do you think the book begins and ends in December?
- Where and when do you think this story takes place—past, present, or future?
- What would you change, if anything, about the ending?

Explore whether freedom is worth the risks.

- What did Jonas give up for freedom? What did he gain?
- What did freedom mean for Jonas? What did it mean for Gabriel?
- What can our own memories and those of our society teach us about the value of memory? The value of freedom?

Independent Writing Activity: *Reader Responses*

Reproducible 5.2 provides students with a way of expressing their understanding of the book. The questions encourage students' critical thinking about the story and personal responses to its themes. The questions may also be used to assess how well students have understood the book and their ability to compare and contrast it with other books or experiences. After students have completed their answers to the questions, you may want to focus a class discussion on their responses.

1. Why doesn't The Giver leave?
2. Why does Jonas leave?
3. What does Jonas give up for his freedom?
4. What does freedom mean for Jonas?
5. Why is memory important?
6. What does this story mean to you?

To Practice

Whole Class Discussion: *Lois Lowry's Newbery Speech*

In her 1994 Newbery acceptance speech (reprinted in the Appendix), Lois Lowry provides valuable insights about why and how she came to write *The Giver*. Ask a volunteer to read the speech aloud. Discuss with the class how Lowry's personal history—her “memories”—influenced the writing of the book and her decision to become a writer.

Connect the class discussion to how memory affected and influenced Jonas. What kind of memory most affected him? What did memory enable him to do? Revisit the Central Question, How do our individual and collective memories shape who we are today and influence our future(s)? Ask students to respond to the question. How have their answers changed after reading *The Giver*? What insights have they gained? How has the book changed how they think about themselves and their future?

Whole Class Activity: *Mapping It Out*

Complete the cooperative mapping activity. (See page 4 of the teacher resource for description.) Display the map in the classroom and ask students to present their work.

To Express

Journal Suggestions

- Reader's response—write your feelings and reactions to the book now that you have finished it.
- Write a different ending to the story.
- Write a letter to Lois Lowry explaining what your interpretation of the ending is.
- Complete your Identity Web for Jonas. Draw an interpretive picture of it.
- Imagine you are a movie producer and want to make a movie based on the book. Who would you cast as Jonas? The Giver? What kind of set would you create?
- Would you recommend this book to a friend? A family member? Why or why not?

Final Writing Activity: *Autobiography*

The Final Writing Activity will help students connect what they have learned through reading and discussing the book with their ideas, thoughts, and personal experiences. Since this writing activity will be assessed, allow students sufficient time for a first draft, peer, self or teacher edit, and final draft.

Plan the Story

It may be helpful for students if you model a personal story about an important memory. Share with the class a memory that affected you profoundly and helped to shape who you are and the choices you've made. Discuss how remembering and then telling your story helps you to better understand yourself and make choices about who you want to be. Ask students to begin thinking about a memory that has had a powerful influence on them.

Distribute and review Reproducible 5.3, which contains instructions about the Final Writing Activity. Students will be instructed to choose a memory that is special and significant in their lives, and will be given an opportunity to share their story with the class. The memory can be about a person or event: something that happened to them, something that inspired them, a conversation they often recall, words of advice they've received, etc. They may choose to write the story in the "first person" voice, but may also use the "third person" voice to write about themselves.

The following questions will help students develop their story:

- Describe what happened. How old were you? Where were you? What happened? Who was there? Try to make the memory as vivid and clear as possible, using imagery and other descriptive language.
- Why is the memory important to you? Has it shaped who you are and choices you've made? If so, how?
- What impact do you think the memory will have on your future? How will it affect your relationships with others? How will it help shape your dreams, hopes, and plans for your future?

First Draft

Have students use their story plans to write a first draft. Then have students read the first drafts of their stories aloud to themselves to find out if they left out any words or important information. Then, have students reread the draft to make sure that they have answered all the questions. As part of the first draft process, students should feel free to change words and move sentences to make their writing clearer and more interesting.

Writer's Conference

After students hand in their first drafts, use the following questions to provide feedback on their writing.

- Are the details of the story clear? Can I tell what happened? Who it happened to? Where it happened? When it happened?
- Do the people in the story seem real? Are the events believable?
- Is it clear why this story is important?
- What lesson does the story teach? Why is it important to learn that lesson?

Peer Response

You may also want to give students the opportunity to obtain feedback from their partners. Have partners read their first drafts to each other. Explain that the purpose of the peer response process is to help writers see their work from a reader's point of view. Encourage students to give their partners positive feedback, telling them what they liked best about the story. They should also let their partners know what parts of the story were confusing or what parts they would like to know more about.

Revise

Ask students to write a second draft in which they incorporate your editing suggestions as well as the comments of their partner.

Proofread

After students have finished their second drafts, help them proofread their work. You may want to devise a proofreading checklist for your students. Choose several grammar or punctuation points for students to look for. As students become more proficient, add other items to the list. After students prepare a final copy of their work, encourage them to illustrate and design a cover for their stories.

Present

Invite students to share their autobiographies or essays with the class. You may want to invite students who have worked as partners to read their partner's work (with their partner's permission). You may want to accumulate students' work into a class book or create a classroom display.

Related Readings and Viewings

- Read Mary Pope Osborne's essay, "All-Ball" in *When I Was Your Age: Original Stories About Growing Up*, edited by Amy Ehrlich (Candlewick, 1996) as an example of an early and influential memory.
- Read aloud *War Boy*, a picture book by Michael Foreman about growing up in England during World War II (Arcade, 1989), which contains vivid words and pictures about his childhood.
- Read "Lineage" by Margaret Walker (in *Grandparents' Houses*, selected by Corrine Streich, Greenwillow, 1984). How has memory influenced the poet's image of her grandmothers? Of herself?
- Obtain a recording of the song "Memories" by Andrew Lloyd Webber, written for the play *Cats*, and listen to it together. Invite students to bring in other songs about memory and discuss how they express some of the ideas in *The Giver*.
- Read selections from Alma Flor Ada's fictionalized memoir, *Where the Flame Trees Bloom* (Atheneum, 1994). Appropriate chapters that evoke significant childhood memories are "Samoné," "Canelo," and "The Ice-Cream Man."
- Read the poem "Fortune" by Lawrence Ferlinghetti in *Visions of America by the Poets of Our Time*, edited by David Kherdian (Macmillan, 1973). How has time affected his memory of an event from his childhood?
- Read the poems "We" or "What" in *Been to Yesterdays: Poems for a Life* by Lee Bennett Hopkins (Boyds Mill Press, 1995). How did his memories affect his life and future?

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Lois Lowry's Newbery Acceptance Speech (reprint)

"How do you know where to start?" a child asked me once, in a schoolroom where I'd been speaking to her class about the writing of books. I shrugged and smiled and told her that I just start wherever it feels right.

This evening it feels right to start by quoting a passage from *The Giver*; a scene set during the days in which the boy, Jonas, is beginning to look more deeply into the life that has been very superficial, beginning to see that his own past goes back further than he had ever known and has greater implications than he had ever suspected:

Now he saw the familiar wide river beside the path differently. He saw all of the light and color and history it contained and carried in its slow-moving water; and he knew that there was an Elsewhere from which it came, and an Elsewhere to which it was going.

Every author is asked again and again the question we probably each have come to dread the most: how did you get this idea?

We give glib, quick answers because there are other hands raised, other kids in the audience waiting.

I'd like, tonight, to dispense with my usual flippancy and glibness and try to tell you the origins of this book. It is a little like Jonas looking in the river and realizing that it carries with it everything that has come from an Elsewhere. A spring, perhaps, at the beginning, bubbling up from the earth; then a trickle from a glacier; a mountain stream entering farther along; and each tributary bringing with it

the collected bits and pieces from the past, from the distant, from the countless Elsewheres: all of it moving, mingled in the current.

For me, the tributaries are memories, and I've selected only a few. I'll tell them to you chronologically. I have to go way back. I'm starting forty-six years ago.

In 1948 I am eleven years old. I have gone with my mother, sister, and brother to join my father, who has been in Tokyo for two years and will be there for several more.

We live there, in the center of that huge Japanese city, in a small American enclave with a very American name: Washington Heights. We live in an American-style house, with American neighbors, and our little community has its own movie theater, which shows American movies, and a small church, a tiny library, and an elementary school; and in many ways it is an odd replica of a United States village.

(In later, adult years I was to ask my mother why we had lived there instead of taking advantage of the opportunity to live within the Japanese community and to learn and experience a different way of life. But she seemed surprised by my question. She said that we lived where we did because it was comfortable. It was familiar. It was safe.)

At eleven years old I am not a particularly adventurous child, nor am I a rebellious one. But I have always been curious.

I have a bicycle. Again and again—countless times—without my parents' knowledge, I ride my bicycle out the back gate of the fence that surrounds our comfortable, safe American community. I ride

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Lois Lowry's Newbery Acceptance Speech (continued)

down a hill because I am curious, and I enter; riding down that hill, an unfamiliar, slightly uncomfortable, perhaps even unsafe—though I never feel it to be—area of Tokyo that throbs with life.

It is a district called Shibuya. It is crowded with shops and people and theaters and street vendors and the day-to-day bustle of Japanese life.

I remember, still after all these years, the smells: fish and fertilizer and charcoal; the sounds: music and shouting and the clatter of wooden shoes and wooden sticks and wooden wheels; and the colors: I remember the babies and toddlers dressed in bright pink and orange and red, most of all; but I remember, too, the dark blue uniforms of the schoolchildren—the strangers who were my own age.

I wander through Shibuya day after day during those years when I am eleven, twelve, and thirteen. I love the feel of it, the vigor and the garish brightness and the noise: all such a contrast to my own life.

But I never talk to anyone. I am not frightened of the people, who are so different from me, but I am shy. I watch the children shouting and playing around a school, and they are children my age, and they watch me in return; but we never speak to one another.

One afternoon I am standing on a street corner when a woman near me reaches out, touches my hair, and says something. I back away, startled, because my knowledge of the language is poor and I misunderstand her words. I think she has said *kiraidesu*, meaning that she dislikes me; and I am embarrassed, and confused, wondering what I have done wrong: how I have disgraced myself.

Then, after a moment, I realize my mistake. She has said, actually, *kirei-desu*. She has called me pretty. And I look for

her, in the crowd, at least to smile, perhaps to say thank you if I can overcome my shyness enough to speak.

But she is gone. I remember this moment—this instant of communication gone awry—again and again over the years. Perhaps this is where the river starts.

In 1954 and 1955 I am a college freshman, living in a very small dormitory, actually a converted private home, with a group of perhaps fourteen other girls. We are very much alike. We wear the same sort of clothes: cashmere sweaters and plaid wool skirts, knee socks, and loafers. We all smoke Marlboro cigarettes, and we knit—usually argyle socks for our boyfriends—and play bridge. Sometimes we study; and we get good grades because we are all the cream of the crop, the valedictorians and class presidents from our high schools all over the United States.

One of the girls in our dorm is not like the rest of us. She doesn't wear our uniform. She wears blue jeans instead of skirts, and she doesn't curl her hair or knit or play bridge. She doesn't date or go to fraternity parties and dances.

She's a smart girl, a good student, a pleasant enough person, but she is different, somehow alien, and that makes us uncomfortable. We react with a kind of mindless cruelty. We don't tease or torment her, but we do something worse: we ignore her. We pretend that she doesn't exist. In a small house of fourteen young women, we make one invisible.

Somehow, by shutting her out, we make ourselves feel comfortable. Familiar. Safe.

I think of her now and then as the years pass. Those thoughts—fleeting, but profoundly remorseful—enter the current of the river.

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Lois Lowry's Newbery Acceptance Speech (continued)

In the summer of 1979, I am sent by a magazine I am working for to an island off the coast of Maine to write an article about a painter who lives there alone. I spend a good deal of time with this man, and we talk a lot about color. It is clear to me that although I am a highly visual person—a person who sees and appreciates form and composition and color—this man's capacity for seeing color goes far beyond mine.

I photograph him while I am there, and I keep a copy of his photograph for myself because there is something about his face—his eyes—which haunts me.

Later I hear that he has become blind.

I think about him—his name is Carl Nelson—from time to time. His photograph hangs over my desk. I wonder what it was like for him to lose the colors about which he was so impassioned.

I wish, in a whimsical way, that he could have somehow magically given me the capacity to see the way he did.

A little bubble begins, a little spurt, which will trickle into the river.

In 1989 I go to a small village in Germany to attend the wedding of one of my sons. In an ancient church, he marries his Margaret in a ceremony conducted in a language I do not speak and cannot understand.

But one section of the service is in English. A woman stands in the balcony of that old stone church and sings the words from the Bible: Where you go, I will go. Your people will be my people.

How small the world has become, I think, looking around the church at the many people who sit there wishing happiness to my son and his new wife, wishing it in their own language as I am wishing it in mine. We are all each other's people

now, I find myself thinking.

Another fragment. My father, nearing ninety, is in a nursing home. My brother and I have hung family pictures on the walls of his room. During a visit, he and I are talking about the people in the pictures. One is my sister, my parents' first child, who died young of cancer. My father smiles, looking at her picture. "That's your sister," he says happily. "That's Helen."

Then he comments, a little puzzled, but not at all sad, "I can't remember exactly what happened to her."

We can forget pain, I thought. And it is comfortable to do so.

But I also wonder briefly: is it safe to do that, to forget?

That uncertainty pours itself into the river of thought which will become the book.

1991. I am in an auditorium somewhere. I have spoken at length about my book *Number the Stars*, which has been honored with the 1990 Newbery Medal. A woman raises her hand. When the time for her question comes, she sighs very loudly, and says, "Why do we have to tell this Holocaust thing over and over? Is it really necessary?"

I answer her as well as I can, quoting, in fact, my German daughter-in-law, who has said to me, "No one knows better than we Germans that we must tell this again and again."

But I think about her questions—and my answer—a great deal.

Wouldn't it, I think, playing devil's advocate to myself, make for a more comfortable world to forget the Holocaust? And I remember once again how comfortable, familiar, and safe my parents had sought to make my childhood by shield-

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Lois Lowry's Newbery Acceptance Speech (continued)

ing me from Elsewhere. But I remember, too, that my response had been to open the gate again and again. My instinct had been a child's attempt to see for myself what lay beyond the wall.

The thinking becomes another tributary into the river of thought that will create *The Giver*.

Here's another memory. I am sitting in a booth with my daughter in a little Beacon Hill pub where she and I often have lunch together. The television is on in the background, behind the bar, as it always is. She and I are talking. Suddenly I gesture to her. I say, "Shhh," because I have heard a fragment of the news and I am startled, anxious, and want to hear the rest.

Someone has walked into a fast-food place with an automatic weapon and randomly killed a number of people. My daughter stops talking and waits while I listen to the rest.

Then I relax. I say to her, in a relieved voice, "It's all right. It was in Oklahoma." (Or perhaps it was Alabama. Or Indiana.)

She stares at me in amazement that I have said such a hideous thing.

How comfortable I made myself feel for a moment, by reducing my own realm of caring to my own familiar neighborhood. How safe I deluded myself into feeling.

I think about that, and it becomes a torrent that enters the flow of a river turbulent by now, and clogged with memories and thoughts and ideas that begin to mesh and intertwine. The river begins to see a place to spill over.

When Jonas meets *The Giver* for the first time, and tries to comprehend what lies before him, he says, in confusion, "I thought there was only us. I thought there

was only now."

In beginning to write *The Giver*, I created, as I always do, in every book, a world that existed only in my imagination—the world of "only us, only now." I tried to make Jonas's world seem familiar, comfortable, and safe, and I tried to seduce the reader. I seduced myself along the way. It did feel good, that world. I got rid of all the things I fear and dislike: all the violence, prejudice, poverty, and injustice: and I even threw in good manners as a way of life because I liked the idea of it.

One child has pointed out, in a letter, that the people in Jonas's world didn't even have to do the dishes.

It was very, very tempting to leave it at that.

But I've never been a writer of fairy tales. And if I've learned anything through that river of memories, it is that we can't live in a walled world, in an "only us, only now" world, where we are all the same and feel safe. We would have to sacrifice too much. The richness of color would disappear. Feelings for other humans would no longer be necessary. Choice would be obsolete.

And besides, I had ridden my bike Elsewhere as a child, and liked it there, but had never been brave enough to tell anyone about it. So it was time.

A letter that I've kept for a very long time is from a child who has read my book *Anastasia Krupnik*. Her letter—she's a little girl named Paula from Louisville, Kentucky—says:

I really like the book you wrote about Anastasia and her family because it made me laugh every time I read it. I especially liked when it said she didn't want to have

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Lois Lowry's Newbery Acceptance Speech (continued)

a baby brother in the house because she had to clean up after him every time and change his diaper when her mother and father aren't home and she doesn't like to give him a bath and watch him all the time and put him to sleep every night while her mother goes to work

Here's the fascinating thing: Nothing that the child describes actually happens in the book. The child—as we all do—has brought her own life to a book. She has found a place, a place in the pages of a book, that shares her own frustrations and feelings.

And the same thing is happening—as I hoped it would happen—with *The Giver*.

Those of you who hoped that I would stand here tonight and reveal the “true” ending, the “right” interpretation of the ending, will be disappointed. There isn't one. There's a right one for each of us, and it depends on our own beliefs, our own hopes.

Let me tell you a few endings which are the right endings for a few children out of the many who have written to me.

From a sixth grader: “I think that when they were traveling they were traveling in a circle. When they came to ‘Elsewhere’ it was their old community, but they had accepted the memories and all the feelings that go along with it.”

From another: “Jonas was kind of like Jesus because he took the pain for everyone else in the community so they wouldn't have to suffer. And, at the very end of the book, when Jonas and Gabe reached a place that they knew as Elsewhere, you described Elsewhere as if it were Heaven.”

And more: “A lot of people I know would hate that ending, but not me. I

loved it. Mainly because I got to make the book happy. I decided they made it. They made it to the past. I decided the past was our world, and future was their world. It was parallel worlds.”

Finally, from one seventh-grade boy: “I was really surprised that they just died in the end. That was a bummer. You could of made them stay alive, I thought.”

Very few find it a bummer. Most of the young readers who have written to me have perceived the magic of the circular journey. The truth is that we go out and come back, and that what we come back to is changed, and so are we. Perhaps I have been traveling in a circle, too. Things come together and become complete.

Here is what I've come back to:

The daughter who was with me and looked at me in horror the day I fell victim to thinking we were “only us, only now” (and that what happened in Oklahoma, or Alabama, or Indiana didn't matter) was the first person to read the manuscript of *The Giver*.

The college classmate who was “different” lives, last I heard, very happily in New Jersey with another woman who shares her life. I can only hope that she has forgiven those of us who were young in a more frightened and less enlightened time.

My son and Margaret, his German wife—the one who reminded me how important it is to tell our stories again and again, painful though they are—now have a little girl who will be the receiver of all of their memories. Their daughter has crossed the Atlantic three times before she was six months old. Presumably my granddaughter will never be afraid of Elsewhere.

Carl Nelson, the man who lost colors
(continues)

Lois Lowry's Newbery Acceptance Speech (continued)

but not the memory of them, is the face on the cover of the book. He died in 1989 but left a vibrant legacy of paintings. One hangs now in my home.

And I am especially happy to stand here tonight on this platform with Allen Say because it truly brings my journey full circle. Allen was twelve years old when I was. He lived in Shibuya, that alien Elsewhere that I went to as a child on a bicycle. He was one of the Other, the Different, the dark-eyed children in blue school uniforms, and I was too timid then to do more than stand at the edge of their schoolyard, smile shyly, and wonder what their lives were like.

Now I can say to Allen what I wish I could have said then: *Watashi-no tomodachi desu*. Greetings, my friend.

I have been asked whether the Newbery Medal is, actually, an odd sort of burden in terms of the greater responsibility one feels. Whether one is paralyzed by it, fearful of being able to live up to the standards it represents.

For me the opposite has been true. I think the 1990 Newbery freed me to risk failure.

Other people took that risk with me, of course. One was my editor, Walter Lorraine, who has never to my knowledge been afraid to take a chance. Walter cares more about what a book has to say than

he does about whether he can turn it into a stuffed animal or a calendar or a movie.

The Newbery Committee was gutsy, too. There would have been safer books. More familiar books. They took a trip beyond the realm of Sameness, with this one, and I think they should be very proud of that.

And all of you, as well. Let me say something to those of you here who do such dangerous work.

The man that I named The Giver passed along to the boy knowledge, history, memories, color, pain, laughter, love, and truth. Every time you place a book in the hands of a child, you do the same thing.

It is very risky.

But each time a child opens a book, he pushes open the gate that separates him from Elsewhere. It gives him choices. It gives him freedom.

Those are magnificent, wonderfully unsafe things.

I have been honored by you now, two times. It is impossible to express my gratitude for that. Perhaps the only way, really, is to return to Boston, to my office, to my desk, and to go back to work in hopes that whatever I do next will justify the faith in me that this medal represents.

There are other rivers flowing.

Create Your Ideal Society

Name _____ Date _____

Imagine that you have been hired to plan and then create an “ideal” society. In the space below, take notes on the ideas you have about how to create a perfect society:

Problems I would solve:

1.

2.

My solutions:

1.

2.

Other features of my ideal society (you may want to consider the following: transportation, food, government, education, jobs, laws, marriage, money, trade):

Additional ideas from my group (use other side if necessary):

Story Organizer (Chapters 1–5)

Name _____ Date _____

	Characters	Events	Themes
Chapter 5			
Chapter 4			
Chapter 3			
Chapter 2			
Chapter 1			

Real or Ideal?

Name _____ Date _____

In the space below, name or describe the society you prefer—yours, your “ideal” society, or Jonas’s society? Make a list of the aspects of the society that make it the one you want to live in.

You will use this list to create a radio, television, newspaper, or other advertisement, such as a billboard or poster, which promotes the society you’ve chosen as a great place to live. You may create a “script” for a radio or television ad or use a combination of text, captions, pictures, magazine cut-outs, etc., to create your ad.

After you have finished your work, you may be asked to share or “perform” your ad with the class.

The society I prefer is:

I like it because:

Identity Web

Name _____ Date _____

JONAS

In My Life

Name _____ Date _____

Recall a time in your life when you experienced an important transition. It could be a time associated with a specific ceremony, such as a bar or bat mitzvah or grade school graduation, or it could be an occasion that marked new skills or independence, such as losing your first tooth, writing your name for the first time, learning to ride a bicycle, or getting your first house key. Later, you will use this reproducible to write a story about the experience. Think about the following questions as you remember the story:

1. How old were you?
2. What was the event or occasion?
3. What did you have to do to prepare for it, if anything?
4. How did it make you feel?
5. Was anyone else involved in the story? Who was it? What role did he or she play?
6. Why was this event or occasion important?

Story Organizer (Chapters 6–9)

Name _____ Date _____

Chapter 9

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Chapter 8

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Chapter 7

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Chapter 6

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Characters

Events

Themes

Remember When

Name _____ Date _____

Share with an adult family member or friend the story of *The Giver* so far. Explain that in Jonas's society, different ages of childhood are marked by a specific ceremony, up to age twelve, when young people receive their lifetime "Assignment." Ask your family "partner" about an important ritual, milestone, or coming-of-age experience that he or she remembers. It can be part of a family custom (such as having a special lunch on the first day of school), cultural or religious tradition (such as a bar or bat mitzvah), or general event (such as getting your first driver's license). The following questions will help you with your interview. Feel free to ask additional questions of your own. After completing the interview, bring your notes to class. With your family partner's permission, share the story with the class.

1. How old were you when this ceremony or experience took place?
2. What happened? Who else was involved in the experience?
3. What preparation (if any) did you have to undergo? What was it like?
4. How did you feel about the ceremony or experience before it happened? How did you feel afterward?
5. In looking back, what do you think of the experience now? How have similar events changed today?
6. Do you want to continue this tradition? Why or why not?

Know–Want–Learn (K–W–L) Chart

Name _____ Date _____

Our Hopes and Dreams	
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What We've Learned about Adolescence	
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What We Want to Know about Adolescence	
--	--

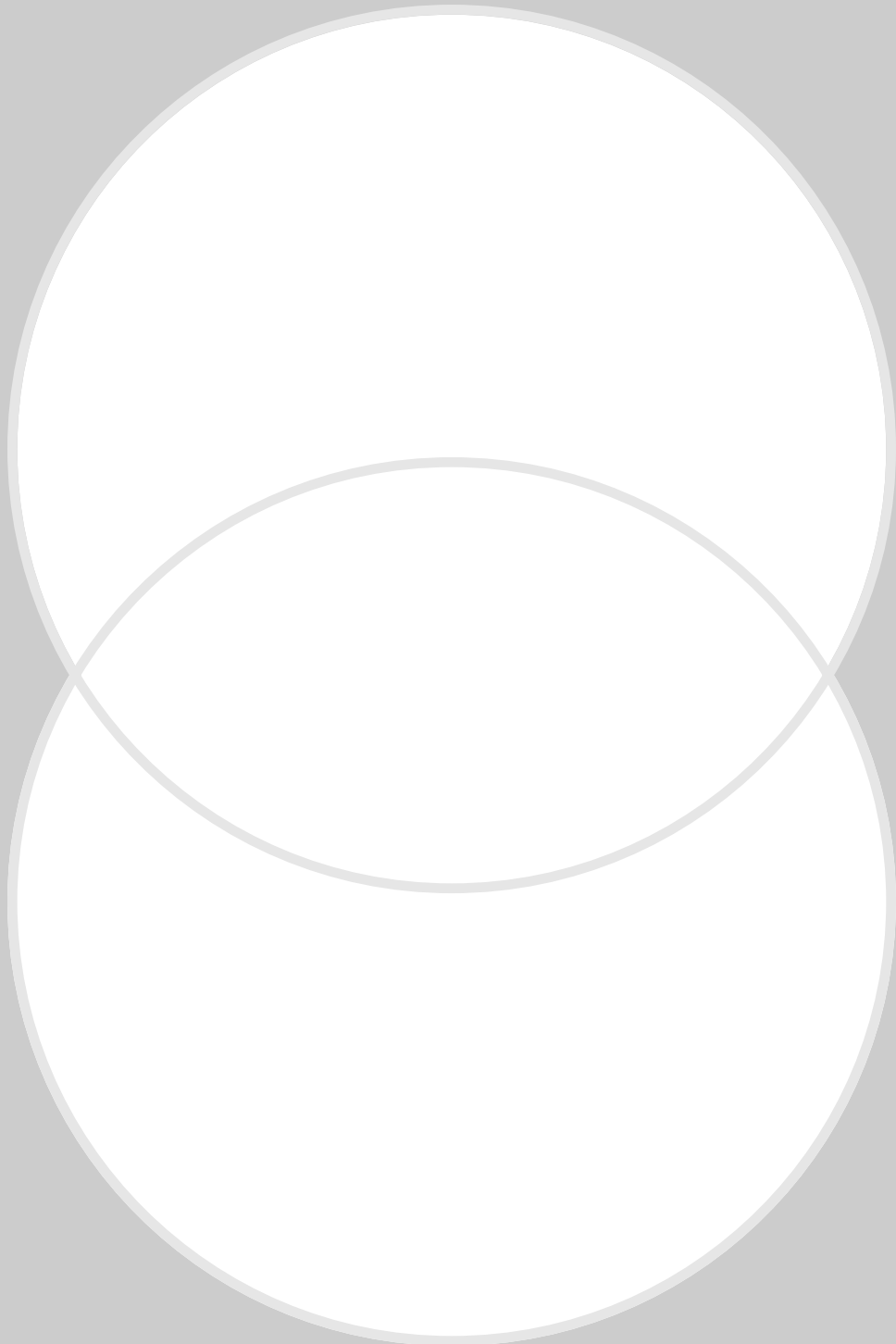
What We Know about Adolescence	
--------------------------------	--

Venn Diagram

Name _____ Date _____

Your World

Jonas's World



Story Organizer (Chapters 10–15)

Name _____ Date _____

Chapter 12

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Chapter 11

--	--	--

Chapter 10

--	--	--

Characters

Events

Themes

Story Organizer (Chapters 10–15)

Name _____ Date _____

Chapter 15

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Chapter 14

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Chapter 13

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Characters

Events

Themes

How Did It Happen?

Name _____ Date _____

In the space below, write your recollection of an event that everyone in school experienced. Describe when and where the event took place, what you think was important about it, and how you felt about it.

Story Organizer (Chapters 16–20)

Name _____ Date _____

	Characters	Events	Themes
Chapter 20			
Chapter 19			
Chapter 18			
Chapter 17			
Chapter 16			

Story Organizer (Chapters 21–23)

Name _____ Date _____

Chapter 23

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Chapter 22

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Chapter 21

--	--	--

Characters

Events

Themes

Reader Responses

Writing assignment: Read over the following questions and give your responses on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Why doesn't The Giver leave?
2. Why does Jonas leave?
3. What does Jonas give up for his freedom?
4. What does freedom mean for Jonas?
5. Why is memory important?
6. What does this story mean to you?

Autobiography

Name _____ Date _____

Choose a memory that is special and significant in your life. It can be a personal memory of something that happened to you, a person who influenced you, a memorable event, a bit of family history that has inspired or impressed you, a conversation you often recall, words of advice you rely on for guidance, etc. It can even be about an object that reminds you about an important person or event in your life.

Think about the following questions before you write your story. You may want to use your answers to create an outline. Then use your outline to write your story.

- Describe what happened. How old were you? Where were you? What happened? Who was there? Try to make the memory as vivid and clear as possible, using imagery and other descriptive language.

- Why is the memory important to you? Has it shaped who you are and choices you've made? If so, how?

- What impact do you think the memory will have on your future? How will it affect your relationships with others? How will it help shape your dreams, hopes, and plans for your future?