

they read and their knowledge of both language and the context in which language is used.

- Analyze the use of figurative, idiomatic, and symbolic language including sensory impressions, poetic license, personification, allusion, indigenous vocabulary, colloquialisms, regional and ethnic dialects, satire, paradox, irony, and allegory.

End of Grade 10 (Secondary) for Writing:

Students should be able to:

- Enhance their writing by using a variety of sources to provide background information, supporting details, and models of good writing.
- Use a variety of techniques to generate, draft, revise, edit, and publish texts.
- Understand and employ the elements of effective writing including purpose, topic development, organization, details, sentence structure, paragraphing, vocabulary, word choice, tone, and style.
- Use a variety of forms to develop ideas, share information, influence, persuade, create, and entertain.

End of Grade 10 (Secondary) for Literature:

Students should be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of literature from various cultures and times, written for a variety of purposes and in a variety of genres such as the classics and contemporary American, British, and world literature, and works by Pulitzer and Nobel prize winners.
- Understand that themes and events in literature often parallel real life.
- Analyze the ways that literature reflects the range of human experience.
- Stand apart from a text and consider it objectively by performing a range of tasks including critically evaluating; comparing and contrasting; understanding the impact of the organizational structure; and analyzing the use of such elements as satire, irony, humor, bias, redundancy, symbolism, analogies, metaphors, and poetic license.
- Critically analyze and evaluate texts for their practical, informational, or aesthetic value; for writer's craft; for writer's biases; and for the inherent ability of the work to communicate.

Giver would require a small portable bed and a chair. A scene that depicts Jonas and his family at dinner would require a small table and four or five chairs. More elaborate scenes (such as the “battle scene” memory Jonas receives from the Giver) would require additional props, but it could be accomplished with minimal effort on the part of the students and instructor. Students would want to prepare for the “readers’ theatre” in another location (such as the school gymnasium or library). The students are allowed to develop as many scenes as they’d like, but it would be advisable to hold them to a maximum of three or four scenes in order to allow for thoughtful responses and critical discussion after the “readers’ theatre” has transpired. All students NOT involved in the theatre project will be required to write a brief reflection paper discussing how the theater added to or changed their perceptions of Lowry’s novel.

2.) ACROSS THE CURRICULUM, HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES: The second option requires that the students write a research paper that focuses on any authoritarian government that has existed within the last century (i.e. Nazi Germany, Communist Russia, or even modern-day North Korea). Students will be required to use at least two book sources and two Internet sources for their research (encyclopedias are to be employed at the instructor’s discretion). Questions to consider answering in the research paper are: How does the authoritarian government you’ve studied and researched match up with the society Lowry portrays in her novel? What kinds of freedoms do you think Americans take for granted on a daily basis? Are democratic countries and their citizens always “better off” than citizens who are forced to conform in non-democratic countries? Obviously, students should use what they’ve learned from their research to defend their position. Upon completion of the paper, students will present their findings to the class. Students who have NOT written a research paper (i.e. the students who have chosen to take part in the “readers’ theatre” instead) will be required to write a brief reflection paper discussing how the research findings added to or changed their perceptions of Lowry’s novel.

Curriculum Standards for the State of New Hampshire:

The following information was taken from:

<http://www.ed.state.nh.us/Education/doe/organization/curriculum/Assessment/EnglishLanguageArts.htm>

End of Grade 10 (Secondary) for Reading:

Students should be able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to examine, adjust, and extend their level of comprehension by combining what they already know with what is new in what

4.) Children don't have much say in the professions they're given at the "Ceremony of Twelve." They simply must do as they're told, even when they have no interest in doing a prescribed job to begin with.

5.) People get "released" in an overtly objective and phlegmatic manner; there seems to be no compassion when dealing with mortality and/or death.

Pre-Paper Group Work, Brainstorming:

In groups of three or four, come up with a list of five to ten things that might help the community in *The Giver* be easier to live in and more individualistic. What kinds of freedoms should these people be given? What kinds of rules and regulations should be done away with? This activity should take approximately twenty to thirty minutes of class time, and it should serve as a platform for students to then brainstorm for one of the two paper topics listed below:

Paper Topic #1:

What do you think the overall theme or main idea of Lowry's novel is? For example, is Lowry simply trying to expose the inherent differences between individualism and conformity? Use examples from the text to help defend your argument. Maximum paper length: 4 pages.

Paper Topic #2:

Imagine that you are the Giver, and it is your job to transfer over memories from your own life. What memories would you give Jonas first? Which ones would you hold back on and why? Try to use examples from the book that help you explain how some memories are inherently more delightful—and some are inevitably more painful—than others. Maximum paper length: 4 pages.

Final Project Options (2) for Students:

1.) **ACROSS THE CURRICULUM, DRAMA:** Students can partake in a "readers' theatre" where they act out some of the more significant scenes in Lowry's novel. There should be at least four or five participants per group in order for this activity to be viable. Rudimentary props and stage materials will be provided depending on the scenes that will be performed. For instance, a scene revolving around Jonas receiving a memory from the

Draw two sketches or paint two paintings of your own memories—one “good” and one “bad.” Discuss how they might be similar or different from the memories Jonas received from the Giver. The class will then review each other’s drawings the following day to determine how intrinsic they might be of the numerous memories presented in Lowry’s novel.

Class Debate:

Break the class up into two heterogeneous groups depending on what “side” students want to take regarding the social norms of the community in Lowry’s novel. The first group would attempt to defend the community as a worthy place to live. Their talking points might include:

- 1.) The community is peaceful, serene, and safe, and no one feels pain, stress, or suffering of any kind while living there.
- 2.) No one needs to care whether he or she looks ugly or disheveled, because there are virtually no mirrors anywhere, and people can’t see colors.
- 3.) People are taught not to frown upon others because of their facial features and/or hair, and this is a good thing after all.
- 4.) Children are taught the importance of responsibility, professionalism, and citizenship at an early age by being given professions at the early age of twelve. This allows for a seamless transition of workers and citizens from generation to generation.
- 5.) No one goes hungry, and no one complains.

The group that argues against the community in Lowry’s novel might use talking points that include:

- 1.) There is virtually no individualism in the society in which Jonas lives. He cannot be himself; instead, he must act and follow the rules dogmatically like everyone else.
- 2.) There are no memories to think of that would give these people a greater sense of awareness regarding human existence and the human condition. Therefore, these people will never fully evolve as human beings.
- 3.) Children are only allowed to do certain things at certain times, and there is virtually no freedom to do anything until the prescribed time.

- 6.) Jonas' father seems to go against the social norms and rules of the community when he begins giving Gabriel extra time and care in order to succeed as one of the "newchildren." Should Jonas' father be punished or reprimanded for his actions? Why or why not?
- 7.) A turning point seems to occur in the story after Jonas is allowed to view a child being "released" on video. Describe how Jonas feels after seeing this.
- 8.) Do you think it's worth it for Jonas to attempt to escape from the community? What might his risky escape and/or quest symbolize?
- 9.) How is Jonas' father's "releasing" of a newchild symbolic of what the community is really like underneath the surface?
- 10.) Explain the significance of the red apple in the plot and development of the story. Is it metaphorical or symbolic in any way? Explain your answer.
- 11.) How does the Giver transfer his memories over to Jonas? Describe the process.
- 12.) Explain how the community and system works for children: For instance, when is a child allowed to play? When must a child do his or her homework? At what age can a child begin to ride a bike? Can a child choose his or her profession? Can he or she reject a profession once it has been given? What happens when a child continues to cause trouble?
- 13.) How is Jonas' twelfth birthday—and the "Ceremony of Twelve"—significant to the community in which he lives?
- 14.) Why does Jonas seem to be so apprehensive about the new profession that is chosen for him? What job is he given during the "Ceremony of Twelve?"
- 15.) Name some responsibilities you began taking on when you were twelve. How much different are they from the ones Jonas is asked to partake in?

Creative Writing Activity for Homework:

One can argue that *The Giver* has somewhat of an ambiguous ending. Write a 3-4 page epilogue in which you describe Jonas' newfound, more individual life. Is he indeed happier? Does he miss his family, or are they now free as well? Does Jonas ever come into contact with the Giver again?

Drawing Activity for Homework: ACROSS THE CURRICULUM, ART:

of the word, and his fortitude under extremely stressful circumstances seems to help prove this point.

Communities: The idea of the community as a social gathering place is one that might be expatiated upon in a critical discussion regarding Lowry's novel. What does a viable community consist of? What rules and regulations should be followed in a community? How much control is too much? Should everyone living in a particular neighborhood simply fall in line and do as they're told? Indeed, these questions could pave the way for a lengthy discussion during a lecture or literature circle.

Memories: In many ways, memories are an enigmatic phenomenon that we all take for granted. In Jonas' world, memories are suppressed or erased from the fabric of the community, and it's the Giver's sole job to contain all of these "good" and "bad" memories within his own mind's eye. Although memories allow for humans to understand history and the human condition, Lowry constructs a world where they're considered dangerous and pernicious. Only the Giver has the right to analyze and interpret memories, and it is his discernment alone that helps guide and instruct the community regarding anomalous situations and ordeals that might occur occasionally.

Curriculum Note:

If this book guide is to be employed as a comprehensive literature unit, it should take approximately three weeks in order to finish all of its activities (of course, this depends on class size and time restrictions). Lowry's novel would be read independently by the students beforehand.

General Questions for Discussion:

- 1.) Describe the main character/protagonist in Lowry's novel.
- 2.) Describe the setting in Lowry's novel.
- 3.) How do you feel about Jonas as a character? What connections do you see between your life and the novel?
- 4.) How does Jonas feel about the "House of the Old?" Explain his perceptions of the building and its tenants.
- 5.) Describe the personality and responsibilities of the Giver. Do you think he's fortunate to have his position in society? Why or why not?

trainer—that nothing is as it seems. Jonas must escape the repressed community to find his own individuality—as well as help the people in his community break away from the social norms that hinder them from living fuller, more individualistic lives.

Setting the Scene:

Lowry’s fictional—and latently satirical—novel takes place in a utopian, science fiction world where communities are sheltered and separated from each other in a highly structured and “programmed” manner. People living in Jonas’ community all go about their business on a daily basis without ever worrying about being truly individualistic or achieving their own dreams. Each family in the community is constructed in a seemingly arbitrary manner, as children are assigned to families, and parents are assigned to jobs that are unconditionally prescribed for them. No one seems to complain or rebel against the laws, borders, or infrastructure of the community, and everyone falls in line dogmatically in what might be perceived as an authoritarian state.

Thematic Connections:

Conformism: This novel provides a contemporary critique of the strengths and weaknesses of a conformist, drone-filled society where people follow rules and regulations dogmatically. Jonas must fight against everything he knows in order to save himself—and his people—from living lives that are perpetually monitored, controlled, and pre-destined.

Individuality: As Jonas receives memories from the Giver, he begins to understand that the society in which he lives is a fallacy; even though everyone seems content and passive, no one is really learning anything new, and no one is allowed to be an individual. Indeed, Lowry is effective in pointing out the human need and fundamental quest for finding one’s sense of self. Self-individuation and/or self-realization are two prominent motifs in her novel.

Freedom and Democracy: In Jonas’ world, the only way to achieve freedom is to break away from the mold of the authoritarian society in which he lives. People deserve to live free from any rules or regulations that would essentially “clamp down” on their freedom to do *what* they want *when* they want.

Journey Quest of the Hero: In Lowry’s novel, a somewhat inconspicuous motif revolves around Jonas’ quest to escape—and to find his own self-individuation in the process. Ultimately, the Jungian journey quest of the hero doesn’t need to revolve around a sword-bearing, larger-than-life warrior who takes part in bold deeds such as fighting dragons or saving damsels in distress. Jonas is truly a hero-like protagonist in every sense

Lois Lowry's *The Giver*: A Book Guide for Middle and Secondary School Educators and Students

Author summary:

Lois Lowry has received the distinguished Newbury Medal for two of her books: *The Giver* (in 1994) and *Number the Stars* (in 1990). She has published numerous young adult novels, including *Gathering Blue* (2000) and *Messenger* (2004). Although Lowry's *The Giver* is now an integral part of many required reading lists for middle school language arts curriculums, her literary work is also considered canonical, thought-provoking, and “deep” enough for secondary school students as well. As *The Giver* is slated for a Hollywood film to be released sometime in 2007, it is inevitable that her Newbury-prize-winning book is bound to become one of the most cherished—and most controversial—pieces of literature in the young adult literature canon. Lowry currently lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She also has a second home in Maine—the place where she grew up and attended college at the University of Southern Maine.

For more information on Lois Lowry and her literary work, please visit the following sites:

Lois Lowry's Official Site:

<http://www.loislowry.com/>

Lois Lowry Biography and Interview:

<http://books.scholastic.com/teachers/authorsandbooks/authorstudies/authorhome.jsp?authorID=55&collateralID=5219&displayName=Biography>

Featured Author on Carol Hurst's Literature Site:

<http://www.carolhurst.com/authors/lloyry.html>

A Synopsis of *The Giver*:

Jonas lives in a place where everyone conforms to rules that create a sense of “sameness” for the entire community. No one goes hungry, no one gets hurt, and everyone seems to live a somewhat emotionless life void of individualism. Once Jonas is given his job as Receiver, he finds out—with the help of a wise-old-man-like