

Individual Learning Packet

**Teaching Unit**

**The Giver**

by Lois Lowry

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## Notes

This science fiction/fantasy about a utopian community is guaranteed to spark lively discussions in the classroom. Lowry explores many important social issues, such as the care of the elderly, sexuality, a fair system of justice, genetic engineering, assisted suicide, control of the environment, and the education or training of the young. The novel raises the question, “At what point does the safety of the community and the desire to live an easy life outweigh the rights of the individual to make individual choices?”

All references come from the Bantam Books edition of *The Giver*, copyright 1999.

## Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to

1. infer the thoughts, ideas, and actions of the characters when they are not expressly stated.
2. identify phrases repeatedly used by the community; recognize which of these phrases are clichés and euphemisms.
3. discuss the ways in which the community handles the following social issues:
  - care of the elderly
  - sexuality and nudity
  - education and job selection
  - the creation of family units
  - assisted suicide
  - control of climate and the environment
4. identify the novel's point of view and explain its benefits
5. discuss the advantages and disadvantages of family life as defined by the committee, considering the following:
  - sharing of feelings
  - limits on the number of children and the sex of children
  - dream-sharing
6. cite incidents in the novel that support the following themes:
  - Experiencing love is worth the risk of also experiencing pain.
  - Good memories give us the strength to achieve our goals.
7. explain how the author uses foreshadowing to build interest and suspense.
8. define the following terms as they are used in the story:
  - Sameness
  - Capacity to See Beyond
  - Release
  - Elsewhere
  - Receiver of Memory
9. comment on the overall concept of the sacrifices that are required to achieve Sameness, including that of individual choice.

### Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. What evidence shows that Jonas does not initially understand what happens when a person is released?
2. How does the community control sexuality? What are the rules concerning nudity? Why do these rules exist?
3. Which of the rules are “almost always” broken without any punishments? What is the worst punishment possible?
4. On the surface, the Nurturers seem to be doing everything they can to help Gabriel. What is fundamentally wrong, by our standards, with the way the community evaluates newchildren?
5. Many cultures have a system by which they select careers for the young adults in their community. Do you agree or disagree with this concept? Is it better to have young adults choose their own careers? Why?
6. In what ways might the “release” of the old and the infirm benefit the community? What are the dangers of this policy?
7. How does the author inform the reader that the climate of the community is artificially controlled? What are the advantages and disadvantages of climate control?
8. Comment on the following phrases from the story. In what ways are they clichéd?
  - Thank you for your childhood.
  - I apologize for...
  - We accept your apology.
  - I'm glad you told us of your feelings.
9. Distinguish between third-person omniscient, limited omniscient, and objective points of view. Which one is used for this story? Why do you think the author selected it?
10. In what ways is the Giver's dwelling different from all of the others in the community? What do you think surprises Jonas the most about the Giver's room?
11. What happened to the last replacement for the Receiver? How might this foreshadow what will happen to the community when it receives Jonas's memories?

# The Giver

## Chapter 1

### VOCABULARY

**apprehensive** – nervous or worried about a future event  
**anxiously** – uneasily and with distress  
**beckoning** – summoning  
**disposition** – one’s usual mood; temperament  
**distraught** – distracted and upset  
**intrigued** – attracted interest and curiosity  
**ironic** – contrary to what is expected or intended  
**jeering** – taunting; mocking or insulting  
**nurturing** – the act of raising or protecting something, especially a child  
**palpable** – easily perceived; obvious  
**pondered** – considered  
**prominent** – important and/or well-known  
**rasping** – in a grating voice  
**recollection** – a memory  
**shudder** – a tremble  
**supplementary** – something added or additional  
**transgression** – the act of violating a rule or law  
**wheedle** – to coax

1. Why is Jonas frightened when he sees a strange plane flying over his community?

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2. How old is Jonas? Why is he apprehensive about the month of December?

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**Chapter 5**

VOCABULARY

**disquieting** – disturbing; unsettling  
**infraction** – a violation  
**murky** – lacking clarity  
**perspiring** – sweating  
**recounted** – narrated the facts or particulars of

1. Define “Stirrings.” Why do you suppose Stirrings require treatment in this community?

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2. Find a comment in the book that supports the idea that the community discourages individuality.

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3. Why does Jonas try to “grasp” back the feeling from his dream? Why is he not successful?

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4. What kind of narration is used in this novel? Why do you think the author selects it?

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## Chapter 13

### VOCABULARY

**accusation** – a charge of wrongdoing  
**anguished** – agonized in physical or mental pain; tormented  
**array** – a variety  
**assimilated** – incorporated and absorbed  
**disregarded** – ignored or paid no attention to  
**electrode** – a wire or conductor through which electricity flows  
**embedded** – integrated into part of a surrounding whole  
**emerge** – to become evident  
**forbidden** – not allowed  
**hueless** – colorless  
**mutilated** – damaged; destroyed  
**outlying** – remote; existing outside of an area  
**seldom** – rarely; infrequently  
**sinuous** – winding or having many curves  
**skeptically** – questioningly  
**spanned** – extended across  
**sparse** – limited; scanty  
**stimulate** – to pressure into actions  
**successor** – one that follows another  
**subsided** – calmed or dwindled down to nothing  
**tended** – applied one’s attention to  
**tufts** – dense clumps  
**vast** – very great in area

1. Why does Jonas think a colorless community is “not fair”? Why is it safer if there are no choices?

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2. What makes Jonas angry when he is with his group mates?

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