



THE GIVER RESOURCE GUIDE



Prime Stage Theatre performs at the New Hazlett Theater Center for Performing Arts in Pittsburgh, PA.

Welcome to Prime Stage Theatre: **Bringing Literature to Life!**

Dear Educator,

Welcome to Prime Stage Theatre's 2015-2016 Season!

We are pleased to bring you *The Giver* adapted for the stage by Eric Coble, our last production of the season. The play is an adaptation of Lois Lowry's book of the same title, which won the Newbury Award.

Eric Coble refers to *The Giver* as "a metaphor for what it means to grow up." When you're young, he notes: "there [is] no before, there's what I'm feeling right now and what I'm enjoying right now, and then suddenly someone says, 'Well did you ever know there was this history? Did you ever know that people suffered and [had] wars?' That point [is] different in everyone's life, but for all of us there's a progression to where you suddenly realize it's a much bigger world than what you thought it was."

All literature produced by Prime Stage is always drawn from middle and secondary Reading Lists and themes are in the curriculum.

This Resource Guide is designed to provide historical background and context, classroom activities and curricular content to help you enliven your students' experience with the literature and the theatre. We encourage you to use the theatrical games and creative thinking activities, as well as the Theatre Etiquette suggested activities to spark personal connections with the themes and characters in the story of *The Giver*.

If you have any questions about the information or activities in the guide, please contact me and I will be happy to assist you and I welcome your suggestions!

Linda Haston, Education Director and Teaching Artist
Prime Stage Theatre
lhaston@primestage.com

The activities in this guide are intended to enliven, clarify and enrich the text as you read, and the experience as you watch the literature.

Our Education Programming is funded in part by the following:

Literacy in Action
Student Matinee Field Trips
Theatre Mentor/Interns
Professional Development
Education Director
Teen Dating Awareness



The Heinz Endowment



LAUREL FOUNDATION



Massey Charitable Trust



Bringing Literature to Life

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

I have always been drawn to stories of alternate universes and dystopian societies. Last year, I had the immense pleasure of directing Prime Stage Theatre's production of Animal Farm, a parable warning of the dangers inherent to blindly following the leader, presented as a story about a group of animals dreaming of a utopia. In their pursuit of happiness, the beasts revolt against their human captors only to allow one of their own to seize power and hold them under another, perhaps crueler, form of dictatorship.

The Giver also presents a society where the members follow their leaders unquestioningly. Unlike their predecessors in Animal Farm, these folks have found contentment. The leaders they follow are not cruel despots. Their society knows no hunger, no poverty, no war; they have no memory of these events and no understanding of the concepts. There is no peer pressure, as clothing and hair are uniform and parents train children from birth to apologize for anything that could be perceived as rudeness. Opportunity is equal and based upon the ability and interests of each individual, so everyone is certain to be assigned the right job, the right spouse, the right life.

If you don't scratch the surface too hard, the Community looks like the perfect world; like the mythological Eden.

Everything comes at a price, though, and in exchange for a strife-free existence the residents long ago gave up free will and the ability to choose. The ability to see color, feel passion, and to love has been eliminated from their lives. They are perfectly content, but they are oblivious. They are as blind as Orwell's animals.

Working on The Giver has made me realize that, if given a choice, I choose the apple. I wholeheartedly choose to bear the weight of knowledge, and the pain that accompanies it, rather than float in oblivion in the bland, if safe, existence that is Sameness. In spite of the dangers and uncertainties that accompany our imperfect world, I get to wake up every morning and decide whether I want to wear a red shirt, or a yellow one. And I'm grateful for it.

**~ Melissa Hill-Grande, Director
Prime Stage Production of "The Giver"**

Theatre Etiquette and House rules

Going to a play is a special experience, one that you will remember for a long time.

Everyone in the audience has been looking forward to seeing the performance. The production team put in many long hours and hard work to mount this performance. If you keep in mind common courtesy for the performers as well as your fellow audience members, everyone's theatre experience will be terrific.

A few reminders for attending the theatre.

- When you arrive, stay with your group at all times, and wait for the ushers to help you find your seat.
- Gum, food, drinks, or candy, are never allowed in the theatre.
- Please go to the bathroom before seating for performance or at intermission.
- TURN OFF ALL cell phones, pagers, beepers, alarms, anything that can disturb the production, actors and the audience during the performance.
- Lights will dim just before a performance and then go dark. Show your knowledge by sitting quietly and calmly.
- Do not talk during the performance. The actors on stage can hear you which is why you can hear them so well. Laughter is permissible at appropriate times.
- No taking of pictures or video recording is allowed.
- Stay in your seat until the cast has taken their curtain call at the end. Show your appreciation by clapping. The actors love to hear applause. This shows how much you enjoyed the performance!

Featured National Standards:

English/Language Arts Standards Developed by International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English

1. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, and aesthetic) of human experience.
2. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context and graphics).
3. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, and video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
4. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, and video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
5. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
6. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

Theatre

NA 5-8.3 Designing by developing environments for improvised and scripted scenes

Students analyze improvised and scripted scenes for technical requirements

NA5-8.7 Analyzing, evaluating, and constructing meanings from improvised and scripted scenes and from theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions

Students articulate and support the meanings constructed from their and others' dramatic Performances Students use articulated criteria to describe, analyze, and constructively evaluate the perceived effectiveness of artistic choices found in dramatic performances

NA 9-12.2 Acting by developing, communicating, and sustaining characters in improvisations and informal or formal productions

Students analyze the physical, emotional, and social dimensions of characters found in dramatic texts from various genres and media

NA 9-12.3 Designing and producing by conceptualizing and realizing artistic interpretations for informal or formal productions

Students analyze a variety of dramatic texts from cultural and historical perspectives to determine production requirements

NA9-12.5 Researching by evaluating and synthesizing cultural and historical information to support artistic choices

Students identify and research cultural, historical, and symbolic clues in dramatic texts, and evaluate the validity and practicality of the information to assist in making artistic choices for informal and formal productions

NA9-12.7 Analyzing, critiquing, and constructing meanings from informal and formal theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions

Students articulate and justify personal aesthetic criteria for critiquing dramatic texts and events that compare perceived artistic intent with the final aesthetic achievement
Students analyze and critique the whole and the parts of dramatic performances, taking into account the context, and constructively suggest alternative artistic choices

All Prime Stage productions and Resource Guides address the following:

Pennsylvania Common Core Standards for *The Giver*:

Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking

CC.1.3.9-10.A: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CC.1.3.9-10.C: Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

CC.1.3.9-10.D: Determine the point of view of the text and analyze the impact the point of view has on the meaning of the text.

CC.1.3.9-10.E: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it and manipulate time create an effect.

CC.1.3.9-10.F: Analyze how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts.

CC.1.3.9-10.G: Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment.

CC.1.3.9-10.H: Analyze how an author draws on and transforms themes, topics, character types, and/or other text elements from source material in a specific work.

CC.1.3.9-10.K: Read and comprehend literary fiction on grade level, reading independently and proficiently.

CC.1.5.9-10.A: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions on grades level topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CC.1.5.9-10.G: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English when speaking based on grade 9-10 level and content.

CC.1.6.11.A: Listen critically and respond to others in small and large group situations. Respond with grade level appropriate questions, ideas, information or opinions.

CC.1.6.11.C: Demonstrate awareness of audience using appropriate volume and clarity in formal speaking presentations.

CC.1.6.11.D: Listen to and acknowledge the contributions of other students well introducing ideas and opinions to enrich the discussion

COSTUME DESIGN NOTES



"The costume design concept for *The Giver* mirrors the no color (grey) world of the set and where clothing is no longer reflective of identity, gender or environment. It is purely functional with design details limited. Artistically, it is a challenge to "pull back" a design, to be limited to flat, non-textural fabric choices and to create clothing that is uniform.

Further, with less fabric manufactured in the US, choices from vendors were limited and the color specific palette made the process of planning and swatching, (getting fabric samples), more lengthy.

It is my hope that the design reflects the author's and playwright's intent and that audience members leave with a renewed appreciation for the individual expression in our every-day clothing, the colors in our world and the freedom of thought and creativity we enjoy as Americans."

Kim Brown
Costume Designer
Prime Stage production of "The Giver," May 2016

SCENIC DESIGN



Set designer Johnmichael Bohach's scaled model of the set.

When I started to talk about creating the set design for *The Giver*, I first had to think about the world in which Jonas, his family, and their surrounding community resides in. I had to define the idea of “Sameness.”

What does an environment look like after it has been stripped of its color, climate, style, emotion, and most importantly, individual choice? The answer is a setting which is cold, sterile and utilitarian. It's only function is to facilitate the storytelling. In our world of “Sameness”, we have sleek and clean edges, repetition, and subtle texture.

Alternately, I had to create the world that Jonas begins to discover through his received memories. As Jonas meets with the Giver he learns what the world once was - a world before the idea of “Sameness” was imposed on the community. This world is full of color, design, feelings and choice. Without giving too much away, we hope that our audience will delight in how we adapt and manipulate our stage design to convey Jonas' journey as he discovers what the world once was, and can be again.

Johnmichael Bohach

Scenic Designer

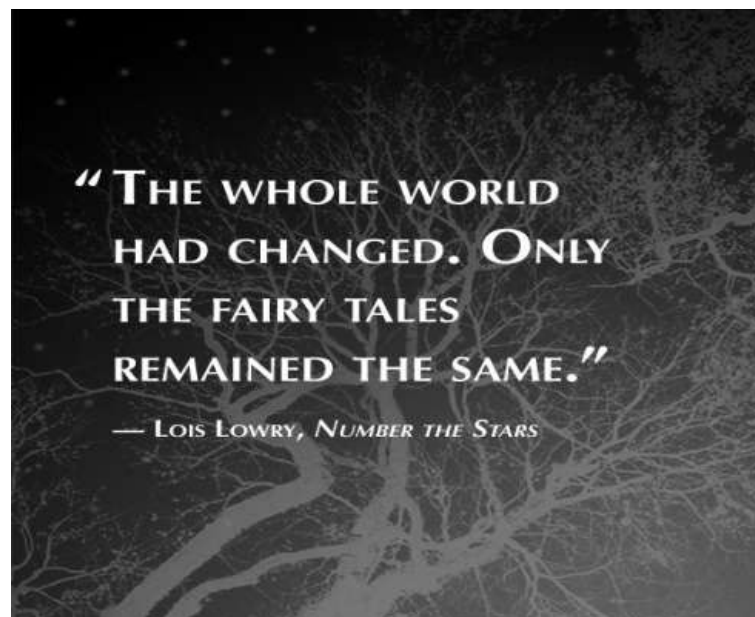
Prime Stage production of "The Giver," May, 2016

LOIS LOWRY- novelist

Lois Lowry was born in Honolulu, Hawaii, on March 20th, 1937. Her father was in the military, so much of her youth was spent living in different places, including New York, Pennsylvania, and Japan. At the age of nineteen she was married and between 1958 and 1962 she gave birth to four children; Alix, Grey, Kristin, and Benjamin. Her family moved to Maine in 1963, and Lowry received a BA from the University of Southern Maine. Today Lois Lowry



lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with her dog Bandit. Lowry said in her Newbery Medal acceptance speech that “The Giver was partly inspired by living in Japan when she was a young girl.” She has published novels known for expressing realistic life experiences. Lowry believes that her books vary in content and style, but that all of her books essentially deal with the importance of human connection. Lois Lowry is the author of more than 30 books for young people. Her first book, *A Summer to Die For*, was awarded the Reading Association’s Children’s Book Award. Lois Lowry was honored with the Newbery Medal for two of her books, *Number the Stars* in 1990 and *The Giver* in 1994. *The Giver* is part of a trilogy of books that also includes *Gathering Blue* and *Messenger*. She also wrote the Anastasia Krupnik book series, *Autumn Street*, and *Rabble Starkey*. *Gossamer* is her newest book.



A Conversation with Eric Coble, Playwright

Artistic Director, Wayne Brinda recently had a conversation with *The Giver* playwright Eric Coble about his work and what it was like to adapt a beloved novel for the stage.

What are you currently working on?

I'm writing another adaptation of a science fiction book - "Feed" by M.T. Anderson. I'm also writing an original play for teens about cell phones, and a big show for Las Vegas, that I cannot talk about yet. And there's a new musical (also based on a book) to work on, as well as three or four other scripts I'm scribbling on or rewriting or about to start on. I like to stay busy.



You have written a wide range of plays for Theatre for Young Audiences and adult regional theatre, as well as off-Broadway. For future or current playwrights who want to create new work, or adapt an existing story, can you share your process with some plays?

*If it's an original piece, say "The Velocity of Autumn", I get an idea that intrigues me and then slowly jot notes on that idea, even as I work on other projects — bits of dialogue, character moments, an interesting twist — then at some point I HAVE to write it, then I sit down with pen and paper and start writing. Usually I start with the earliest scene I can (usually the first one) and then move forward. But sometimes I have a very clear monologue or scene in mind, so I'll start with that, even if I know it's going to happen later in the play. Then I keep working every day until I get the thing done. If the script is an adaptation (like *The Giver*), I read the book once for my own entertainment, and to see what moments and characters stick with me. Then I read it again, marking it up as I go (which always feels a little wrong (I was taught never to write in books!), but I've bought the book so I can mark it as I see fit). I note the scenes and dialogue that HAVE to go into the play. Then I start weaving it together, trimming the parts that won't tell the story as cleanly as the stage demands it be told (maybe an intriguing subplot that there's just not time for), and shaping it for the stage. Whenever I have a first draft, I type into my computer (2nd draft), then I show it to close friends and other playwrights for their feedback (do the 3rd, 4th rewrite), then start sending it out into the world.*

Regarding *The Giver*, what was the impulse or inspiration for you to adapt this story?

Stan Foote at Oregon Children's Theatre approached me about writing the adaptation. I hadn't heard of the book prior to that, but was instantly taken in as I read it. Stan secured the rights from the book publisher, and I wrote my version of it.

What did you especially like about the story that is important for audiences to get from the story and your adaptation and what were some challenges you encountered while adapting it? Can you share the experience of working with Ms. Lowry on the adaptation?

**The Giver* touches on so many universal themes. What it means to grow up, to realize there is a bigger world than your home and your friends, and what your obligation to that world is. It's about the power of memory and how it affects society. It's about the age-old question of how much freedom we are willing to trade for security. It's about love and family. And it's a mystery with compelling characters and a world we've never seen before.*

Every scene in the book is so wonderful and telling. So the challenge was what to leave out, since I couldn't include everything in under 3 hours. I put in all the scenes I felt HAD to be there, and then kept whittling until it became a whole play. The other great challenge was in bringing the momentary flashes of color to the black and white stage. In the book you can clearly imagine that happening — but how to do that in our real world? My solution was to not come up with a single solution. I've left the exact nature of that magic trick to each theatre, and so far they've all come up with clever ways to achieve the effect.

Lois was amazingly trusting of my writing as I went. She didn't see the script until I'd finished the first draft. Then she gave her approval and we've since continued to run into each other around the country at various productions and events, checking in on how the play is doing. And then I also adapted her companion book to the Giver - "Gathering Blue" - so we've discussed that many times as well.

Prime Stage is doing its first Sensory-Friendly performance with *The Giver*, do you have any experience with young people or adults on the spectrum?

I have personal experience with relatives and friends who are on the spectrum — none of my shows have ever been performed in a Sensory-Friendly style before, so I'm very excited to see how that works. I think it's a brilliant idea.

How did you and the director, Melissa Hill-Grande know each other in college?

We both attended Ohio University, but at different times. We crossed paths briefly when she was directing there and I returned as a guest panelist for the Seabury Quinn Playwriting Festival. We also know many of the same actors — the theatre is a small small world....

What are your thoughts about the importance of reading, as well as *seeing* literature and plays?

I learned almost everything I know about playwriting from reading, seeing, and acting in plays. It's taught me how to build suspense, set up and pay off jokes, what moments make us care about these fictional characters and why. I try to read or see about 100 plays a year. With every one of them - even the ones I really don't like - my world gets a little bigger. I understand humanity a bit more. What a gift.

Please share any concluding thoughts for the actors and/or audiences.

*I think science fiction is a brilliant way to explore issues we face today, but at arm's length so we cannot get quite so tangled in the here and now. They offer visions of what our world can become and ask the audience — is this what we want? Should we strive for this or work to avoid it? How will we do that? The dystopia of *The Giver* is unique in that it's so pleasurable. There's no suffering, everyone gets the job they want, there's enough food and everyone is sweet to each other and it strikes me as kind of a great place to live. Until you look at what they've given up to live that way. And what they're willing to do to maintain that world. I hope the actors, designers, and audiences will all leave thinking about what we have now and what we want to change - and keep - about it.*



Plot Overview of The Giver



Jonas lives with his parents and his younger sister, Lily, in a world without hunger, violence, or conflict. Everything in the community is carefully designed for serenity and comfort. Each family unit has two parents and no more than two children; old people are cared for in a separate facility; appropriate careers are assigned by a committee of elders who carefully assess each person's abilities. As the time nears for the annual Ceremony of 12, Jonas and his friends Asher and Fiona look forward to receiving their life assignments. Jonas is surprised to be singled out as the community's Receiver of Memory. Every day he is to report to the Giver, an Elder who holds a special place of honor in the community.



The Giver begins to share with Jonas the wealth of memories and knowledge he carries, and Jonas starts to glimpse a world beyond the confines of his community, beyond the here and now. As he learns about the choices that are no longer available to him—or to anyone else—Jonas begins to question the price the community pays for its placid existence.

DISCUSSION IDEAS

Before the play...

All students will benefit greatly from reading Lowry's novel before seeing the production. However, whether or not your students have read the book, begin to stimulate their interest through these discussion prompts:

- If you could design a perfect world, what would it be like? What from our society would you get rid of? What would you keep? What would you change? Why?
- Imagine if the entire history of our society, through present day, was erased, and we had no memories. Would people be better or worse off without any individual or collective memories of the past? Why?
- The Giver presents a world where sameness is valued above diversity. In what ways does diversity enrich our lives? In what ways does diversity complicate our lives?
- Think about the kinds of choices you can make in your life: what to wear, what to eat, who to marry, what career to pursue, etc. How would you feel if these choices were made for you? Do you think it is important to make our own choices? Why would a society choose to eliminate the ability to make individual choices?

During the play...

As you watch the play, pay attention to the visual and auditory components. How do the set, lights, costumes, and sound design work to tell the story of *The Giver*? Consider these questions:

- Notice how color is used in the set, lighting, and costumes. How does color define the play's setting? How do the colors change from beginning to end?
- What kinds of sound do you hear, both recorded and from the live percussionist? How is sound used to create this world without music? How does sound change at the end of the production?
- How is movement used? How do these physical actions of the actors help define the world of the play? How do the actors bring the transmitted memories alive on stage?
- Observe the relationship between Jonas and the Giver. What do they learn from each other? How does this relationship differ from the other relationships in the story?



The Giver set rendering by Dunsai Dai.

ACTIVITY IDEA!

BUILD A SOUND ORCHESTRA

How do the sounds around you help define your environment? Explore that idea with your students by creating a “sound orchestra”:

STEP 1: With the class standing in a circle, choose a location. Students will often have great suggestions. Some examples: your classroom, the whole school, a restaurant, a park, a baseball game.

STEP 2: Ask students to think of a sound (ex: dog barking, baseball bat hitting the ball, laughter), word or phrase (ex: “Get to work,” “May I take your order?”) they might hear in the selected location.

STEP 3: Stand in the middle of the circle, and point to individual students in any order. Students will vocalize their selected sounds when you point to them.

STEP 4: As you “conduct” this orchestra, you may point to several students at one time, direct them to raise and lower their volume, and work to create a soundscape of overlapping voices.

STEP 5: Invite student volunteers to “conduct” for themselves and create the sonic world of your selected environment. Repeat for different locations.

From the motion picture *The Great*
ROSEMARY'S SONG
Music by MARCO BELTRAMI

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PRE-SHOW ACTIVITY: FROM THE PAGE TO THE STAGE...

Teachers: pull out this page to make copies for your students.

How did the playwright do it? Eric Coble faced the challenging task of transforming Lois Lowry’s narrative into effective, engaging dialogue for actors and audiences.

Look closely at these side-by-side passages from *The Giver*. In this scene, Jonas expresses apprehension about the upcoming Ceremony of Twelve at his family’s evening meal. The first excerpt is from the original novel, while the second is Coble’s stage adaptation.

Both excerpts tell the same part of the story, but how do they differ? What changes did Coble make? Why do you think he chose to make these changes? How do stage directions take the place of Lowry’s descriptions of what the characters are doing?



<p>From the novel:</p> <p>The ritual continued. “Jonas?” Father asked. “You’re last, tonight.”</p> <p>Jonas sighed. This evening he almost would have preferred to keep his feelings hidden. But it was, of course, against the rules.</p> <p>“I’m feeling apprehensive,” he confessed, glad that the appropriate descriptive word had finally come to him.</p> <p>“Why is that, son?” His father looked concerned.</p> <p>“I know there’s really nothing to worry about,” Jonas explained, “and that every adult has been through it. I know you have, Father, and you too, Mother. But it’s the Ceremony that I’m apprehensive about. It’s almost December.”</p> <p>Lily looked up, her eyes wide. “The Ceremony of Twelve,” she whispered in an awed voice. Even the smallest children—Lily’s age and younger—knew that it lay in the future for each of them.</p> <p>“I’m glad you told us your feelings,” Father said.</p> <p>“Lily,” Mother said, beckoning to the little girl, “go on now and get into your nightclothes. Father and I are going to stay here and talk to Jonas for a while.”</p> <p>Lily sighed, but obediently she got down from her chair. “Privately?” she asked.</p> <p>Mother nodded. “Yes,” she said, “this talk will be a private one with Jonas.”</p> <p><small>Excerpt from THE GIVER by Lois Lowry. Copyright © 1993 by Lois Lowry. Reprinted by permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved.</small></p>	<p>From the play:</p> <p>MOTHER Jonas? (Jonas has been staring at his food)</p> <p>FATHER Jonas.</p> <p>JONAS What.</p> <p>FATHER We’re sharing feelings. Anything you want to share? (Beat. He looks at them)</p> <p>JONAS I’m feeling... apprehensive.</p> <p>FATHER Why is that, son?</p> <p>JONAS ...it’s almost December. (They look at each other)</p> <p>LILY (Almost whispered) The Ceremony of Twelve.</p> <p>FATHER ...I’m glad you told us your feelings.</p> <p>MOTHER Lily, go get on your nightclothes. Father and I are going to talk to Jonas for a while.</p> <p>LILY But—</p> <p>FATHER Lily.</p> <p>LILY Privately?</p> <p>MOTHER Yes. This talk will be a private one with Jonas.</p> <p><small>Excerpt from THE GIVER by Eric Coble, based on the book by Lois Lowry. Reprinted with permission from Eric Coble.</small></p>
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TURN THE PAGE OVER TO WRITE YOUR OWN SCRIPT!

ACTIVITY IDEA!

<p>ADAPT A SCENE FROM THE GIVER</p> <p>Select another short passage from <i>The Giver</i> novel, and write your own script in the space below. You may want to continue the scene featured on the previous page (see Chapter 2), or choose a different part of the book. Once your script is written, assign roles, and take turns acting out the different versions your class has created.</p>	<p>SCRIPT FORMATTING TIPS:</p> <p>CAPITALIZE the name of the CHARACTER who is speaking.</p> <p>(Put stage directions in parentheses.) See Eric Coble's script on the previous page for tips on formatting.</p> <p>This scene is from Chapter _____, Page(s) _____.</p>
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(Continue on additional page as needed.)

CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS: TACKLING CHALLENGING CONTENT

Release

“Release” is a rather shocking element of Lowry’s story. Though initially presumed to mean “sent elsewhere,” release—as Jonas comes to discover—actually means put to death. Towards the end of the story, Jonas witnesses his father releasing—or killing by lethal injection—a baby, because their community does not allow twins. (Note: This scene will not be played out literally on stage in our production.)

Discussion Ideas for Students:

- How do you think the Community became a place where release is an accepted practice?
- Jonas’s community uses *euphemism* to distance itself from the reality of killing. **Euphemism** is the substitution of an agreeable or inoffensive expression for one that may offend or suggest something unpleasant—saying “release” rather than “murder.” In our society, how do we use euphemism to distance ourselves from the realities of aging, death, bodily functions, and/or political activities?

Euthanasia

It is a common practice to euthanize members of the Community living in the House of the Old. Euthanasia refers to the painless killing of someone who is suffering from an incurable disease. A highly controversial practice, euthanasia is believed by some to be murder, while others believe the practice is a merciful way to end suffering.

CLASSROOM DEBATES: GENETICS IN THE NEWS

From sheep cloning to fast-growing salmon, stories of genetic modifications have been making national headlines for years. As technology advances, the ethical debates surrounding these stories persist. Choose one or more related news stories for your students to research. Plan a classroom debate day around these topics. For each scenario, students should consider: is this advancement helpful or harmful for society at large?

To get started, check out these websites for recent news and teaching ideas about genetic engineering:

http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/science/topics/genetic_engineering/index.htm |
http://www.teachersdomain.org/browse/?fq_hierarchy=k12.sci.life.gen.engineering
<http://www.scientificamerican.com/topic.cfm?id=genetic-engineering>

MISSOURI SCIENCE GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS:
STRAND 8: Impact of science, technology and human activity

Sameness: A World Without Diversity

When Jonas sees “beyond,” he begins to recognize skin color. But for the rest of his community, skin color is an unknown concept. **Ask students:** Why do you think the creators of the Community decided to eliminate skin color? How would our society be different if we eliminated skin color, and there were no differences in our skin tones? What would we gain? What might we lose?

Genetic Engineering

In Jonas’s community, humans cannot see color. As the Giver explains, the people who created the Community made the choice to give up color, in order to maintain a “safe” society of sameness. What are some other examples in the story where science was used to manipulate the environment?



What are Cultural Norms?

Culture is defined as “the customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or other social group.”

A *cultural norm* is an accepted practice or belief within a specific culture.

Lois Lowry has created a very different culture in *The Giver* from what we are used to in the United States today. For example, the concept of release is an accepted cultural norm in the world of *The Giver*. So is having your family and profession chosen for you. As you watch the play, pay attention to other cultural norms present in this world. How do these practices and beliefs differ from the world in which we live today?

For more resources and lesson plans on diversity, see www.tolerance.org.

****ACTIVITY IDEA!****
MEMORY JOURNAL

Start a memory journal with your students. For the first entry, ask students: write about a time in your life when you have had an awakening similar to what Eric Coble describes above. What happened that led you to discover the world is a much bigger place? How does this memory affect your outlook on the world today?

Continue your Memory Journal by responding to these prompts:

- Write about a time when you were faced with a difficult decision regarding a choice. Why was the decision so difficult? How did you make your choice?
- Think about a time in your life when you faced a challenge that required great courage. Write about this memory. What was the situation? How did you find the courage you needed? How successful were you at meeting this challenge? How has this challenging time affected the way you view your life and the world at large?
- Keep an ongoing journal of your dreams. What stands out to you from your dreams? Do you notice any patterns? Why do you think dreams were so important to Jonas's community?

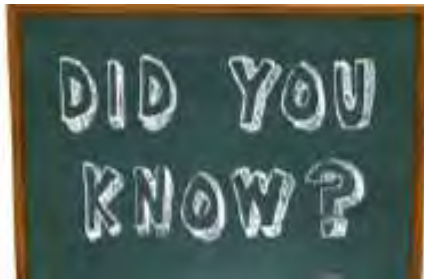
****MEMORY AND HISTORY****
(ONLINE ACTIVITY)

To people in Jonas's community, memories are limited to personal experience. Father and Mother recall their own childhoods, but there is no common knowledge of any time before.

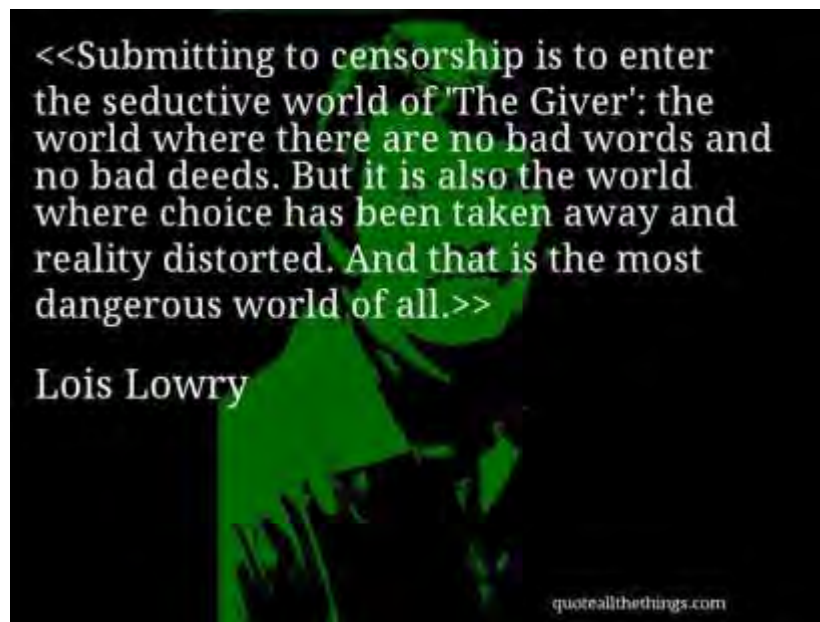
On ReadWriteThink.org, students can access an interactive timeline application. (<http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/timeline/index.html>.) Each student can use this tool to create a personal timeline of major and/or memorable events in his/her life. Encourage students to include as many specific dates as they can remember (birthday, favorite holiday, first day of school, etc.).

Next, ask students to select at least 3 dates (month + day) from their timelines. Have them visit the "Today in History" section on the American Memory website: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/archive.html>. For each selected date, students should research and record one event from history. Then, add these events to their timelines.

Why is it important that we preserve both our personal memories, and humanity's collective history? Why does it matter if we remember the past? What do you think will be important for future generations to remember about the time we live in now?



In the United States, hundreds of utopian experiments appeared during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when settlers sought to create ideal societies united by religious, political, and/or economic beliefs. Two of the colonies you can research are the Oneida Community in New York and the Amana Colonies in Iowa. Or, look up the history of New Harmony, Indiana, and then plan your visit—it's just 3 hours from St. Louis.



“When Lois Lowry began writing children’s books more than 20 years ago, it never occurred to her that someone might try to ban them. Since then, eight of her books have been challenged in schools and public libraries across the country. One, THE GIVER, ranked No. 11 on the American Library Association’s most frequently challenged books of the 1990s.”

-Thurston Hatcher, CNN.com Writer

****Activity****

1. Begin by starting a discussion with the class about the definition of censorship. What is censorship? Why are things such as books, pieces of art, television shows, and movies sometimes censored? Who makes the decision of what is censored and what is not?
2. Ask students whether they know the difference between a book that is challenged and one that is banned. If they are unclear of this difference, in small groups have them use the internet to research challenged and banned books. Have students come up with a list of challenged books and banned books. Have they ever read any of these books? Why do they think these books were placed under a challenged or banned book list?
3. Many supporters of censorship argue that some books expose children to issues that are too “adult”. Ask students what they think “too adult” means? Who should decide what is “too adult” for a young person to handle? Who should decide what a young person should read or watch on television or in the movies?
4. Ask students whether they think a book and its messages could influence someone to make bad decisions? Why or why not? What about television shows or movies? Why or why not?. If time permits, have students research on the internet cases of books, television shows, or movies being blamed for the negative decisions and actions of young people. Ask your students whether they agree with the verdict of these cases or not, and why.
5. Write Amendment One of the United States Constitution on the board, or place it on an overhead projector screen. Have students read Amendment One out loud.



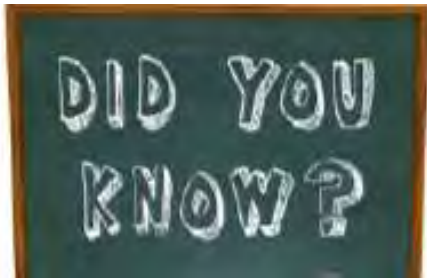
CONGRESS SHALL MAKE NO LAW RESPECTING AN ESTABLISHMENT OF RELIGION, OR PROHIBITING THE FREE EXERCISE THEREOF; OR ABRIDGING THE FREEDOM OF SPEECH, OR OF THE PRESS; OR THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE PEACEABLY TO ASSEMBLE, AND TO PETITION THE GOVERNMENT FOR A REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES.

Ask students to identify what part of this Amendment protects us against censorship? In what instances does Amendment One not protect us?

6. If students are familiar with the story of *THE GIVER*, ask them to imagine if Lois Lowry were told to change *THE GIVER* by taking out all references to stirrings, Gabriel, birthmothers,

and release. How would the story change without these elements? Would it still be the same story? Why or why not?





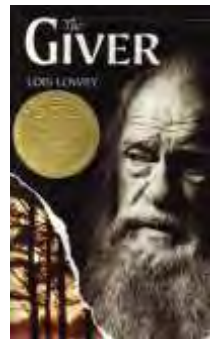
The Life and Books of Lois Lowry

Lois Lowry is a witty, clever, interesting woman with many facets to her life. She's a great conversationalist, a knitter, an avid and eclectic reader and movie-goer, and besides that, she likes to play bridge and to garden. She's an excellent cook and her cookbook collection is enormous and varied. Her home is full of bookshelves which, of course, are full of books and, since she has a great need for order, her books are carefully arranged with her own rather eccentric system with no apologies to Dewey.

As a child whose father was in the military, she moved around a lot and spent the years of World War II with her mother's parents in central Pennsylvania before joining her father in post-war Japan. You can find out more about that house and town in Pennsylvania because she used it as the setting for **Autumn Street**.



Lowry is an accomplished photographer (the cover of **The Giver** is her own work) with an artist's eye for composition. She sometimes compares the role of writer to that of photographer, saying that the writer carefully chooses the best lens and settings for her work, deciding which things to focus on and which to blur.



Most mornings you'll find Lois seated at her computer and at work by eight o'clock. A brief lunch break and she's back at it again at least until mid-afternoon. She writes novels, short stories and picture books, mostly for young people, but she also writes because it's so much a part of her that she turns to it constantly, both professionally and personally. When her son, an Air Force pilot, was killed when his plane crashed on takeoff she put together a book about him

with photographs and a brief text for his two-year-old daughter so that she would remember what her father was like.



A look at Lowry's prolific work as a writer is an occasion for amazement. It's so varied and always so good. Her first book, **A Summer to Die**, is centered around the death of a young girl as witnessed by her younger sister, Meg. Although the book is not totally based on fact, Lowry's own sister, Helen, died young of cancer and she used the memories of that tragic time in the story. Lowry calls that her most personal book even though, of course, it addresses the universal theme of life and death.

Lowry turned to a friend's memories in the writing of her Newbery Award winning **Number the Stars** (see below). Annemarie Johansen is based on Lowry's real-life friend Annelise. She used the role played by Annelise and her family during the occupation of Denmark to bring some awareness of the Holocaust to a slightly younger-than-usual audience.



The Giver (see below) and the three other titles in "The Giver Quartet" series are her most ambitious works to date. **The Giver** earned her another Newbery Award and her acceptance speech tells of the many rivers of experience and inspiration that led her to write it. One of those rivers of inspiration came from her father who was, at that time, in a nursing home having lost most of his long-term memory. She realized one day while visiting her father that, without memory, there is no pain, and she began to imagine a society in which the past was deliberately forgotten.

In her picture book **Crow Call** Lowry again drew on memories of her father to create a sensitive vignette of their hunt to kill crop-eating crows.



Lowry has said that each reader reads his or her own book and that is certainly shown in the varied reactions to **The Giver**. It is one of the most frequently censored books in the United States today. Ironically, it is attacked for being too Christian, for not being Christian enough, for being "new age" and for being too spiritual. It is criticized for being un-American and for stressing too many American middle class values, for being too pessimistic and not pessimistic enough. Saner folks seem to recognize it as a skillful and fascinating work of fiction, which challenges the reader to reexamine his or her own values and the directions current societies seem to be taking.

Recurrent themes for Lois Lowry seem to be saying goodbye, the importance of making connections with others, and finding a place where we belong. Her work is wide-ranging, richly varied and right on target for her intended audiences.

I learned
to GIVE
not because
I have much

but because
I know exactly
how it feels to
have NOTHING.

MEET THE CAST OF "THE GIVER"



Gina Preciado (Larissa) Gina is very pleased to be working with Prime Stage for the first time! 1990 is when she began acting, doing comedy improv and met her husband, Frank. The New Group Theater gave her several wonderful opportunities for acting. Flying Pig Theater's Reality Optional gave her a chance to do improv. Since then she's done several shows with The Summer Company, Carlow College, Theatresports, and The Gemini Children's Theater among others. Gina has been a member of The "Amish Monkeys" Comedy Troupe for 17 years and loves it! This performance is dedicated to her good friend and director, Cheryl Young.

Ken Lutz (The Giver) Ken is a retired Pittsburgh Public Schools music teacher. Active in both theatre and music, Ken plays clarinet in the East Winds Symphonic Band and the Edgewood Symphony. Acting roles include George Spelvin in *The Actor's Nightmare* with Proudly Presents Productions, Weller in Grand Dream Productions' *The Gin Game*, Charles Thomson in *1776* with Artscape, Dr. Dorn in Wooden Rocket's *The Seagull*, Pastor James in *The Gospel Singer* with Pittsburgh Lab Project, David Kahn in *Social Security* and Bill in *Making God Laugh* with South Park Theatre. He has appeared in twelve productions with Prime Stage, most recently *The Crucible*.



(Chief Elder) is thrilled to finally *be* working with director Melissa and excited to be performing with Prime Stage for the first time. Naomi is both an actor and director, having directed for the New Works Festival for the past eight years. Naomi was last seen performing for sold out crowds in *Brighton Beach Memoirs* at Little Lake Theater. She has worked with many theater companies in Pittsburgh including The Summer Company, 12 Peers, Pittsburgh Playwrights, Unseamed Shakespeare, Open Stage Theater, Little Lake Theatre, McKeesport Theatre, South Park Theatre and The Baldwin Players. Ask her about her alter ego Magda who is an amazing Palmist.

Sadie Primack (Lily) of Squirrel Hill is a third grader at Colfax Elementary School. She has been taking acting, dance, musical theater, and piano lessons for two years. Sadie's professional credits include playing Rita in the book trailer for *The Secrets of Flight* by Maggie Leffler. The book trailer can currently be seen on amazon.com. She also played Jojo in *Seussical* at the CLO summer academy.



Micah Primack (Asher) of Squirrel Hill is a sixth grader at Colfax Middle School. Micah has been exploring his interest in acting, musical theater, comedy improvisation and chorus for two years. His professional credits include being in the Children's Ensemble of the CLO's 2015 production of *Mary Poppins*. Micah is thrilled to play Asher in *The Giver* because the role calls for throwing food, keeping his hair tousled, and hanging out with Will Sendera (Jonas) of which are all things that he enjoys!

Will Sendera (Jonas) is thrilled to be returning to Prime Stage after playing Tobias in last year's production of *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde*. Other Pittsburgh stage credits include Oliver in *Oliver Twist* at PICT, Newsboy in *Gypsy*, in the Ensemble of *Mary Poppins* at Pittsburgh CLO and Honk in *Honk Jr* at CLO Academy. Previous Austin Texas credits include Young Tommy in *The Who's Tommy*, JoJo in *Seussical Jr*, Pinocchio in *Pinocchio*, Schwartz in *A Christmas Story*, Gavroche in *Les Miserables*, and Ensemble in *Ragtime* all at the ZACH Theatre as well as Frank Jr. in *Merrily We Roll Along* at St. Edward's University. Will also originated the role of Bobby Jr. in a workshop of *ZM*, a new musical by Kotis/Hollmann the team that created *Urinetown*. Will is in 6th grade at Pittsburgh CAPA and is a student at Pittsburgh CLO Academy.





Grace Vensel (Fiona) is very excited to return to Prime Stage Theatre for this production of *The Giver*. Grace was last seen at Prime Stage in *The Crucible* (Betty Parris) and she most recently appeared in *Charlotte's Web* (Fern Arable) at Towngate Theatre in Wheeling, WV. You may have seen her in recent Pittsburgh CLO productions of *A Musical Christmas Carol* (Cratchit Child/Want) and *Gypsy* (Balloon Girl). Some of her favorite roles include Marta von Trapp in *The Sound of Music* with the Lincoln Park Performing Arts Professional Company, Little Red Riding Hood in *The Almost Totally True Story of Hansel and Gretel* with the Greensburg Civic Theater, and City Father in *The Wizard of Oz* with the Lincoln Park Performing Arts Student Company. Grace is finishing her fourth year of study at the Pittsburgh CLO Academy and is excited to be starting 6th grade at CAPA in the fall of 2016. Grace would like to thank her teachers, friends and family for always supporting her in doing what she loves.

Ricardo Vila-Roger (Father) is excited to be in his first Prime Stage production. He is a Teaching Artist at the University of Pittsburgh, Department of Theatre Arts. Pitt productions: *Nine* (Guido), *Water by the Spoonful* (Director, Fall, 2015), *Curse of the Starving Class* (Wesley), *In the Heights* (Kevin). Recent Productions: *Fixing King John* (No Name Players), *OjO* (Bricolage), *The Other Place* (Off the Wall). Up next: *Peribáñez* (Quantum).



(Mother) is thrilled to be making her Prime Stage Theatre debut. Favorite roles include Aldonza in *Man of La Mancha*, Lilli Vanessi in *Kiss Me, Kate*, Clelia Waldgrave in *The Nerd*, Maxene Andrews in *Sisters of Swing*, and Judy Garland in an original one-woman show. Zanna has been a soloist with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and the Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh, and is an original member of Seraphic Singers. She has appeared with Pittsburgh Public Theater, No Name Players, Throughline Theatre, Front Porch Theatricals, Arizona Broadway Theater, and Texas Family Musicals. A Pittsburgh native, Zanna is a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University and Rice University's Shepherd School of Music.

Interview with Ken Lutz (The Giver)

Tell us a little bit about your character.

I play The Giver. He's an old guy who has served as the "Receiver of Memory" for a community that decided long ago to create a "perfect" society by eliminating all sources of pain, unhappiness, and conflict. In order to make this work, they had to make everyone and everything the same: no ethnic differences, no intense emotions, no seasons, no colors, etc. But they also had to remove all memories of the past, since those too could cause pain. To retain the wisdom necessary for decision making, one person was chosen to receive and hold ALL the memories of the past. As he gets older, he must train a new receiver; at that point, he becomes The Giver.

What's your favorite part of working on this play?

My favorite part of working on this (and any) play is the process of figuring out my character. Who is he? How did he get to this point in his life? How does he see the world? Finding answers to these and many other questions is challenging and exciting, and it helps me to do the best job I can.

The characters in *The Giver* live in a very different world than our own. What would be the best thing about living in the world of this story, and what would be the worst thing?

*The best thing about living in *The Giver's* world would be the lack of pain and unhappiness. But creating that world has also resulted in the absence of love and joy. A life of "Sameness" would be boring and empty.*

What's something an audience member should know before they see this play?

*Audiences might be interested in knowing that the original *Giver* book can be categorized as a "dystopian novel", and as such is similar to *The Hunger Games*, *Divergent*, *1984*, and others.*

Interview with Will Sendra (Jonas)

Tell us a little bit about your character.

I'm playing the role of Jonas. My character is turning 12 which is an important time in the society because you get assigned your job within the community. Jonas gets selected as the new Receiver. This is very important because there hasn't been a Receiver in the last decade and the previous Receiver failed. Jonas has no idea how this important assignment will affect his life.

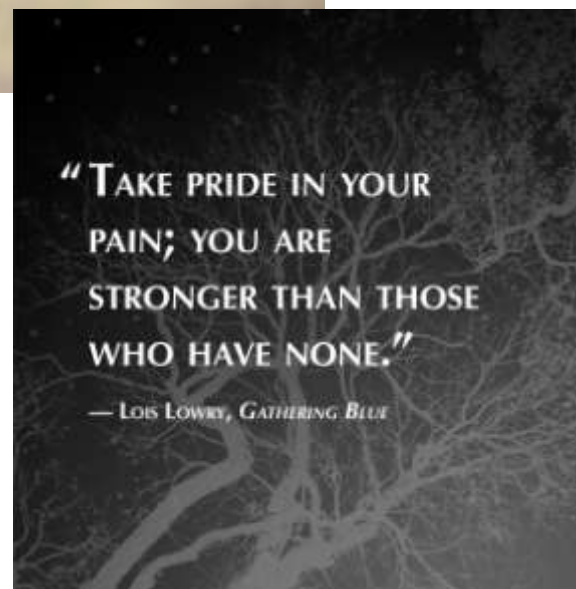
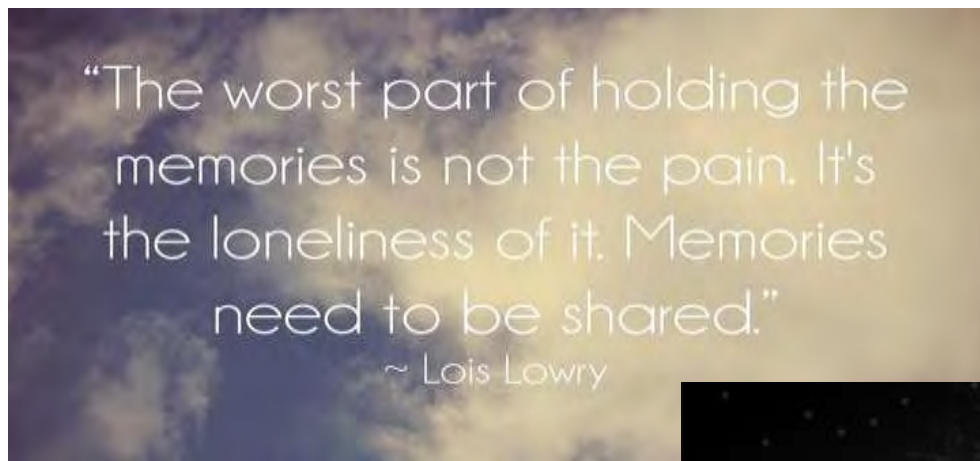
What's your favorite part of working on this play?

I love that I get to see all of the magic of the show get developed right in front of my eyes. Also it is a fantastic story and I love these characters.

The characters in *The Giver* live in a very different world than our own. What would be the best thing about living in the world of this story, and what would be the worst thing?

*The characters in *The Giver* live in a very different world than our own. What would be the best thing about living in the world of this story, and what would be the worst thing?*

What's something an audience member should know before they go to see this play? *This show makes you think about some of the things that could happen to our world if people try to force a perfect society that isn't really perfect.*





The Rules in Jonas' Society

Rules







1. you can...
2. you can't...
3. you can...
4. you can't...

- * Jonas' community is forced to live by strict rules in order for their society to avoid negative emotions like fear, anger, hurt, jealousy and maintain the "utopia."
- * However, there are so many rules that the citizens are not free to make their own decisions or have free choice.
- * The novel does not explain where the rules come from. We can assume the founders of the community invented them to create what they considered to be a utopia.
- * Is it worth sacrificing choice and individuality it to never feel "bad" emotions?

NAMING CEREMONY

- Children are named and placed with their family units
- They are given a comfort object (nighttime stuffed animal)

The Giver Character Map

	<p>Jonas</p> <p>Traits: Curious, Honest, Different, Smart.</p> <p>Interests: Jonas is unlike his friends because he doesn't believe he has a place.</p> <p>Beliefs: After becoming The Receiver, he believes that people should have choices in life and he realizes that everything he was taught is not the truth.</p> <p>Quote That Shows Personality: "I wanted to share the memories with Asher but it didn't work."</p>
	<p>The Giver</p> <p>Traits: Honest, Wise, World-Weary, Strong, Understanding, Loving.</p> <p>Interests: The giver is unlike any elder because he has a disagreement in the way they handle the community.</p> <p>Beliefs: The Giver believes that perhaps there should be a change in the community but hides that thought.</p> <p>Quote that Shows Personality: "I'm grateful to you Jonas, because without you I would never had figured out a way to bring about the change."</p>
	<p>Jonas's Mother</p> <p>Traits: Serious, Pleasant, Practical, Intelligent, Sympathetic, Understanding.</p> <p>Interests: Jonas's mother is interested in laws. She wonders many times why people break the law.</p> <p>Beliefs: Jonas's mother believes that no one should break any rules at all.</p> <p>"Why do you think the visitors don't obey the rules?"</p>
	<p>Jonas's Father</p> <p>Traits: Intelligent, Silly, Pleasant, Understanding.</p> <p>Interests: Jonas's father is like everyone and is interested in kids and the way they act. Lily, for example, is played with by his father. Also, Jonas's father is happy to know what is wrong with his kids.</p> <p>Beliefs: Jonas's father believes that everyone should share their feelings and that kids shouldn't act badly. He also believes that kids should be happy.</p> <p>Quote That Shows Personality: "I'm glad you told us your feelings."</p>
	<p>Gabriel</p> <p>Traits: Loud, Different, Joyful, Loving.</p> <p>Interests: Gabriel's interest is the past. His interest is happiness because he kept crying even with his "elephant". When Jonas gave him the memories, he was happy.</p> <p>Beliefs: Gabriel's beliefs can not be answered because he is a baby.</p> <p>Quote that shows personality: NA.</p>
	<p>Lily</p> <p>Traits: Funny, Silly, Loving, Pleasant.</p> <p>Interests: Lily's interests are babies and moms. She wants to be a birth mother and adores babies. She loves babies so much.</p> <p>Beliefs: Lily believes that she should be able to ride a bike and that she should be a birth mother.</p> <p>Quote That Shows Personality: "I think we all agree he should sleep in my room."</p>

Create your own at [Storyboard That](https://www.storyboardthat.com)

Characteristics of society in Utopia:



- Utopia is an island surrounded by high walls and large rock. This creates a barrier blocking out the rest of the world. The island does not need a military because the walls create enough of a stronghold.
 - Society works together "like a single family"
 - There isn't a King, instead citizens elect Philarchs, which then elect a Prince.
 - Each citizen practices a trade to help better the society. Everyone is put to use and has a purpose.
- Everyone has access to supply houses where they get what they need to live. Food is an abundance, due to the amount of labor being done by the entire society.
 - Money and private property does not exist.
 - Criminals are not executed, but instead put to work as slaves.
 - Housing and clothing are modest, yet well-made.

Copy the link below to interact with the world of *The Giver*

<https://www.thinglink.com/scene/672200915750486018>

****ACTIVITY IDEA!****

MAPPING THE COMMUNITY

What does a map of Jonas's community look like?

Choose ONE of these scenarios:

SCENARIO A: Imagine that Jonas has arrived safely in Elsewhere. Create a map from Jonas's perspective. How would Jonas explain the location of his community and the distance he and Gabriel travelled to Elsewhere?

SCENARIO B: Design the "Official" map of Jonas's community. How would the Council of Elders present the map of their community and Elsewhere to the members of the Community?

For BOTH scenarios, be sure to include the following locations on your map. You may also include additional locations mentioned in the play or the novel.

- The Community:
 - Jonas's Dwelling
 - Other Family Dwellings (Asher's, Fiona's, etc.)
 - House of Old
 - The Giver's Studio (behind the House of Old)
 - Auditorium (location for the Ceremony of Twelve)
 - The Nurturing Center
 - The School
 - The Play Area
 - The Fish Hatchery
- Other Surrounding Communities:
 - How many?
 - How far apart are the other communities?
- The River (the Community border)
- The Forest (another Community border)
- Elsewhere

As you design your map, consider these details:

- How is color utilized or not utilized? (Remember your scenario/perspective!)
- How large is the Community relative to other locations on the map?
- How large is Elsewhere relative to the other communities?
- What kind of roads or pathways connect the buildings, areas, and outlying communities?

When all maps are completed, take a gallery walk to observe all map designs. How do the maps differ? How do the "Jonas" maps differ from the "Official" maps?

MISSOURI SOCIAL STUDIES GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS:
TS7b Knowledge to create and use various social studies graphics and maps
EG5c Understanding the concept of place

Cartography is the science or practice of drawing maps. People who design maps are called **cartographers**.

For more information, check out this Student's Guide to Mapmaking:
<http://www.edgate.com/lewisandclark/cartography.html>
Or this useful site on Making Sense of Maps:
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/maps/>

****ACTIVITY IDEA!****

UTOPIA: "DISCOVER" THE PERFECT SOCIETY

A **utopia** is an imagined place or state of things in which everything is perfect.

Students are to become researchers on a very important expedition, and you need their help to solve this case. Archaeologists have recently discovered some artifacts from a utopian society. Divide the class into six groups. Each group will "uncover" one of the following "artifacts":

- Official Flag
- Official Map
- The Laws
- Key Moments in History
- An Advertisement
- The Anthem (lyrics and melody or chant)

In their groups, students will create these "found" artifacts. Remind students that since these artifacts are from a utopian society, whatever they create will automatically be considered a perfect representation of that community.

TIPS:

- To maintain continuity, select one student from each group to serve as ambassador. This student will observe all other groups in action, and report back to his/her group.
- Inform students that as researchers, they must adopt a "Yes, and" policy. In other words, whatever "facts" one group discovers must then hold true for all other groups (e.g. name, key features of society, etc.).

Allow time for each group to share their "findings" with the class.

Encourage the Anthem group to teach their song to the class!

Compare your utopian society with the Community in **The Giver**. How does each community reflect different ideas about perfection? Would you like to live in one of these utopian societies? Why or why not?

A **dystopia** is an imagined place or state in which everything is bad; in other words, the opposite of a utopia. Is the world of **The Giver** a utopia or a dystopia? Is it possible for a society to go from utopia to dystopia? How might this transformation occur?

Lessons in Disobedience

Scan any parenting section at a local bookstore, and you will find scads of literature dedicated to raising the well-behaved and obedient child. These books reinforce a perceived notion that success for both caregivers and children springs from a willingness to go along with the pack, make little disturbance, and conform. Americans prize individualism and yet we see this conformity play out in our homes, our religious institutions, and perhaps most frighteningly in our schools.

This past October in Jefferson County, Colorado, school board members proposed a new curriculum for public school history courses. The proposal suggests educators should not teach works that encourage civil disorder, social strife, or disregard for the law. In this scenario students would be “guarded” from the works of Thoreau, the Women’s Suffrage and Civil Rights movements, and the Boston Tea Party. How did young people of Jefferson County respond? They staged acts of civil disobedience, participated in walkouts, and voiced their concerns in public forums. The proposal marginally passed and debates continue in Jefferson County.

The Giver offers us a dynamic lesson in disobedience that continues to be strikingly relevant. In Jonas, we find a young man who has little reason to challenge his surroundings. For him, every need is met, every desire numbed. Lois Lowry’s remarkable story reminds us at every age that when equipped with truth, knowledge, and memory, we must stand up to the most disguised oppressors, whether they are familial or foreign. And often the best and most powerful tool in that fight is our own disobedience.



by Courtney Sale, Director, *The Giver*, Jan-Feb 2015
Indiana Repertory Theatre

LESSON PLANS FOR *THE GIVER*

WORKSHOP I

Theatrical Warm-up and Get students engaged!

Objective: Students will develop physical awareness as it relates to self-expression and vocal production. Stretching limbers the muscles and connective tissues so that they can move with the demands of any dramatic situation.

Procedure:

- Begin with movement/vocal warm-up

Start with head/neck roles

The Puppet –

1. Stand in a circle with some room around you to move.
2. Imagine a string is attached to each of your shoulders. Let the string pull your shoulders up to the ceiling. Try and touch the ceiling with your shoulders. Really try.
3. Now imagine the string is attached to your elbows. Let it lift your elbows to the ceiling. Try and touch the ceiling with your elbows.
4. Now imagine the string is attached to your wrists. Try and touch the ceiling with your wrists.
5. Now imagine the string is attached to your fingertips. Try and touch the ceiling with your fingertips. Stretch and reach to the ceiling.
6. Release your spine from the waist with a big “uhhh” sound. Hang bent over at the waist like a rag doll, relaxing everything in your body but those few muscles required to keep you on your feet.
7. Breathe a big sigh and let out any tension remaining.
8. Now roll up your spine, stacking one vertebra atop the other. Leave your head, shoulders and arms released until the very last minute when your head will float into place above the spine.
9. Breathe another big sigh and release the tension.
10. Repeat the entire exercise double time.

6-8 minutes -----



VOCABULARY – READING AND RESPONDING TO TEXT

Objective: Students will strengthen inter-personal skills with knowledge of vocabulary used in different ways throughout their reading and writing. Using and understanding different vocabulary will also expedite comprehension and focus. It allows for **audibility**: projecting your voice so your audience can hear and understand you; **pronunciation**: recognizing words before you say them and pronounce all sounds correctly; **articulation**: using your tongue, mouth and lips to pronounce all the sounds correctly; **vocal variety/expression**: using appropriate pitch, volume and flow.

Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking

The following standards are addressed in this lesson plan:

1.6.11.A: Listen critically and respond to others in small and large group situations. Respond with grade level appropriate questions, ideas, information or opinions.

1.6.11.C: Demonstrate awareness of audience using appropriate volume and clarity in formal speaking presentations.

1.6.11.D: Listen to and acknowledge the contributions of other students well introducing ideas and opinions to enrich the discussion

Vocabulary

Objective: Students will strengthen inter-personal skills with knowledge of vocabulary used in different ways throughout their reading of *The Giver*. Using and understanding different vocabulary will also expedite comprehension and focus.

Divide class into teams. Use vocabulary cards and distribute copies to the students for example:

- Rumple
- Distraught
- Adequate
- Transgression
- Awed
- Beckoning
- Chastise
- Unsettling
- Remorse
- Ensemble
- Motivation

Ask students to refer to the definitions they wrote on their vocabulary cards to answer each question below. The questions require them to apply the meaning of the words to their own experiences.

1. What is an experience that you find **unsettling**?
2. When have you seen something that gave you **remorse**?



3. Describe a **distraught** character from a movie.
4. Tell about an **awe** inspiring event from the news.
5. What would you describe with the word **transgression**?

20 minutes

Objective: Students will strengthen inter-personal skills with knowledge of vocabulary used in different ways throughout their reading. Using and understanding different vocabulary will also expedite comprehension and focus.

- **Comprehension Focus**

Analyze Theme

Community vs Individual

“Sameness” is mentioned frequently in *The Giver*. All the members of Jonas’s community follow an identical and uniform lifestyle. Competition has been eliminated, climate is controlled, and choices are made for the members of the community. By not allowing people to make choices, the wrong choices are never made and, therefore, no one in the community ever suffers or feels pain. There is a community in which everyone works together, for the common good. However, when all experiences are regulated, many wonders of the world—even simple ones, like colors—are eradicated.

Use the statement above to support students in examining the theme in *The Giver*. Ask them to list the traits and actions of both “characters” as they read. When they have finished the story, ask students to state its theme in one or two sentences using the traits from their list as support. Guide a discussion, encouraging students to share their answers and evidence.

1. Divide students into teams
2. Using all the characters in *The Giver* distribute “Character” cards to the teams.
3. Allow them to discuss amongst themselves for 4 minutes how the characters contribute to the theme and movement of the play.

19-20 minutes End of Workshop I

WORKSHOP II

Objective: Students will develop physical awareness as it relates to self-expression and vocal production. Stretching limbers the muscles and connective tissues so that they can move with the demands of any dramatic situation.

Procedure:

- Begin with movement/vocal warm-up from Workshop I

6-8 minutes

Theatre Game:

Observing Change

This exercise focuses entirely on your power of observation. It becomes more difficult for your partner as your attention to detail improves. This exercise will all also discipline the student to focus and observe the performance for comprehension and clarity.

1. Sit on the classroom floor across from a partner.
2. Spend two minutes observing everything about your partner in as much detail as possible.
3. Turn away. Your partner will then change three small things about his or her appearance.
4. Turn back when your partner is ready.
5. Try and guess the three changes.
6. Switch roles.

This exercise can be done with four students at a time so that the class can observe changes.

20 minutes

Objective: Training students on how to be an “audience” member.

Theatre Etiquette

1. Bring in a playbill – explain the importance of reading the contents of the Playbill.
2. Bring in picture of the set – explain the importance of observing the set and how important it is to the movement and tone of the play.

Explain how important it is to respect performers on stage by being quiet and listening to the performance. Students will learn the proper way to attend a theatrical performance by being observant and focused on the playbill, the set the language and will thus have an enjoyable experience and be able to ask intelligent questions at the Q&A after the performance.

20 minutes

END Workshop II

WORKSHOP III

AFTER THE PRODUCTION

Evaluation, Reflection and Comprehension

Objective: To evaluate the learning experience of the play and comprehension quality of the experience. Reflections on student experience.

Procedure: Initiate and participate with students in collaborative discussion on various aspects of the play. A Q&A period on paper and/or verbally for the entire session.

To properly evaluate the learning experience for the students, the Instructor can pose questions on paper from Workshops I and II and the theatre experience. **40 minutes**

We encourage you and your students to explore these topics further by checking out the following resources regarding *The Giver*.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES Teaching Tools for The Giver:

<http://www.neiu.edu/~barindfl/thegivernavigator.html> This comprehensive website includes a 3-week unit plan on teaching *The Giver*, including all daily plans and worksheets.

http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=13 An extended unit plan on using *The Giver* to teach about memory and history.

<http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/giver> This site includes chapter-by-chapter summaries and analysis of the novel. Essay questions, a quiz, and additional resources are also included.

<http://www.quia.com/rr/38952.html> An online trivia game based on *The Giver*, this site provides an interactive tool for students to test their reading comprehension.

<http://www.k-state.edu/smartbooks/Lesson003.html> A math-related probability lesson based on *The Giver*.

<http://faculty.salisbury.edu/~elbond/giver.htm#anchor5> Another educator-devised guide to the novel, this site includes many links to additional web-based resources.

Related Reading:

For younger students (grades 5-8):

Cormier, Robert. *The Chocolate War*

L'Engle, Madeleine. *A Wrinkle in Time*.

O'Dell, Scott. *Island of the Blue Dolphins*.

Park, Linda Sue. *A Single Shard*.

Pullman, Philip. *The Golden Compass*.

Westfield, Scott, *Uglies*.

For older students (grades 8-12):

Bradbury, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*.
Collins, Suzanne. *The Hunger Games*.
Golding, William. *Lord of the Flies*.
Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World*.
Orwell, George. *1984*.

If you enjoyed *The Giver*, you might want to read about Utopia/Dystopia in Literature and Film:

***The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins** - *A quick read with a lot of substance and thought-provoking ideas.*

Summary (Goodreads.com): "In the ruins of a place once known as North America lies the nation of Panem, a shining Capitol surrounded by twelve outlying districts. The Capitol is harsh and cruel and keeps the districts in line by forcing them all to send one boy and one girl between the ages of twelve and eighteen to participate in the annual Hunger Games, a fight to the death on live TV."

"But collective thinking is usually short-lived. We're fickle, stupid beings with poor memories and a great gift for self-destruction."

***Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury** - *A classic. What a scary thought that people would burn books! (RIP Ray Bradbury).*

Summary (Goodreads.com) - "Guy Montag was a fireman whose job it was to start fires...The system was simple. Everyone understood it. Books were for burning ... along with the houses in which they were hidden. Guy Montag enjoyed his job. He had been a fireman for ten years, and he had never questioned the pleasure of the midnight runs nor the joy of watching pages consumed by flames... never questioned anything until he met a seventeen-year-old girl who told him of a past when people were not afraid. Then he met a professor who told him of a future in which people could think... and Guy Montag suddenly realized what he had to do."

"There must be something in books, something we can't imagine, to make a woman stay in a burning house; there must be something there. You don't stay for nothing."

***Divergent* by Veronica Roth** - *A contemporary dystopian.*

Summary (Goodreads.com) - "In Beatrice Prior's dystopian Chicago world, society is divided into five factions, each dedicated to the cultivation of a particular virtue--Candor (the honest), Abnegation (the selfless), Dauntless (the brave), Amity (the peaceful), and Erudite (the intelligent). On an appointed day of every year, all sixteen-year-olds must select the faction to which they will devote the rest of their lives. For Beatrice, the decision is between staying with her family and being who she really is--she can't have both. So she makes a choice that surprises everyone, including herself."

"Human beings as a whole cannot be good for long before the bad creeps back in and poisons us again."

The Truman Show (film - 1998)

A perfect society is created for a 24/7 TV show starring Truman Burbank, a man who's entire life has been falsified and filmed for entertainment. One of my favorite films! I first watched it in my eighth grade

class after reading *The Giver*.

"We accept the reality of the world with which we are presented."

Bibliography of Lois Lowry

Children's book series

The Giver Quartet

- *The Giver* (1993)
- *Gathering Blue* (2000)
- *Messenger* (2004)
- *Son* (2012)

Anastasia

- *Anastasia Krupnik* (1979)
- *Anastasia Again!* (1981)
- *Anastasia at Your Service* (1982)
- *Anastasia, Ask Your Analyst* (1984)
- *Anastasia on Her Own* (1985)
- *Anastasia Has the Answers* (1986)
- *Anastasia's Chosen Career* (1987)
- *Anastasia at This Address* (1991)
- *Anastasia Absolutely* (1995)

Sam Krupnik

- *All About Sam* (1988)
- *Attaboy Sam!* (1992)
- *See You Around, Sam!* (1996)
- *Zooman Sam* (1999)

Tate Family

- *The One Hundredth Thing About Caroline* (1983)
- *Switcharound* (1985)
- *Your Move, J.P.!* (1990)
- *Gooney Bird*
- *Gooney Bird Greene* (2002)
- *Gooney Bird and the Room Mother* (2006)
- *Gooney the Fabulous* (2007)
- *Gooney Bird Is So Absurd* (2009)
- *Gooney Bird on the Map* (2011)
- *Gooney Bird and All Her Charms* (2014)

Autobiography

- *Looking Back* (1998)

Other

- *A Summer to Die* (1977)
- *Here in Kennebunkport* (1978)
- *Find a Stranger, Say Goodbye* (1978)
- *Autumn Street* (1980)
- *Taking Care of Terrific* (1983)
- *Us and Uncle Fraud* (1984)
- *Rabble Starkey* (1987)
- *Number the Stars* (1989)
- *Stay! Keeper's Story* (1997)
- *The Silent Boy* (2003)
- *Gossamer* (2006)
- *The Willoughbys* (2008)
- *Crow Call* (2009)
- *The Birthday Ball* (2010)
- *Bless This Mouse* (2011)
- *Like the Willow Tree* (2011)

In Conversation with Lois Lowry Author of *The Giver* by Lauren Wengrovitz

<http://theyoungfolks.com/film/conversation-with-lois-lowry-author-of-the-giver/35746> A conversation with Lois Lowry about "The Giver"

Also see American Libraries' interview at: <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/a-conversation-with-lois-lowry/>



The Giver

Anticipation/Reaction Guide

Part I Directions: Prior to reading or seeing *The Giver*, in the “Before” column, respond to each statement by putting a plus sign (+) if you agree with it, a minus sign (-) if you disagree, and a question mark (?) if you are unsure of your belief.

Part II Directions: For one of the statements below, write a *Deep Thoughts* response of 500 words or more as to why you have the belief you do.

Part III Directions: After reading or seeing the story, in the “After” column respond again to the statements. Then, reply by writing a 500 words or more *Deep Thoughts* response to a statement where your belief changed since reading the play. If not, write about a different statement than you responded to in Part II.

Before	Statement	After
1. ____	An ideal community would not have hunger or starvation.	1. ____
2. ____	An ideal community would not have hunger or competition.	2. ____
3. ____	An ideal community would not have any unemployment.	3. ____
4. ____	All children should have equal possessions and privileges at a certain age, regardless of the status of their families.	4. ____
5. ____	Life would be much better and easier if we did not carry bad memories in our heads.	5. ____
6. ____	Overpopulation is such a problem that families should not be allowed to have more than two children.	6. ____
7. ____	There is no real need to learn about world history.	7. ____
8. ____	There is no real need to learn about one’s own family history.	8. ____
9. ____	Families are much closer when they share feelings and memories with each other.	9. ____
10. ____	Freedom in society is best determined by one person.	10. ____

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Please go to our website: www.primestage.com to find this form and send it back directly online! Or you can mail it to us at: Prime Stage Theatre P.O. Box 99446 Pittsburgh, PA 15233

The Resource Guide Student Evaluation Form

YOUR NAME _____

NAME OF SCHOOL _____

GRADE _____ NAME OF TEACHER _____

What part/parts of this story did you enjoy when you were seeing the play?

What part/parts of this play confused you while reading or watching the play?

What part/parts of the stage version helped you understand the book?

What did you learn from reading or seeing this play?

Which character would you like to play?

Please go to our website: www.primestage.com to find this form and send it back directly online! Or you can mail it to us at: Prime Stage Theatre P.O. Box 99446 Pittsburgh, PA 15233

The Resource Guide Teacher Evaluation Form

Prime Stage constantly assesses the work provided by our education department. Your feedback is vital to our ongoing need for funding for this program. Please fill out the following forms and mail or email them to the address given below. Thank you.

YOUR NAME _____

NAME OF SCHOOL _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

Which part(s) of the play and experience you find most helpful for you and your students?

Was the guide useful to you?

Which part(s) did you find most helpful?

How can we improve the theatrical for the future?



**Tomorrow
is the first blank page
of a 365 page book.
Write a good one.**

— Brad Paisley