

# THE GIVER

By Lois Lowry  
Adapted by Eric Coble



## TEACHER'S GUIDE

This play is sponsored by:



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# THE GIVER

## TEACHER'S GUIDE

*by Darrell Scheidegger Jr.*

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# Introduction

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## *Synopsis of the Play:*

Jonas lives in a perfect world. There is no war or fear or pain. There are also no choices. Everyone is assigned a role in the Community by the Elders. When Jonas turns 12, he is chosen to be trained by the Giver to receive the memories of the people and the past; memories that hold the pain and pleasure of life. It is time for Jonas to receive the truth. There is no turning back.

## *Themes:*

conformity, fear, understanding, courage, acceptance, perseverance, ignorance, tolerance, and love

# Before the Play

## *Theatrical Terms:*

### **SCRIPT:**

The written play that tells actors what to say and what to do.

### **ACTORS:**

The people that say the words and do the actions on stage.

### **DIRECTOR:**

The person that tells the actors how to say the words and how to do the actions.

### **SCENERY:**

The backdrops, furniture, and other pieces that show the audience where the play is happening (also called the *SET*).

### **COSTUMES:**

The clothes and other things an actor wears to show who they are (also called *WARDROBE*).

### **PROPS:**

The things that actors use (such as a book or broom) during the play.

### **SOUND:**

The sound effects (like a doorbell or thunder) that help to tell the story.

### **LIGHTING:**

The lights that help the audience to see the actors and scenery on the stage.

### **THEATRE:**

The place where a play is performed. It is from the Greek word *THEATRON*, which means “*watching place*.”

## Discussion Questions:

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1. What is the difference between a live play and a movie?
2. Identify the jobs people do at a theatre (see the *Theatrical Terms* list).
3. What do you think we will see and hear during the play?
4. Have you ever made a bad choice? What happened?
5. Can there be good reasons for doing bad things?
6. If you could get rid of every sad or frightening memory you have by snapping your fingers, but also had to get rid of all the happy ones as well, would you?
7. If someone doesn't know they are doing wrong, should they still be blamed?

LISTENING & SPEAKING 1.0 STRATEGIES  
3:1.3 4:1.1

## During the Play

### Audience Behavior:

While watching a live theatre performance, it is important to sit quietly and listen. It does not mean that you need to be silent. Be sure to laugh at the funny parts (or cry at the sad parts), and certainly applaud at the end! Actors love it when an audience is involved with the show by actively watching and listening.

## After the Play

### Discussion Questions:

1. Which was your favorite character or scene from the play? Why?
2. Who were the main characters? Why do you think so?
3. What did you notice about the costumes and props?
4. How was the stage arranged to show more than one place?
5. If you were going to be in this play, who would you like to be? Why?
6. Why do you think the Receiver is the most important job in the Community?
7. Why was it necessary to take pills to suppress the stirrings of sexual attraction? Why was the Community afraid of love?
8. Why did the Receiver's rules state that he could be rude and lie?
9. Is it important to have memories? Why or why not?
10. Which are more important: sad or happy memories? Why?

11. Is a painless life the best life?

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12. Why do you think the Giver's favorite memory was of family?

13. Could our future really be like the one in the play?

Ask the same questions you asked prior to watching the performance, and see if any attitudes have changed. Also, have the students ask questions of the teacher and other students.

LISTENING & SPEAKING 1.0 STRATEGIES

3:1.3 4:1.1

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

4.0 Aesthetic Valuing

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

ACTIVITY 1 (VOCABULARY):

## Words

 Below are 10 vocabulary words that will be heard during the performance:

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. nurturer     | 6. obsolete     |
| 2. apprehensive | 7. distinctive  |
| 3. anxiety      | 8. petitioned   |
| 4. exempted     | 9. excruciating |
| 5. exhilarating | 10. overwhelmed |

Use a DICTIONARY to define the words, divide them into syllables, and identify the parts of speech.

READING 1.0 VOCABULARY & CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT


3:1.7 4:1.5

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

ACTIVITY 2 (VOCABULARY):

## Language

 The people in the Community use different words and phrases for everyday objects and actions.

examples:      comfort object = stuffed animal  
                      new children = babies  
                      stirrings = romantic feelings


Make up your own vocabulary words/phrases for other objects or actions.

Share them with the class, and see if they can identify their meanings.

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

## Euphemism

 A EUPHEMISM is a mild or vague expression substituted for a harsher more direct one.

examples: “release” sounds nicer than “death”  
“discipline wand” sounds nicer than “spanking stick”

Develop some euphemisms of your own, and share them with the class. A THESAURUS can help you find some synonyms to use.

READING 1.0 VOCABULARY & CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT


3:1.7 4:1.5

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

## ACTIVITY 4 (VOCABULARY):

## Precision

 At first you might think that the following statement was precise in its meaning:

“I like baseball.”

But it doesn't tell you if the speaker likes WATCHING the game, or PLAYING the game. It would be more precise to say...

“I like playing baseball.”

But it still doesn't tell you if the speaker likes to play because they ENJOY the sport, or because they are GOOD AT IT. It would be more precise to say...

“I like playing baseball because I enjoy the sport.”

But it still doesn't tell you what the speaker enjoys about it: HITTING the ball, CATCHING the ball, RUNNING the bases, etc.

Think of a simple statement and write it down. Then have a partner ask 3 questions to help you make it more precise.

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications



VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS  
5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

Revise and edit your story (scene).

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WRITING 1.0 STRATEGIES: EVALUATION & REVISION  
3:1.4 4:1.10 5:1.6 6:1.6

Share your story (scene) with the class.

LISTENING AND SPEAKING 2.0 APPLICATIONS  
3:2.1 4:2.1 5:2.1 6:2.1

Read aloud your story (scene) with fluency and volume.

LISTENING AND SPEAKING 1.0 STRATEGIES  
3:1.9 4:1.9 6:1.7

## RESPONSE TO LITERATURE

Think about what happened in the play. What did the characters say and do? What did they learn? What did you learn? How did it make you feel? Write a response to the play.

WRITING 2.0 APPLICATIONS  
4:2.2 5:2.2 6:2.4

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS  
5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

Revise and edit your response.

WRITING 1.0 STRATEGIES: EVALUATION & REVISION  
3:1.4 4:1.10 5:1.6 6:1.6

## PERSUASIVE ESSAY

Think about one of the following questions (or think of your own):

Which would be better: to live in a world without color,  
or a world without music?

Which would be better: to be assigned a job based on your strengths and  
talents, or to be able to choose your own job?

Which would be better: for people to only SAY, "I accept your apology,"  
or for people to actually MEAN IT?

Choose a position or point of view and write a persuasive essay. Give examples and reasons to convince your readers why they should agree with you.

WRITING 2.0 APPLICATIONS  
5:2.4 6:2.5

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS  
5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

Revise and edit your essay.

WRITING 1.0 STRATEGIES: EVALUATION & REVISION  
3:1.4 4:1.10 5:1.6 6:1.6

Share your essay with the class.


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LISTENING AND SPEAKING 2.0 APPLICATIONS 6:2.4

**ALTERNATE ACTIVITY:** Stage a class debate. Instead of writing formal essays, have students form small teams to write down their reasons that will be presented to the entire class. Have them think of opposing arguments, so they can anticipate a response that still supports their point of view. Give each side a certain time limit, and a chance for rebuttals. Discuss as a class which arguments were more convincing, and why. Also, give students an opportunity to rehearse their presentations

**ACTIVITY 7 (SCIENCE):**


## See and Hear

 Use encyclopedias, nonfiction resources, and the internet to find some interesting facts about COLR or MUSIC. Make a poster to share them with the class.

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS  
5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

**ACTIVITY 8 (SOCIAL STUDIES):**


## Utopia

 Write a list of rules for a perfect society, or UTOPIA. Share and compare your list with others in the class. Are there any common rules? What makes your perfect community different? Would you like to live in any of those places?

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS  
5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

**ACTIVITY 9 (ART):**


## Feelings

 Brainstorm several emotions and write them on the board. Have students draw cartoon faces that express each emotion. They can “use” their classmates to “make a face” to help them draw the expressions. Tell them to pay close attention to the eyebrows and mouths.

Display the drawings and have the class identify the emotions.


VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS 5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

## Conformity

 Make a list of all the good things about people being the SAME, and a list of the good things about people being DIFFERENT. Next, make lists of the bad things about being the same and different. Have a class discussion that includes the difference between being forced to do something and being allowed to do it.

LISTENING & SPEAKING 1.0 STRATEGIES  
3:1.3 4:1.1  
VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS  
5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

## Can We Talk?


 After discussing the play and its themes, have students share by relating their prior experiences to those that happened in the play.

LISTENING & SPEAKING 1.0 STRATEGIES  
3:1.2  
VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS  
5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

Lois Lowry wrote of her hope for the future recently on her blog:

*"I am a grandmother now.  
For my own grandchildren  
- and for all those of their generation -  
I try, through writing,  
to convey my passionate awareness  
that we live intertwined on this planet  
and that our future depends upon our caring more,  
and doing more, for one another."*

## Would You Rather?

 After seeing the play, this activity is a great way to encourage class discussion by play the “Would You Rather” game. Here are some questions that can start the game.

1. Would you rather have to share your feelings every night, OR have your parents and friends already know what your feelings are?
2. Would you rather do certain things just because that is the way they have always been done, OR do certain things because you know right from wrong?
3. Would you rather always have good choices made for you, OR be able to make your own choices, both good and bad?
4. Would you rather live in the House of the Old where all your needs are met, OR live with your family?
5. Would you rather have to change in order to belong to a group, OR just be yourself, but maybe be excluded from the group?
6. Would you rather be sad, but know the truth, OR be happy, but be ignorant?
7. Would you rather be loved or be safe?

LISTENING & SPEAKING 1.0 STRATEGIES  
3:1.2

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS  
5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

## Standards Connections

### **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

- 1.0 Artistic Perception
- 2.0 Creative Expression
- 3.0 Historical and Cultural Context
- 4.0 Aesthetic Valuing

## 5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

### READING

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1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development

3.0 Literary Response and Analysis

### WRITING

1.0 Writing Strategies

2.0 Writing Applications

### WRITTEN AND ORAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE

#### CONVENTIONS

1.0 Written and Oral English Language Conventions

### LISTENING AND SPEAKING

1.0 Listening and Speaking Strategies


2.0 Speaking Applications

## Resources

### WEBSITES


 [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

 [www.shmoop.com/the-giver/](http://www.shmoop.com/the-giver/)

 Higher Education Channel | HEC-TV Live: Inside the Artist's Studio-  
The Giver: Issues and Themes - Free Full Episode Online  
<http://www.hectv.org/programs/series/hectv-live/201/inside-the-artists-studio-the-giver-issues-and-themes/>

 [www2.scholastic.com/browse/learn.jsp](http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/learn.jsp)

### BOOKS

 **The Giver** by *Lois Lowry*  
ISBN # 9780440237686

 **Gathering Blue** by *Lois Lowry*  
ISBN # 9780440229490

 **Messenger** by *Lois Lowry*  
ISBN # 9780385737166