

Colegio San Ignacio de Loyola

English Department | 8th Grade English

Regular | Summer 2026

Summer Reading Guide

The Giver by Lois Lowry

Read the book over the summer and answer the included questions to help guide your understanding of the reading. Hand-written answers to the guide will be handed in on the first day of school for a grade. The novel will be discussed during the first cycle of class. There will be two formal assessments, one for reading comprehension and another for analysis.

CHAPTER CHARTER: Questions to Guide Your Reading

Chapter 1

- What do you imagine it means when someone is "released"?
- What are some clues that Jonas's community is different from the one in which you live?
- How does the opening scene — Jonas watching a plane fly overhead — immediately signal that this is a controlled society? What does the community's reaction tell you?

Chapter 2

- How would you feel not to have your own individual birthday?
- If you were attending the Ceremony of Twelve with Jonas, what Assignment do you think the Elders would select for you?
- The Ceremonies mark each stage of a child's life collectively, not individually. What does this suggest about the value of the individual versus the group in Jonas's society?

Chapter 3

- How would you feel to be watched all the time, the way Jonas is?
- Do you think it says something about Jonas that he sees the apple change?
- The apple briefly changes in mid-air but Jonas cannot describe or explain what he saw. What might this moment symbolize about Jonas's unique ability to perceive truth?

Chapter 4

- Jonas's community has a lot of rules. Do you think that's a good thing or a bad thing? Why?
- Volunteer hours require children to experience different types of work. What does this practice reveal about how the community controls choice and destiny?

Chapter 5

- Why was Jonas embarrassed about telling his dream?
- How important is sameness in Jonas's community? How important is it in your community?

- Jonas is immediately given a pill to suppress his "Stirrings." What does this reveal about how the community deals with emotions and desire? Is eliminating certain feelings a form of freedom or a form of control?

Chapter 6

- All the members of Jonas's family had to sign a pledge that they would not become attached to the newchild, Gabe. Do you think it's possible to keep such a promise?
- What do you think of how families in Jonas's community are formed?
- Family units are assigned, not chosen. How does this reflect the dystopian idea that the government knows better than individuals what is good for them?

Chapter 7

- Do you think Asher should have been given the discipline wand when he was three, for saying "smack" instead of "snack"?
- How would you feel if you were in Jonas's shoes and the Chief Elder skipped right over you when she was making Assignments?
- Asher's mispronunciation as a toddler was punished with physical pain. What does this tell us about how language and precise speech are controlled in Jonas's world?

Chapter 8

- What do you think Jonas's Capacity to See Beyond is?
- Would you rather be selected, as Jonas was, or assigned, as his groupmates were?
- Jonas is described as being "selected" rather than "assigned" — a distinction the community treats with awe and fear. Why might the idea of true selection (not just assignment) be unsettling to a society built on sameness?

Chapter 9

- Jonas tells himself several times that things can't change between him and his best friend, Asher. Do you think they can? Do you think they will?
- Why does Jonas find the final rule in his instructions, "You may lie," so unsettling?
- The permission to lie is the first crack in Jonas's trust of the community. What does it symbolize that honesty — something treated as sacred — has exceptions for those in power?

Chapter 10

- What do you think it means to live in a place where no doors are ever locked?
- Jonas says, "I thought there was only us. I thought there was only now." Do you think that's a good way to live?
- The Annex where the Receiver lives is unlike any other building — it has locks and books. What might these details symbolize about the value of memory, knowledge, and privacy?

Chapter 11

- Can you imagine giving up such things as snow and hills because they are impractical?

- The first memory Jonas receives is of snow and sledding — joy and sensation. Why do you think Lowry chooses this as Jonas's introduction to the world of memories?
- Climate Control was implemented to make life easier. What does the community sacrifice by eliminating weather and seasons? What might weather symbolize in the story?

Chapter 12

- Imagine a world without color. What color would you miss most?
- What value, if any, is there to Sameness?
- Color is a central symbol in *The Giver*. What does the gradual revelation of color represent for Jonas — both literally and as a metaphor for truth, emotion, and individuality?

Chapter 13

- Do you agree with Jonas that people have to be protected from wrong choices?
- As Jonas continues his training, he often finds himself angry with his groupmates and his family. Why?
- Jonas starts seeing things his family and friends cannot. In dystopian literature, the protagonist who "wakes up" to the truth is often isolated. How does Jonas's growing awareness create a barrier between him and his community?

Chapter 14

- Do you agree that painful memories are made easier when they are shared?
- Do you think it's fair that one person in the community — The Receiver — should have to be burdened and pained by memories so that no one else is?
- Jonas receives his first memory of pain — sunburn, then war. How does experiencing pain change Jonas's understanding of what has been taken from the community in the name of peace?

Chapter 15

- Why do you think The Giver asks Jonas to forgive him?
- Jonas receives the memory of war — death, suffering, and chaos. How does this memory contrast with the world he has grown up in? What is Lowry saying about the cost of eliminating conflict?

Chapter 16

- The Giver gives Jonas many good memories. What are some of your best memories?
- Do you think the elderly should be part of the community, or separate, as in Jonas's community?
- The memory of a loving family Christmas celebration is the one Jonas treasures most. Why is this ordinary human moment so powerful for him? What does it reveal about what is missing in his world?

Chapter 17

- Why didn't the game of good guys and bad guys that Jonas's friends play seem harmless to Jonas anymore? Should Jonas have asked them to stop playing it? Why or why not?
- Jonas has stopped taking his pills, which means he is beginning to reclaim his full humanity — including complex feelings. How does this change him? What does it suggest about what the pills were truly suppressing?

Chapter 18

- Do you think Rosemary sounds like she was or wasn't brave?
- Why did The Giver seem distracted after telling Jonas to stay away from the river?
- Rosemary chose release rather than continue bearing the weight of painful memories. What does her story foreshadow about Jonas? What might she symbolize in the novel?

Chapter 19

- What do you think of what Jonas's community calls "release"? Were you surprised at what it was?
- How do you think this new knowledge will affect Jonas?
- The word "release" is a euphemism — a gentle word used to hide a brutal reality. How does Lowry use language and euphemism throughout the novel to show how dystopian societies control thought?

Chapter 20

- Jonas knows that if his plan fails, he could be killed. But he believes that if he stays, his life is no longer worth living. Do you agree?
- Do you think The Giver should go with Jonas or stay? Why?
- The Giver and Jonas's plan hinges on releasing memories back to the community. What does this suggest about the power of collective memory? Is it possible to force a society to feel things it has been trained to suppress?

Chapter 21

- How does Jonas show that he understands that the meaning of everything is to care about others?
- How do you think The Giver will feel when he realizes Jonas is gone? How will Jonas's friends and family feel?
- Why is the community so desperate to get Jonas back?

Chapter 22

- Jonas briefly wonders whether he made the wrong choice when he decided to run away. What do you think?
- As Jonas moves further from the community, the landscape begins to change — weather, wildlife, and terrain appear. How does the natural world function symbolically as Jonas escapes the controlled society?

Chapter 23

- Although most of the memories have left Jonas, the feelings have not. Why do you think that is?
- The ending of *The Giver* is deliberately ambiguous. Do you think Jonas and Gabriel survive? What does Lowry gain by leaving the ending open to interpretation?
- Jonas hears music for the first time as he reaches the hilltop. Music is something his community never possessed. What does music symbolize at the end of the novel?

PLOT & STORY ANALYSIS

Answer the following questions after completing the entire novel.

Overall Plot

- Describe the central conflict of *The Giver*. Is it a conflict between Jonas and a person, Jonas and society, or Jonas and himself — or all three?
- Trace Jonas's transformation from the beginning to the end of the novel. How is he different as a person by Chapter 23?

Symbolism

- The sled appears at the beginning and end of the novel. What does it symbolize? How does its meaning change from Jonas's first memory to the final chapter?
- Light and darkness are used throughout the book. Find two examples and explain what they represent in each case.

UNDERSTANDING DYSTOPIA

*A dystopia is an imagined society where life appears perfect on the surface but is actually controlled, oppressive, and dehumanizing. Use what you've learned from *The Giver* to think critically about these ideas.*

Characteristics of Jonas's Dystopia

- List at least five features of Jonas's community that make it a dystopia rather than a utopia (a perfect society). Explain why each feature is problematic.
- The community claims to have achieved "Sameness" for the good of everyone. Who actually benefits from Sameness? Who loses? Is it ever truly fair to eliminate difference?

Dystopia vs. Utopia

- Jonas's community was built with good intentions — to eliminate war, pain, and inequality. At what point does a society trying to be perfect become oppressive? Where is the line?
- Compare Jonas's world to our own. Are there any ways in which our society also trades freedom for comfort or safety? Give a specific example.

Themes and Big Ideas

- The Giver explores the tension between safety and freedom. Which do you think is more important? Can a society have both?
- Memory is presented as both a burden and a gift. Do you agree that without memory, life lacks meaning? Support your answer with examples from the novel and your own life.