

Approved for use in English I (all levels)

Summary of the Work:

Jonas lives in a community where there are very few uncertainties. There is no war, no poverty, no family turmoil and no secrets. In his twelfth year, Jonas is selected as the Receiver of Memory for the Community, which is seen as a great honor. Jonas is expected to separate himself from the Community and be trained by The Giver. Although Jonas is allowed some freedoms that other members of The Community are not, he is also required to isolate himself and not participate in many of the childhood joys of his peers. Once The Giver begins to share the memories of how life used to be, Jonas deals with an internal struggle between the safety and security of the current community and the diversity and freedom of the community of the past. Ultimately, he will have to decide which option is best for him.

Rationale:

The novel deals with the themes of the importance of memory, the relationship between pain and pleasure and the need for individuality. Because Jonas and *The Giver* are the only ones who are aware of the existence pain, happiness, death, war, color, seasons, and other essential elements of the past, they carry a heavy burden. This conflict forces readers to contemplate the value of choice in our own society.

Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

- Kellerman, (1993, May). Book Review: Junior high up fiction. *School Library Journal*, 39, 124.
- Nilsen, A.P. & Donelson, K.L. (1993, November). 1993 Honor Listing: A Bumper Crop. *English Journal*, 83, 99.
- Bushman, J.H. & Bushman, K.P. (1994, January). The tradition continues: New release from well known authors. *English Journal*, 83, 80.
- Editors' Choice '93. (1994, January 15). *Booklist*, 90, 868.
- Jones, T.E., Toth, L., & Elder, V. (1993, December). Best Books 1993. *School Library Journal*, 39, 26.

* Print resources are available from the library media center and libraries in the district. Contact any library media specialist to view the scholarly sources.

* Scholarly reviews are also available online through Books in Print and Gale. Contact the library media specialist to obtain username and password information to access the subscription database of full-text reviews.

Noted Distinction:

- Newberry Medal/Honor
- ALA Notable Book
- School Library Journal Best Book

Readability:

- Lexile Score: 760
- Readability Level: 6.0

Learning Resources Guidelines:

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

Standard Alignment: ([link](#))

Approval:

Submitted to Committee:

Approved for Adoption: 1995

Notes on the Text:

(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

Jonas' security in the Sameness of his community is comforting and reassuring for junior high and young high school students who often battle with peer pressure and the need to conform. It forces the readers to consider the freedoms that many of us take for granted and how essential those freedoms are for creating our sense of self. The topic of a Dystopian society lends itself to some mature themes in Jonas' young adult maturation, disobedience, euthanasia and execution.

Connection to the Curriculum:

Jonas' journey fits with many of the aspects of the hero's journey, which is emphasized in the freshman curriculum. Establishing a sense of self is appropriate for this grade level and connects to other areas of freshman curriculum.

Additional Connections:

(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)

This novel is appropriate for all levels of English I but will be most commonly used with the Essentials/Applied classes.

The Giver

by Lois Lowry

(Published in 1993)
