Eleven-year-old Jonas anxiously awaits his Life Assignment from the Committee of Elders in the upcoming Ceremony of Twelves. To maintain peace and order, everyone in his community lives under a carefully prescribed set of rules. Individuality and choice are strictly limited, and anyone who fails to conform to acceptable standards is “released.” To Jonas’s astonishment, he is selected to become the next Receiver of Memory, the most important Elder who lives alone and advises the other Elders only in the most serious matters. In his training, the current Receiver—now called the Giver—transmits memories of the past to Jonas, including the pains and pleasures of life from which the rest of his community has been shielded. When Jonas learns that “release” is actually a euphemism for lethal injection, the terrible injustices of his society become too much to bear. He and the Giver devise a plan to return the memories to the people, but the plan falls apart when Jonas learns that a release has been approved for Gabriel—the baby he has grown to love and with whom he has secretly shared some of his most pleasurable memories. Jonas manages to escape with Gabriel and unleash his memories. The novel ends ambiguously as Jonas and Gabriel reach their final destination.

Lois Lowry is the author of more than forty books for children and young adults. Her writing has received countless honors, including Newbery Medals for *Number the Stars* and *The Giver*, the first novel in the Giver Quartet. Growing up in a military family, she lived in Hawaii, New York, Pennsylvania, and Tokyo. Today she divides her time between Cambridge, Massachusetts, and a farmhouse in Maine.

Page references throughout this guide are from the © 1993 Houghton Mifflin Books for Children hardcover edition of *The Giver*. Other print and electronic versions of the text may vary.
OVERVIEW

This guide supports your teaching with The Giver in an easy-to-use format.
- **Plan** your instruction using the teaching objectives, reading assignment, and critical vocabulary list.
- **Focus** students’ attention with questions that send them back to the text for discussion or writing.
- **Teach and assess** with ideas for comprehension support, vocabulary development, and writing practice.
- **Use Text Complexity** notes to help all students unpack meaning.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the lessons and activities in this guide are to help students
- analyze the development of a story’s setting
- describe how characters change
- determine theme

Additionally, students will learn to
- analyze point of view
- identify and analyze symbols
- analyze a story’s conflicts
- use sensory language in narrative writing

WORD STUDY

- The academic vocabulary words in the box appear in The Giver. Introduce these words before students read the book. Then display the words in the classroom and encourage students to use them as they discuss the text.
- Each lesson also includes a list of critical vocabulary words from the reading assignment. You may preview these words before students read.

INTRODUCE THE TOPIC

- Tell students that they are going to read The Giver, a novel with a setting in the future.
- Display this essential question in a prominent place: **What are the characteristics of a perfect world?** Tell students that this question can help them focus on main ideas as they read.
- Have students discuss the essential question in small groups. Then have them write a brief paragraph that describes how a society might attempt to create a perfect world.

PREVIEW THE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Tell students that after they finish reading and discussing the book, they will write an epilogue that describes the fate of the characters and the lasting impact of the main character’s actions. Suggest that, as they read, they pay attention to details that show how the characters respond to the story’s events.
Setting

Objectives
- Analyze the development of a story’s setting.
- Distinguish among the connotations of words with similar denotations.

Reading Assignment
Chapters 1–4

Critical Vocabulary
intrigued, distraught, apprehensive, nurturer, transgression, chastisement

Focus
Use the following for writing or discussion:
- What details in the text show how the setting differs from our present society?
- What is Jonas’s attitude toward his community? Support your inference with text details.
- How are the characters affected by the rules of the community?

Teach and Assess

1. Comprehension
Remind students that setting refers to the time and place of a story’s action. Explain that authors may develop a story’s setting through details about characters and events.

2. Read
For fluency practice, have students read aloud Chapter 1 in pairs. Then have them read Chapters 2–4 independently.

3. Word Study
Point out that the words frightened and apprehensive are synonyms, but Jonas decides apprehensive describes his feelings more precisely. Explain that frightened has a stronger connotation, or shade of meaning. Have students identify other examples in which connotation impacts meaning.

4. Collaborate
Have students discuss the first two Focus questions in small groups.

5. Share
Invite groups to contribute to a Venn diagram that compares and contrasts the story’s setting with our present-day society. Then, as a class, discuss groups’ answers to the second question. Ask: What details suggest that Jonas is content in his environment? What imperfections does he recognize in his community?

6. Assess
Have students respond to the third Focus question in writing. Students should cite examples in the text that show the characters’ lack of individual freedom and choice.

Text Complexity

Flashback
Have struggling readers create a sequence chart to track events in the story. Explain that flashbacks interrupt a story’s chronological order by describing events that occurred before the current action. For example, in Chapter 1 Jonas recalls an incident involving an unidentified aircraft that occurred one year earlier. Point out how this use of flashback provides background and helps readers understand the setting.
**Plan**

**Objectives**
- Analyze point of view.
- Use context as a clue to word meaning.

**Reading Assignment**
Chapters 5–8

**Critical Vocabulary**
inadequate, relinquish, consciousness, meticulously, attribute, acquisition, integrity

**Teach and Assess**

1. **Comprehension** Remind students that a third-person limited narrator is an external voice that reveals the thoughts and feelings of only one character. Discuss how this differs from the third-person omniscient **point of view**, in which the narrator reveals the thoughts and feelings of all of the characters.

2. **Read** Tell students that, as they read, they should think about how the author uses point of view to control the development of the story.

3. **Word Study** Explain that types of **context clues** may include synonyms, antonyms, definitions, and examples. Point out the vocabulary word attribute on page 77. Guide students to use the examples playfulness and patience to define the term. Then have students use context clues to define the remaining terms before consulting dictionaries to clarify precise meaning.

4. **Write** Have students respond to the first two Focus questions in writing.

5. **Collaborate** Ask students to discuss the third Focus question in pairs. To help them draw conclusions about the reasons for the community’s rules, suggest that students identify ways in which the rules impact the community.

6. **Share** Invite students to share their answers to the third Focus question. Discuss the pros and cons of the community’s rules as a **whole class**.

7. **Assess** Ask students to identify details that show how Jonas’s thoughts and feelings help build suspense during the Ceremony of Twelves. Then have them write a paragraph explaining how this part of the story might differ if readers knew the thoughts and feelings of all of the characters.

**Focus**

Use the following for writing or discussion:
- Explain Jonas’s mixed feelings about receiving treatment for Stirrings.
- Why must Jonas and his family members promise not to become attached to Gabriel? What details in the text suggest that they have already formed an attachment?
- Why do you think the Elders choose jobs and families for all citizens? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer.
1. **COMPREHENSION** Explain the relationship between plot and character development. Characters often grow as they cope with situations and confront crises. Remind students to pay attention to how characters respond to important events in the story.

2. **READ** Have students read the assignment independently, noting changes in Jonas’s character since the beginning of the story.

3. **WORD STUDY** Read aloud this sentence from page 102: “He could see a bright, whirling torrent of crystals in the air around him, and he could see them gather on the backs of his hands, like cold fur.” Explain that this sentence uses a **simile** to compare the snow crystals on Jonas’s hands to fur. Encourage students to identify and interpret other examples of **figurative language** in the text.

4. **WRITING INSTRUCTION** Point out that the sentence from page 102 above uses **sensory details** to describe what Jonas saw and how he felt. Ask students to identify other sensory details that help create a vivid image of Jonas’s experience in the snow.

5. **WRITING PRACTICE** Have students write a paragraph that describes a memory The Giver might transmit to Jonas. Tell students to use sensory details to describe what Jonas would see, hear, smell, feel, or taste.

6. **COLLABORATE** Have **small groups** discuss their answers to the first and second Focus questions.

7. **SHARE** Invite groups to share their answers with the class. Students should explain how Jonas’s job begins to affect his personal relationships and his views about the community.

8. **ASSESS** Assign the third Focus question for assessment. Strong responses will explain that the prospect of shattering Jonas’s innocent idea of pain torments The Giver.
4 SYMBOLISM

PLAN

Objectives
- Identify and analyze symbols.
- Use knowledge of Latin roots as a clue to word meaning.

Reading Assignment
Chapters 12–16

Critical Vocabulary
assimilated, perceived, assuage, imploring, pervaded, obsolete

FOCUS

Use the following for writing or discussion.
- In what ways does Jonas become disillusioned with his community in these chapters?
- What text details show that color has a special meaning in the story? What does color symbolize?
- How is Gabriel important to the story? What does he symbolize for Jonas and for the community?

TEACH AND ASSESS

1. COMPREHENSION Explain that a symbol is a person, place, or thing that represents something beyond itself. Authors use symbols to help convey important ideas in a text.

2. READ Have students read the chapters independently, noting examples of symbols in the text as they read.

3. WRITE Ask students to write their answers to the first Focus question independently.

4. WORD STUDY Point out the vocabulary word assimilated. Explain that the Latin roots simil and simul mean “like” or “resembling.” Ask students to identify other words that contain this root. (similar, simile, simulated) Have students use their knowledge of the root as a clue to the vocabulary word’s meaning. Encourage students to look up the roots of the other vocabulary words as they define them.

5. COLLABORATE Have students discuss the second and third Focus questions in pairs.

6. SHARE Discuss students’ answers to the second and third Focus questions as a whole class. Then ask students to identify other examples of symbols that they identified and listed in their reading notes. Discuss how each symbol adds meaning to the story.

7. ASSESS Have students choose one symbol from the class discussion and explain its meaning in a brief paragraph. Remind students to support their interpretations with details from the text.

TEXT COMPLEXITY

Futuristic Setting
To help all students understand the story’s futuristic setting, have them work in pairs to identify examples of scientific or technological advances that do not exist in today’s society. (memory transmission, genetically-engineered people, climate-controlled environment)
**CONFLICT**

**PLAN**

**Objectives**
- Identify and analyze conflicts in a story.
- Analyze and interpret euphemisms.

**Reading Assignment**
Chapters 17–20

**Critical Vocabulary**
permeated, dejected, luminous, empowered, rueful, solace

**FOCUS**

Use the following for writing or discussion:
- What conflicts does Jonas face within his own mind? Cite text evidence that shows his internal struggle.
- What external conflict do Jonas and The Giver face? How do they decide to resolve their conflict?
- Compare and contrast the internal conflicts that Jonas and The Giver experience.

**TEACH AND ASSESS**

1. **COMPREHENSION** Explain that conflict in a story refers to the struggles faced by the characters. Characters may experience internal conflicts within themselves or external conflicts against another character, group, or outside force.

2. **READ** As students read the chapters, have them note how the story’s conflicts help drive the plot.

3. **WORD STUDY** Explain that a euphemism is a mild or vague expression that is used instead of a harsher term with more unpleasant connotations. For example, in Chapter 19 Jonas learns that release is a euphemism for lethal injection. Have students work in pairs to identify other examples of euphemism in the text. (discipline wand, Nurturer, Stirrings, Elsewhere) Then discuss as a whole class the irony of the community's emphasis on “precise language.”

4. **WRITE** Assign one half of the class to write a response to the first Focus question; have the other half write an answer to the second Focus question.

5. **SHARE** Invite groups to share their responses. Then create a diagram of the story’s major conflicts as a whole class. Ask volunteers to offer predictions about how the story’s conflicts will be resolved.

6. **ASSESS** Have pairs discuss and write their answers to the third Focus question.

**SAFECORDING FOR ELL STUDENTS**

**Euphemism**

To help English language learners understand euphemisms, display the following examples. Work with students to identify the milder expression in each word pair.

- When my guinea pig (died, passed away), he was (laid to rest, buried) in the family pet cemetery.
- Alvarez is (between jobs, unemployed) at the moment. He was (fired, let go) by his previous employer last week.
**THEME**

**PLAN**

**Objectives**
- Determine theme.
- Use knowledge of prefixes as a clue to word meaning.

**Reading Assignment**
Chapters 21–23

**Critical Vocabulary**
stealthily, condemned, languid, augmented, subsided, imperceptibly, impeded

**FOCUS**

Use the following for writing or discussion:
- How does Jonas feel about his decision to leave the community? What details in the text support your answer?
- Why do Jonas’s memories become weaker on his journey?
- What lesson about life do you think the author wants to convey to readers? Support your ideas with details from the text.

**TEACH AND ASSESS**

1. **COMPREHENSION** Remind students that a theme is a message or lesson about life that the author wants to communicate to readers. Explain that a reader can make inferences about themes by interpreting changes in characters, their reactions to conflicts, and the lessons they learn.

2. **READ** Have students read the final chapters independently.

3. **WRITE** Have students work in pairs to write answers to the first two Focus questions.

4. **SHARE** Call on volunteers to share their answers. Ask students why they think the author decided to include the concept of memory transmission in the story and what this abstract idea adds to the book’s meaning. Encourage students to consider the important role that memories might play in forming a person’s individual identity.

5. **WORD STUDY** Tell students that the prefix im- in the vocabulary words impeded and imperceptibly means “not.” Model how to use knowledge of the prefixes as a clue to the meaning of these words.

6. **COLLABORATE** Discuss the book’s ending with the whole class. Invite students to share their ideas about what they think happens to Jonas, Gabriel, and the community they left behind. To help students identify themes, ask: How does Jonas’s understanding of life differ from the citizens of his community? What “words of wisdom” might he offer them? Encourage students to support their ideas with details from the text that show the lessons Jonas learned.

7. **ASSESS** Have students write answers to the third Focus question. Then give students an opportunity to share and discuss their responses with a partner before you collect them for assessment.
PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

OVERVIEW
Students will write an epilogue for *The Giver* based on text details about the characters, setting, and events.  
*Tech Option:* Students may choose to present their epilogues in an audio book or video recording.

INTRODUCE THE ASSESSMENT
Tell students that this performance assessment is designed to show what they have understood about the characters, setting, and events in *The Giver*. Their task is to write an epilogue, a section at the end of a book that gives a comment about or a conclusion to what happened. Their epilogues will reveal the fate of Jonas and Gabriel and the community that they left behind.

SUPPORT STUDENTS’ WORK
- Distribute copies of the blackline master on the facing page. Review the steps with students and answer any questions about the assessment.
- Clarify that each student will create his or her own epilogue, but they will have opportunities to share ideas with a partner as part of the planning process.
- Tell students to use consistent point of view and incorporate sensory language in their description of experiences and events.

ASSESS STUDENTS’ PERFORMANCE
The following are suggested criteria for scoring this performance assessment. To help students focus their work, you might share these criteria or a simplified version of them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRONG</th>
<th>AVERAGE</th>
<th>WEAK</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The epilogue uses point of view and sensory details effectively and provides a fitting conclusion to the book’s unanswered questions.</td>
<td>• The epilogue introduces a narrator, includes some sensory details, and adequately addresses most unanswered questions.</td>
<td>• The epilogue does not address unanswered questions, use consistent point of view, or provide relevant details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The epilogue draws from text details in a meaningful way.</td>
<td>• The epilogue is supported by some text details.</td>
<td>• The epilogue is not clearly supported by text details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The text has few or no errors in grammar, mechanics, and spelling.</td>
<td>• The text has some errors, but the writer’s meaning is clear.</td>
<td>• The text has many errors, making the writer’s meaning unclear.</td>
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</table>
WRITE AN EPILOGUE

Show what you know about the characters, setting, and events of *The Giver*. Use this information from the book to write an epilogue that tells what happens after the book's ending. Follow these steps:

**Plan**

1. What questions are left unanswered by the book's ending? Take notes about details that support your interpretation.

2. Discuss your interpretation of the ending with a partner.

3. Use this chart to plan your epilogue. Include text details that support your interpretation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unanswered Questions</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Supporting Text Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What happens to Jonas and Gabriel?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What happens to Jonas's community?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the significance of the music Jonas hears?</td>
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**Create**

4. Write a draft of your epilogue. Continue using a third-person limited narrator as in the text, or introduce a different point of view. Remember to include sensory details in your descriptions.

5. Exchange drafts with a partner. Read your partner’s epilogue. Tell your partner what you like about his or her epilogue and how the epilogue could be better.

6. Use your partner’s comments to revise your epilogue. Make sure there are no spelling errors or other kinds of mistakes.
Text Complexity in *The Giver*

Use of flashback, symbolism, complex themes, and a futuristic setting contribute to text complexity in *The Giver*.

- **Flashback** Flashbacks provide additional information about the characters and setting.
- **Symbolism** The author uses symbols to convey meaning and support themes.
- **Complex Themes** The book explores complex themes relating to societies and human nature.
- **Futuristic Setting** Aspects of the setting include memory transmission, genetically engineered people, and a climate-controlled environment.

Differentiating for Diverse Learners

The lessons in this guide provide options for differentiated instruction tied to specific reading assignments and the text-complexity issues they present. Look for boxed notes with suggestions for English language learners, struggling readers, and above-level readers.

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**TEXT COMPLEXITY RUBRIC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualitative Measures</th>
<th>Purpose/Levels of Meaning</th>
<th>Difficult: multiple levels of meaning</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Text Structure</strong></td>
<td>Difficult: time shifts and more complex characters</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Language Convenionality and Clarity</strong></td>
<td>Moderate: some unfamiliar or figurative language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Knowledge Demands</strong></td>
<td>Moderate: complex themes; experiences include some unfamiliar aspects</td>
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**Reader and Task Considerations**

Text Complexity notes throughout the lessons can help you decide how best to motivate your students and provide additional support as needed.

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**Lexile Number**

- **Grade Level**: 7
- **Lexile**: 760L

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**Lexile Score Chart**

- **Grade Level**: 4 to 5
- **Lexile Number**: 400 to 900

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