

Focus ON READING

Vocabulary

READING
COMPREHENSION

The Giver

Lois Lowry

ACTIVATE PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Reproducible Activities

*Focus Your Reading**Vocabulary Words to Know*

Study the following words and definitions. You will meet these words in your reading. Be sure to jot down in your word journal any other unknown words from the reading.

squat—low and broad

rasping—a harsh, grating sound

ironic—darkly humorous

unison—two or more speakers speaking the same words together

rituals—any procedures faithfully or regularly followed

apprehensive—anxious or uneasy about something in the future

depth—deepness; intensity

honor—respect or distinction

hoarded—saved to use later

solemn—very serious

Things to Know

Here is some background information about this section of the book.

Newchild refers to all babies born within a given calendar year and matched with a family.

Nurturers attend to the newchild's needs before it is given to a family.

The **Naming**, also called The Ceremony of One, is the annual December ceremony in which all newchildren are given to their chosen families and given an assigned name.

The **Ceremony of Twelve** is the last and most important ceremony held each December. It marks the end of childhood.

The **Committee of Elders** make and enforce all the rules and assignments for the community.

The **Receiver**, the most important Elder, lives and works alone.

An **Assignment** is one's lifetime job, announced during the Ceremony of Twelve.

A **comfort object** is the particular stuffed animal that each child is allowed until the age of eight.

Birthmothers are the women assigned to give birth to all the children in the community. Each produces three babies in three years, after which she spends the rest of her working life doing manual labor.

The **House of the Old** is where the elderly members of the community live.

A **tunic** is a long, loose-fitting shirt, required clothing for Jonas and his groupmates.

Build Your Vocabulary

Read the sentences below. On the line, write your definition of the word in bold type. Then, on another sheet of paper, use that word in a new sentence of your own.

1. “It was not a **squat**, fat-bellied cargo plane but a needle-nosed, single-pilot jet.”
squat: _____
2. “IMMEDIATELY, the **rasping** voice through the speakers had said.”
rasping: _____
3. “There was an **ironic** tone to that final message, as if the Speaker found it amusing; and Jonas smiled a little, though he knew what a grim statement it had been.”
ironic: _____
4. “‘We accept your apology, Asher.’ The class recited the standard response in **unison**.”
unison: _____
5. “It was one of the **rituals**, the evening telling of feelings.”
rituals: _____
6. “But there was a little shudder of nervousness when he thought about it, about what might happen. ‘**Apprehensive**,’ Jonas decided. That’s what I am.”
apprehensive: _____
7. “Now, seeing the newchild and its expression, he was reminded that the light eyes . . . gave the one who had them a certain look—what was it? **Depth**, he decided; as if one were looking into the clear water of the river, down to the bottom, where things might lurk which hadn’t been discovered yet.”
depth: _____
8. “‘I hope I get assigned to be a Birthmother.’ ‘Lily!’ Mother spoke very sharply. ‘Don’t say that. There’s very little **honor** in that Assignment.’”
honor: _____
9. “‘. . . SNACKS ARE TO BE EATEN, NOT **HOARDED**. . . .’”
hoarded: _____
10. “The evening proceeded as all evenings did. . . . It was different only in the addition to it of the newchild with his pale, **solemn**, knowing eyes.”
solemn: _____

Check Your Understanding

Multiple Choice

Circle the letter of the best answer to each question.

1. Who is Asher?
 - a. Jonas's neighbor
 - b. Jonas's coach
 - c. Jonas's best friend
2. Which word does Jonas choose to describe his feelings about the Ceremony of Twelve?
 - a. apprehensive
 - b. frightened
 - c. excited
3. How old is Lily?
 - a. She is a Five.
 - b. She is a Six.
 - c. She is a Seven.
4. What is Father's job?
 - a. judge
 - b. nurturer
 - c. doctor
5. What is the name of newchild number Thirty-six?
 - a. Michael
 - b. Benjamin
 - c. Gabriel
6. What is received at the Ceremony of Nine?
 - a. a bicycle
 - b. a comfort object
 - c. a book bag
7. Who makes the Assignments for the Ceremony of Twelve?
 - a. the parents
 - b. the Elders
 - c. the Instructor of Elevens
8. What had Jonas once taken from the Recreation Area?
 - a. a ball
 - b. an apple
 - c. Asher's bicycle
9. Where does Fiona spend her volunteer hours?
 - a. the Birthing Center
 - b. the Rehabilitation Center
 - c. the House of the Old
10. What happened to Roberto?
 - a. He moved to Florida.
 - b. He was released.
 - c. He accepted an Assignment in another community.

Deepen Your Understanding

Foreshadowing refers to elements of the story that give the reader the sense that something is going to happen. Describe the sense of foreshadowing that Lois Lowry creates in Chapter 1. Do you think something good or something bad is going to happen? Give specific examples from the story to explain your answer.

Focus Your Reading

Vocabulary Words to Know

Study the following words and definitions. You will meet these words in your reading. Be sure to jot down in your word journal any other unknown words from the reading.

emblem—a symbol

reprieve—the postponement of punishment

transgressions—violations of rules or laws

meticulously—very carefully

aptitude—a natural talent or ability

retroactive—applying to an earlier time

avert—to turn something away from

crescendo—a gradual increase in volume of sound

jaunty—having a self-confident or carefree manner

immense—huge

Things to Know

Here is some background information about this section of the book.

Stirrings are the first feelings of physical attraction.

Elsewhere is anywhere beyond the group of communities of which Jonas's community is a part. To go Elsewhere is to be an outcast. No one in the community would go there willingly, hence the grim humor in the joke told by Asher's mother.

The **Chief Elder** is the leader of the community. He or she is elected every ten years.

The **discipline wand** is a thin, flexible weapon that stings painfully when it is used to smack small children. It is used in schools and Childcare Centers.

Build Your Vocabulary

Read the sentences below. On the line, write your definition of the word in bold type. Then, on another sheet of paper, use that word in a new sentence of your own.

1. “The bicycle, at Nine, would be the powerful **emblem** of moving gradually out into the community, away from the protective family unit.”
emblem: _____
2. “He had been given an unusual and special **reprieve** from the committee, and granted an additional year of nurturing before his Naming and Placement.”
reprieve: _____
3. “His **transgressions** were small ones, always: shoes on the wrong feet, schoolwork misplaced, failure to study adequately for a quiz.”
transgressions: _____
4. “The community was so **meticulously** ordered, the choices so carefully made.”
meticulously: _____
5. “She mentioned that there was one who had singular skills at caretaking, another who loved newchildren, one with unusual scientific **aptitude**, and a fourth for whom physical labor was an obvious pleasure.”
aptitude: _____
6. “‘In fact,’ the Chief Elder continued . . . ‘we even gave a little thought to some **retroactive** chastisement for the one who had been Asher’s Instructor of Threes so long ago.’”
retroactive: _____
7. “He saw the others in his group glance at him, embarrassed, and then **avert** their eyes quickly.”
avert: _____
8. “They applauded at the final Assignment; but the applause was piecemeal, no longer a **crescendo** of united enthusiasm.”
crescendo: _____
9. “Earlier that day, dressing in his own dwelling, he had practiced the kind of **jaunty**, self-assured walk that he hoped he could make to the stage when his turn came.”
jaunty: _____
10. “‘The Receiver himself was not able to describe it, only to remind us that you would be faced with it, that you would need **immense** courage.’”
immense: _____

Check Your Understanding

Multiple Choice

Circle the letter of the best answer.

1. What was unusual about Jonas sharing a dream?
 - a. Lily had not dreamed the night before, so Jonas did not have to wait for her to share.
 - b. Jonas had dreamed vividly the night before; he did not usually have a dream to share.
 - c. Mother had fallen asleep at the table.
2. For how long will Jonas need to take the pills?
 - a. until he enters the House of the Old
 - b. until he receives a spouse
 - c. until he dies
3. How old are children when they receive a front-buttoned jacket?
 - a. a Five
 - b. a Six
 - c. a Seven
4. Who attends the Ceremony?
 - a. only the children and their family units
 - b. everyone in the community
 - c. everyone from the neighboring communities
5. Loss of a child in the community is
 - a. very rare.
 - b. very common.
 - c. not unusual.
6. During the Ceremony of Twelve, the Chief Elder
 - a. punishes Jonas.
 - b. skips Jonas.
 - c. forgets Jonas.
7. The Chief Elder says that Jonas has been
 - a. released.
 - b. assigned.
 - c. selected.
8. How many years has it been since the last Receiver-in-Training selection?
 - a. ten years
 - b. fifteen years
 - c. fifty years
9. How many members of the Committee of Elders must agree in choosing the new Receiver?
 - a. a majority
 - b. a quorum
 - c. all
10. Of the five essential attributes of The Receiver, which one does Jonas not have yet?
 - a. wisdom
 - b. integrity
 - c. intelligence

Deepen Your Understanding

Theme refers to the overall idea of a novel. One of the main themes that runs through this novel is the importance of personal autonomy—the freedom to choose your own life. Yet, what is so wrong with having important life decisions made for us by concerned, highly knowledgeable adults? Is freedom of choice always a good thing?

Write about a time when you had an important decision to make and you wished someone would make it for you. Do you think the result would have been better or worse if the choice had been taken out of your hands? Explain, using specific details and examples.

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Vocabulary Words to Know

Study the following words and definitions. You will meet these words in your reading. Be sure to jot down in your word journal any other unknown words from the reading.

precision—exactness

luxurious—characterized by great comfort and beauty

conspicuous—very noticeable

deftly—skillfully

tentatively—to act uncertainly

obsolete—no longer in use

weary—very tired

fretful—distressed; fussy

admonition—to reprimand or give a warning

relinquished—surrendered or gave up something

Things to Know

Here is some background information about this section of the book.

Training Hours is the time designated each day for learning to master one's Assignment.

The Annex is attached to the House of the Old. It is where The Receiver lives and works.

Climate Control devices regulate the community's temperature and overall weather.

Sameness is the policy long ago adopted by the community. It promotes practicality, efficiency, and—as much as is scientifically possible—the elimination of all differences.

The Giver is the old **Receiver**. Now that Jonas is the new Receiver of Memory, the old Receiver no longer receives the memories of the world but gives them to Jonas instead.