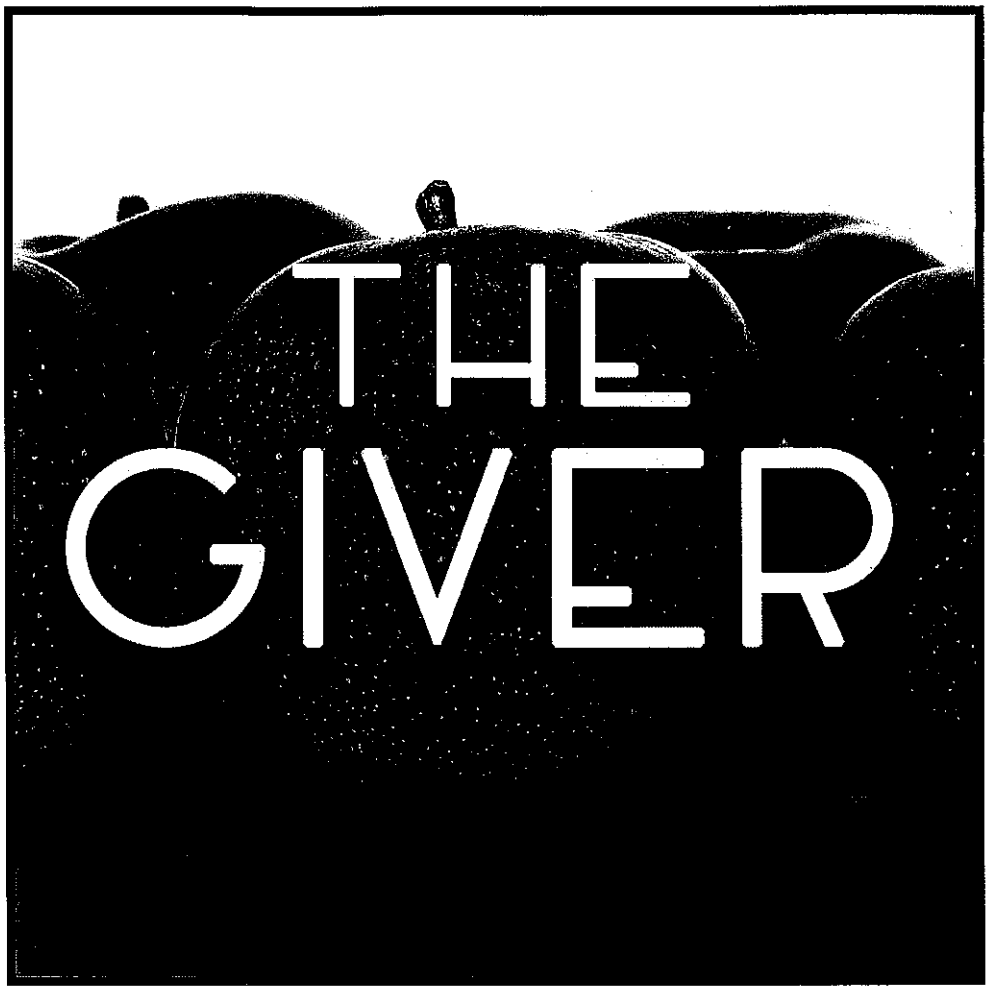
THE GIVER

Integrated Lesson Plans and Study Guide Companion



The Springer Theatre Academy is an educational program of the Springer Opera House, the State Theatre of Georgia. The Springer Theatre Academy presents the following study guide of integrated classroom activities in multiple subject areas to further enrich and enhance the Arts in Education experience for participating schools. The following study guide for *The Giver* is largely adapted from an existing show guide developed by National Players, the education and outreach program of Olney Theatre Center in Olney, Maryland. We credit National Players for much of the content of this classroom guide.

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Georgia Performance/Common Core Standards for Study Guide Activities

The activities presented in the guide are based on predominantly on 6th-12th grade standards. Our intention is to present activities which, although based on specific grade-level standards, can be adapted to other grade levels and which are compatible with curriculum standards in other states.

Theatre Etiquette

WHAT DOES "THEATRE ETIQUETTE" MEAN?
"Etiquette" means "behaving the way you are supposed to,
based on where you are and what you are doing".

There are many different kinds of etiquette, or ways to behave, in different situations. For example, if you were eating dinner at home in front of the TV, it could be okay to sit on the floor while you eat. However, if you were at a fancy restaurant, it would NEVER be okay to sit on the floor while you eat. That sounds simple, but sometimes when people go to see a play, they aren't sure which things they are allowed to do.

Here is a list of things it IS okay to do when watching a play:

- Laugh when something is funny.
- Clap in between scenes (Normally, a scene starts when an actor comes on stage and ends when the actors leave the stage. Sometimes, the lights will get darker at the end of a scene, but not always).
- Clap and cheer for the actors when they bow at the end!
- Talk quietly before the play starts and when the play is over.
- Quietly excuse yourself to go to the bathroom if you need to go during the show. Try to be polite to others sitting around you.

Here is a list of things it IS NOT okay to do when watching a play:

- Talk while the play is going on. It might be a good choice *not* to sit next to someone you know will make you talk during the play.
- Get up and walk around during the play.
- Eat or drink anything in the theatre. This includes candy, mints, and gum.
- Use cell phones (this also means NO TEXTING), or even anything that might make sounds, like a watch that beeps.
- Film or take pictures during the show.
- "Heckle" the actors onstage. This is not only extremely rude and disrespectful, but it distracts the actors and other audience members who are trying to enjoy the show.

The Springer Opera House is a producing theatre, which means that we create all the parts of the plays on our stage--including the costumes, props, lighting, hiring the actors, directing the show, building the sets, and everything else it takes to produce a professional show. The actors you will be seeing are professionals, and this is their job. They take what they do very seriously, and the Springer expects students who come to our Arts in Education performances to demonstrate respect for the actors and technicians during performances by demonstrating appropriate theatre etiquette.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What other types of situations require you to behave a certain way or use etiquette? (ex: at the library, in the school cafeteria, in the hallway, at a baseball game, at a wedding, etc.)
2. What are exceptions to theatre etiquette rules (you are going to be sick, you are bleeding, etc.)? What should you do in those type of situations?

STANDARDS FOR THIS ACTIVITY

Theatre:

TAHSFTI.11 Engaging actively and appropriately as an audience member in theatre and other media experiences
a. Demonstrates appropriate audience behaviors
b. Articulates why the relationship between the audience and performers is critical to the success of the production
c. Examines how audience relationships differ with venue and performance type

Technical Theatre:

TAHSTTII.7 Engaging actively and appropriately as an audience member in theatre or other media experiences
a. Observes and demonstrates appropriate audience etiquette
b. Explores the contribution of the audience to the production process

Theatre Vocabulary Terms

Scene: a small section of a play. Normally, a scene begins when an actor comes onstage and speaks to another actor or actors. A scene ends when one actor or group of actors leave the stage.

Character: the person an actor portrays in the story of a play.

Setting: the place (or places) where the play happens. What country/state, inside or outside, type of room (bedroom, doctor's office, classroom), what time of year (Spring, Halloween, Summer Vacation), and the physical objects around the characters (furniture, toys, cars, etc).

Plot: the story of a play. The plot is everything that happens from the beginning of the play to the end of the play. The plot is made up of the Beginning (or Exposition), Middle (or Climax), and the Ending (or Conclusion).

1. Exposition: In this part of the play, the audience is introduced to the characters, setting, and the other information the audience needs to know in order to understand the plot: the *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, and *why*.
2. Climax: The most intense, exciting, or important moment in a play, when the problem of the story reaches its height. The Climax is normally somewhere in the "middle", but could fall at a different moment depending on the dramatic structure chosen by the playwright.
3. Conclusion/Denouement: After the climax, the characters in the play have to decide *how* the will handle the aftermath of the climax. The Denouement is not always a clear-cut resolution or a happy ending.

Proscenium Theatre: The Springer's mainstage is Emily Woodruff Hall, a proscenium-style theatre. Its primary feature is the Proscenium, a "picture frame" placed around the front of the playing area of an end stage. The audience watches the play through this "picture frame".

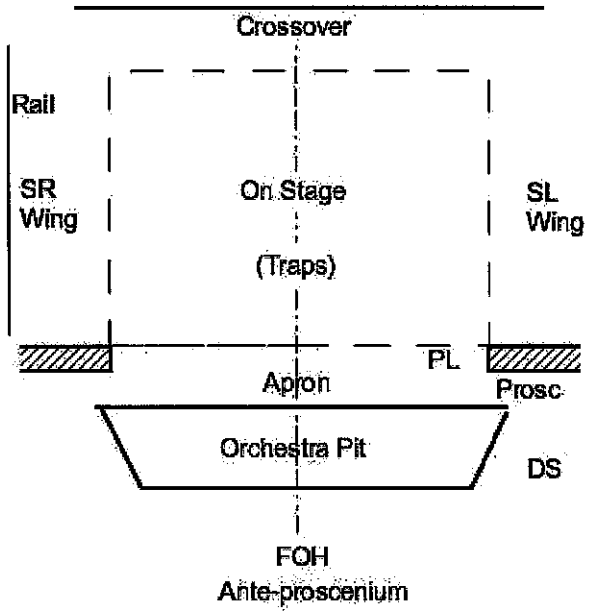
"Fourth Wall": the imaginary wall the separates actors from the audience. Traditional plays maintain the "fourth wall" as a way to encourage the "willing suspension of disbelief" that helps audiences get wrapped up in the world of the play. However, some plays encourage actors to "break the fourth wall" and either speak directly to the audience, sometimes even *reminding* them that they are watching a play!

Apron: The part of the stage beyond the frame of the proscenium.

Wings: the spaces on either side, extending off-stage to the right or left.

Backstage: any space around the acting area which is out of sight of the audience, including the wings.

Proscenium Stage Diagram (from above):



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About the Author

Lois Lowry

EARLY LIFE

Lois Ann Hammersberg was born on March 20, 1937 in Honolulu, Hawaii. She was a shy and introverted child who loved to read and decided at a young age that she would be a writer. She moved around while growing up, including to Japan and New York City, because her father was a dentist and Army officer. Lois attended Brown University for two years before dropping out to get married to a naval officer named Donald Lowry. Lois continued to move around, this time with her husband and their four children. While living in Maine, she finished up her bachelor's degree at the University of Southern Maine.

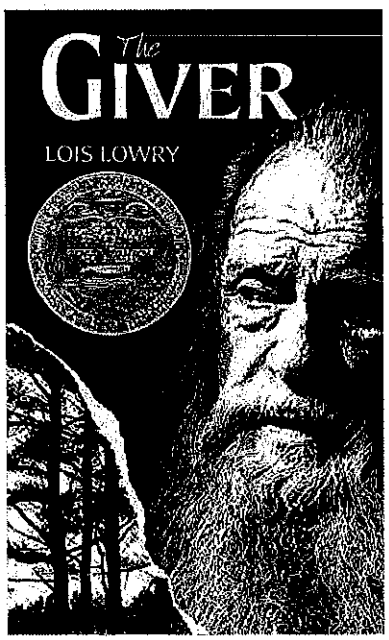
THE AUTHOR

Lowry published her first novel, *A Summer to Die*, in 1977. The story was based on Lowry's personal experience of losing her older sister Helen during her childhood. During this time, Lois and Donald divorced. After the serious drama of *A Summer to Die*, Lowry showed her lighter side with 1979's *Anastasia Krupnik*, which became the first in a series of humorous books.

Lowry won her first Newbery Award for the 1989 novel *Number the Stars*. In 1993, Lowry received the honor a second time for *The Giver*, which would eventually become a film in 2014. Both of these novels were published with covers featuring photography by Lowry herself. In 1995, Lowry's son Grey died in a plane crash, leaving behind a young daughter; she wrote a book for her granddaughter called *Looking Back*, a memoir of her life with Grey. It is the most autobiographical and intimate novel she has published in her career

In 2002, Lowry launched the Gooney Bird series for elementary school students. She currently lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In total, she has written more than 40 books for kids and young adults.

THE GIVER



Lowry invented the world of *The Giver*, with its memory- and emotion-erasing drugs, after her father was put in a nursing home. As he aged, he began to lose parts of his memory; Lowry showed him a photograph of her deceased sister and he could not remember her name, or that she had died at the age of 28. The experience caused Lowry to briefly question how society might be different, or even better, if we did not have memories. The novel is often labelled the first dystopian young adult novel, which Lowry dismissed in an interview with NPR in 2014. "I didn't think of it as futuristic or dystopian or science fiction or fantasy," she protested.

The novel has been banned by many communities for its treatment of euthanasia, nudity, and prepubescent sexual thoughts. Walden Media purchased the film rights in the 1990s shortly after the novel became popular, but became concerned about marketing and publicizing a film surrounded by controversy.

The Giver has become required reading in thousands of schools and remains a beloved literary rite of passage for many people. In addition to the 2014 movie, it has been adapted into the play by Eric Coble, as well as an opera.

Interview with Lois Lowry

What led you to write *The Giver*?

In 1992, my mother and my father, both in their late 80s, were residents of the same nursing home in Staunton, VA. My mother was blind and very frail but her mind was completely intact. My father was healthier, physically, but his memory was going. I would frequently fly down from Boston to see them. On one particular visit, my mother wanted to tell me the stories about her life. I sat and listened to her talk about her childhood, her college years, and her marriage to my dad. In the course of retelling those anecdotes, she related the details about the death of her first child, my sister Helen, clearly her saddest memory. But she wanted to retell it.

How did your father react to those visits?

My brother and I had prepared a photograph album filled with images to spark his memory. In 1956, he had had a green Chrysler that he loved. When he saw a picture of it, his eyes would always light up. That day, he came upon a picture of two little girls, and he said, "There you are with your sister. I can't remember her name." I told him her name was Helen. He looked a little puzzled, a little confused, and asked, "What ever happened to her?" I had to tell him that she had died; for him it was as if her death had just occurred. I turned the pages to show a house we had lived in, a dog that we had had. But within five minutes, there was another picture of the two daughters. He lit up again and said, "Oh, there you are with Helen. I can't remember what happened to her."

How did you incorporate those experiences into *The Giver*?

Driving back to the airport that day, I began to think about memory—how we use it, how painful it can be, yet how necessary. What if we could manipulate it? What if I could leave my mother with all those happy memories of puppies and picnics and take away the sad memory of the day her daughter died?

I began to play with the idea of people who had learned to manipulate memory. I realized such a story would have to be set in the future. I began creating a community quite different from the ones we now have. I never thought of the book as a science-fiction novel or that I might need to explain its technology. I still get letters from readers, usually boys, asking for specific details of how the weather was controlled or color removed from objects. But I didn't feel a need to put technology in the book. Nor would I have known how to figure it out!

Did you always know that the society you were creating was going to be a dystopia?

In creating that community, I had to figure out what their world would consist of and what they had been able to control. They were without war, poverty, crime, alcoholism, divorce—and without the troubling memories of those things. Only gradually did I begin to understand that I was not creating a utopia—but a dystopia. I slowly understood that I was writing about a group of people who had at some point in the past made collective choices and terrible sacrifices in order to achieve a level of comfort and security.

Did you ever imagine The Giver would become a classroom favorite?

What I did not know then—and what I have over the years come to realize and been surprised by—is the number of political questions that their society raises. That's why teachers love using the book. They can find many books with as compelling a plot as The Giver. But they can't find many books that provoke adolescents—who are tough nuts, anyway—to see issues that confront their world and to be passionately interested in them. The inclusion of this discussion material, however, was not purposeful on my part.

From an 2007 interview with School Library Journal.

Eric Coble

THE ADAPTOR

Eric Coble was born in Edinburgh, Scotland and subsequently raised on the Navajo and Ute reservations of New Mexico and Colorado. After pursuing his love of theatre through high school and Fort Lewis College, he received his M.F.A. in Acting from Ohio University. During that time he began writing plays. Besides The Giver, Eric's most often produced plays are *Bright Ideas, The Dead Guy, Natural Selection, For Better, Southern Rapture, A Girl's Guide To Coffee, The Velocity of Autumn,* and *My Barking Dog.* Theaters that have produced his work include Manhattan Class Company, The Kennedy Center, Playwrights Horizons, Actors Theatre of Louisville Humana Festival, the Denver Center, New York and Edinburgh Fringe Festivals, Alliance Theatre, Cleveland Play House, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, South Coast Repertory, Florida Repertory Theatre, Indiana Repertory Theatre, Asolo Repertory, Coterie Theatre, Curious Theatre, Actors Theatre of Charlotte, Oregon Children's Theatre, People's Light and Theatre Company, Stages Repertory Theatre, Great Lakes Theater Festival, and The Contemporary American Theatre Festival.

Coble's awards include the 2011 AATE Distinguished Play Award for Best Adaptation, the AT&T Onstage Award, National Theatre Conference Playwriting Award, Edgerton Foundation New American Play Award, an NEA Playwright in Residence Grant, a TCG Extended Collaboration Grant, the Cleveland Arts Prize, a Creative Workforce Fellowship from Cuyahoga Arts and Culture, and four Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Grants. He is a member of the Cleveland Play House Playwrights Unit.

Interview with Eric Coble

Regarding *The Giver*, what was the impulse or inspiration for you to adapt this story?

Stan Foote at Oregon Children's Theatre approached me about writing the adaptation. I hadn't heard of the book prior to that, but was instantly taken in as I read it. Stan secured the rights from the book publisher, and I wrote my version of it.

What did you especially like about the story that is important for audiences to get from the story and your adaptation and what were some challenges you encountered while adapting it? Can you share the experience of working with Ms. Lowry on the adaptation?

The Giver touches on so many universal themes. What it means to grow up, to realize there is a bigger world then your home and your friends, and what your obligation to that world is. It's about the power of memory and how it affects society. It's about the age-old question of how much freedom we are willing to trade for security. It's about love and family. And it's a mystery with compelling characters and a world we've never seen before. Every scene in the book is so wonderful and telling. So the challenge was what to leave out, since I couldn't include everything in under three hours. I put in all the scenes I felt HAD to be there, and then kept whittling until it became a whole play. The other great challenge was in bringing the momentary flashes of color to the black and white stage. In the book you can clearly imagine that happening—but how to do that in our real world? My solution was to not come up with a single solution. I've left the exact nature of that magic trick to each theatre, and so far they've all come up with clever ways to achieve the effect. Lois was amazingly trusting of my writing as I went. She didn't see the script until I'd finished the first draft. Then she gave her approval and we've since continued to run into each other around the country at various productions and events, checking in on how the play is doing. And then I also adapted her companion book to *The Giver*—"Gathering Blue"—so we've discussed that many times as well.

What are your thoughts about the importance of reading, as well as seeing literature and plays?

I learned almost everything I know about playwriting from reading, seeing, and acting in plays. It's taught me how to build suspense, set up and pay off jokes, what moments make us care about these fictional characters and why. I try to read or see about 100 plays a year. With every one of them - even the ones I really don't like—my world gets a little bigger. I understand humanity a bit more. What a gift.

Please share any concluding thoughts for the actors and/or audiences.

I think science fiction is a brilliant way to explore issues we face today, but at arm's length so we cannot get quite so tangled in the here and now. They offer visions of what our world can become and ask the audience—is this what we want? Should we strive for this or work to avoid it? How will we do that? The dystopia of *The Giver* is unique in that it's so pleasurable. There's no suffering, everyone gets the job they want, there's enough food and everyone is sweet to each other and it strikes me as kind of a great place to live. Until you look at what they've given up to live that way. And what they're willing to do to maintain that world. I hope the actors, designers, and audiences will all leave thinking about what we have now and what we want to change - and keep - about it.

From an interview with Wayne Brinda, the Artistic Director of Prime Stage.

The World of the Play

The Power of Unanswered Questions

"I will say that I find it an optimistic ending. How could it not be an optimistic ending, a happy ending, when that house is there with its lights on and music is playing? So I'm always kind of surprised and disappointed when some people tell me that they think that the boy and the baby just die. I don't think they die. What form their new life takes is something I like people to figure out for themselves. And each person will give it a different ending."

— Lois Lowry

The Giver ends with Jonas and Gabe starving and freezing, sledding down a hill toward what Jonas believes to be 'home.' There might be music. Or he might be hallucinating. Lois Lowry doesn't spell out for us what Jonas discovers, what happens to the community once he gets to 'Elsewhere.' We're left wondering.

"Narrative ambiguity" is when an action, symbol, or character is open to multiple interpretations that can be debated, analyzed, or discussed at length. It is a common device in literature, particularly in shorter novels and short stories, that forces the reader to decide what happens. Readers have to fill in the gaps and participate in the story.

The use of narrative ambiguity at the end of *The Giver* is particularly fitting, since the story is all about choice. Everything in Sameness is dictated and unambiguous. Community members decide pratcially nothing about their own lives. So it's appropriately ironic that readers are faced with deciding what happens to Jonas, what kind of world he finds—and what kind of world they'd like him to find. Readers choices, in turn, will reflect on their own values and experiences.

FAMOUS AMBIGUOUS ENDINGS

In Literature

The Awakening by Kate Chopin

The protagonist goes out for a swim and goes too far, perhaps committing suicide, perhaps merely by mistake—or perhaps she makes it back to shore.

In Film:

Inception (2010)

In the final shot, it's not clear whether the top will stop spinning—indicating what we see is real life—or if it won't—indicating it's all been a dream. The movie cuts out before giving us an answer.

Biblical Allusions

An allusion is a reference to another work of art, such as a painting, book, movie, etc. Allusions to characters and stories from the Bible are very common in literature. Authors choose the details of their stories very carefully, and names, plot points, and settings often have special meaning to them.

JONAS

The protagonist of the book is named **Jonas**. Jonas is a form of the name Jonah, a prophet of Israel. The name Jonah also means "dove." The Book of Jonah tells that Jonah tried to flee the presence and bidding of God in the temple at Jerusalem. He went to sea to escape to the West, and God caused his ship to be caught in a great storm. Jonah tried to sleep, but the others on the ship asked him how to stop God's wrath on the ship. They cast him into the sea, where Jonah was swallowed by a large fish for three days and three nights, where he prayed and spoke his devotion to God.

The fish spat up Jonah, and God told him to go to Nineveh. Jonah prophesized to the Ninevites that their city would be overthrown in forty days. The Ninevites repented for their sins and God saved their city. Angry with God's decision to save Gentiles, as Jonah was a proud Hebrew, Jonah asked God to kill him. God reprimanded him, and Jonah sat on a nearby hill in hopes that Nineveh would be struck down. God caused a tree to shade him from the sun, and then destroyed it, and Jonah fainted from the heat. God told Jonah that he should not pity the death of the tree when he cannot find pity for the inhabitants of Nineveh.

GABRIEL

The baby's name is **Gabriel**. Gabriel was an angel who delivered messages from God to certain people, most famously foretelling the birth of Jesus Christ to Mary. Gabriel is seen as the angel of mercy in the Christian tradition and the angel of judgment in the Jewish tradition.

The angel Gabriel as painted by Gerard David in "The Anunciation." Image from The Metropolitan Museum of Art

THE APPLE

Jonas's first moment of seeing "beyond" is with an **apple**. In the Garden of Eden, the snake persuades Eve to eat an apple from the Tree of Knowledge. The apple gives her knowledge, and she persuades Adam to eat the apple and partake in the knowledge as well. Their knowledge angers God, and he expels them from the paradise of the Garden of Eden.

SACRIFICE

Jonas **sacrifices himself** to keep Gabe and everyone else safe. Christ-like figures are very popular in literature. In the Bible, Jesus Christ suffers on the cross and is crucified for the sins of his followers. The guiding principle of Christianity is that Christians receive God's grace because of Jesus's self-sacrifice.

Rites of Passage

IN SOCIETY

Different countries and customs call for celebrations surrounding certain ages. There is often a lot of significance placed on birthdays that pass legal milestones, such as being able to drive a car, vote, hold a job, or purchase alcohol, restrictions that vary all over the world, or often reaching the age of 21.

A quinceñera and her escorts.

In some Latin American cultures, quinceñeras are elaborate celebrations to celebrate a young woman's fifteenth birthday ("quince" is fifteen in Spanish). Many centuries ago, girls were specially educated by elder women at a certain age on how to serve the community; later, Christian missionaries made church services and blessings a significant part of the celebrations. At her quinceñera, a young woman usually to wear a fancy dress and heels to show her maturity, select fourteen male and female escorts (*chambelanes* and *damas*) to represent the last fourteen years of her life, and will sometimes present a porcelain doll to her young sister to show that she is leaving her childhood behind.

In America, "Sweet Sixteens" often involve formal parties, generally for young women. This age is associated with maturity because in many states, it is the minimum age to hold a job and/or get a driver's license, both popular signs of independence from one's parents or guardians.

Seijin Shiki. Most women wear a type of kimono with long sleeves that hang down called a furisode, and zori sandals

Seijin Shiki, a national holiday in Japan, is held on the second Monday of every January. Everyone who will celebrate a twentieth birthday in the coming year dresses up and participates in a grand celebration. The event is derived from the Samurai warrior celebration of Genpuku.

Some rites of passage are even painful. In the northern and western parts of Africa, female circumcision (also known as female genital cutting or mutilation) is practiced on girls either before puberty or before marriage. The social custom is a surgical procedure that inhibits a woman's sexual feelings. In the Brazilian Amazon, boys in the Sateré-Mawé tribe enter the jungle when they turn thirteen years old to harvest bullet ants. A tribe leader sedates the ants and sews them into gloves, which the boys pass around for short increments, trying to not cry out in pain. The ritual, meant to prepare them for life as men, is repeated twenty times over the course of several months.

IN EDUCATION

Popular rites of passage include educational examinations and ceremonies that acknowledge completion of certain levels. Formal graduations have been popular at universities and pre-college schools for over a century; nowadays, middle schools, elementary schools, and even preschools hold formal events to note changes in education. There are sometimes performances by school arts groups, speeches from students and faculty about the future, and specific outfits worn by the graduates. Most often, those moving on to new stages of education or life are called up one by one to be acknowledged publicly for their accomplishments.

IN RELIGION

Those who grow up in a religious family or choose to participate in a religious lifestyle go through special rituals as they mature. There are often different standards and practices within a religion or sect depending upon whether the person is male or female, but the intended outcome is the same: after years of religious study and inner reflection, the participant is affirming his or her commitment to a religious community.

In both the Christian and Jewish traditions, adolescents present short speeches reflecting on their religious education and read excerpts of either the Bible or the Torah aloud. In Christianity, these "confirmations" occur around the age of thirteen, and in Judaism, these "mitzvahs" occur around age thirteen for boys and age twelve for girls. Specific practices and differences between Bar and Bat Mitzvahs are dependent upon the movement of Judaism or the temple that they child is educated in. All of these ceremonies display a commitment to the specific commandments in each tradition and are shared with whole congregations as well as family and friends, and are followed by large celebrations.

In the Hindu tradition, young men are instructed to learn mantras to participate in the Sacret Thread ceremony at the age of seven, nine, or eleven years old. The ceremony lasts two to three days, is performed entirely in Sanskrit, and involves a boy's father as his teacher. He receives the Sacred Thread, which he wears for the rest of his life as a reminder to serve Gayathri, Saraswati, and Savitri (the goddesses of thoughts, words, and deeds). The ceremony concludes with lavish feasts and gifts.

A teacher places a sacred thread around disciples.
Image from http://www.swaminarayangadi.com/

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What rites of passage have you participated it?

Were they part of a family, school, or religious tradition?

How did you prepare for them?

How does Jonas' Ceremony of Twelve compare to events in your own life?

ACTIVITIES

EXPLORING RITES OF PASSAGE

***NOTE: This activity is most effective upon conclusion of reading* The Giver.**

OBJECTIVE: Students will analyze the "rituals" that are part of our birthday celebrations, and compare them to the Ceremony that takes place in *The Giver*, to try and understand the differing values in both societies. Students will then create their own version of a birthday Ceremony based on the values they have discussed.

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 6 – 12

SUPPLIES NEEDED: Text of *The Giver*

1. As a class, discuss the December Ceremony that takes place in the Community of *The Giver*. Some questions to consider?

- Why is the birthday celebration communal?
- What is the significance of each gift the children receive? How are they appropriate for each age?
- What does the December Ceremony say about the Community as a society? What do they value? What is important to them?
- What are the "rituals" that we include in our birthday celebrations? What is the significance of these rituals? What do they say about our society and our values?
- Compare the December Ceremony to our birthday celebrations. What are the similarities and differences?
- Based on the comparison/contrast of birthday celebrations, what are the similarities and differences of values in our society and in the Community?

2. Divide students into groups and have them create their own Birthday Ceremony (like the December Ceremony in *The Giver*) for students at their school. If you like, have them create a visual aid (poster, slideshow, etc.) Some aspects of the ceremony to consider:

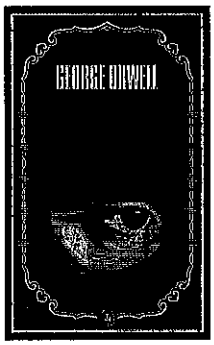
- What gifts would be given to each grade? What is the significance of those gifts?
- When would the Ceremony take place? Would there be special clothing, food, and or music?
- What kind of ritual(s) would happen at the ceremony?
- What would happen at the final ceremony (i.e. The Ceremony of Twelve?)
- What does your Birthday Ceremony say about your "society"? What are its values?

3. Have each group present their ceremonies to the rest of the class. After all ceremonies are presented, discuss what similarities and differences you see. What do your students value? How are their ceremonies different from the December Ceremony in *The Giver*?

Utopia/Dystopia

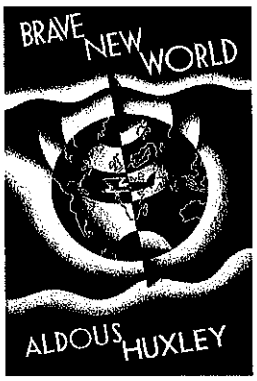
The concept of "Utopia" was first coined by Thomas More in 1516 in his Latin book, the title of which roughly translates to: "Of a republic's best state and of the new island Utopia." The word "utopia" comes from the Greek prefix "ou," which means "not," and "topos," which means "place." Put together, the word means "nowhere"; hence, utopias are imaginary, idealistic societies that do not actually exist.

IN FICTION



Speculative fiction is a popular genre of literature—and film. Utopic and dystopic work are subgenres, and it's often difficult to draw the line between the two. Utopian fiction generally portrays a smoothly functioning, peaceful society where everyone enjoys some measure of prosperity. Dystopian novels depict societies gone awry, often but not always post-apocalypse. These societies can be cruel and totalitarian, terribly violent, incredibly unequal, and/or involve extensive surveillance of the populace. Many seemingly utopian worlds are really masking dystopian elements. In The Giver, Sameness is a peaceful community where no one wants for anything—but that peace is achieve at the expense of deep emotions like love, color and choice.

Examples of other dystopian/utopian works:



1984 by George Orwell — In one of the most iconic dystopian novels, Orwell imagines a world of constant surveillance and government-controlled media that spits out "Newspeak," a language that makes independent thought impossible.

Brave New World by Aldous Huxley— Pain is absent in Huxley's world. Instead, people take numbing drugs, there's no conept of family, and reproduction is strictly regulated.

A Clockwork Orange by Anthony Burgess—Burgess's story features a world full of youth violence and gangs while state authorities attempt to restore order.

Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury—Bradbury imagines an American society that burns books and outlaws intellectual thought.

The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins—Twenty-four children are forced to fight to the death on live television for the entertainment of the elite ruling class.

IN EUROPE: Utopian Socialism

Although Thomas More wrote *Utopia* in 1516, and Plato's Republic was arguably the first envisaged utopia (written in 380 BCE), Utopian Socialism as a movement did not get started until much later, in the early nineteenth century. The Industrial Revolution brought an incredible wave of changes to economic and working conditions. Suddenly people were working in factories featuring extreme division of labor. Rather than a cobbler, for instance, making an entire pair of shoes himself from start to finish, shoes would be made along an assembly line with multiple people each doing a small and specific task. These labor changes, in turn, sparked a group of thinkers called "Utopian Socialists," who wrote about—and sometimes enacted—idealistic, more equitable ways to structure society.

The most famous of these thinkers are Charles Fourier, Robert Owen, Henri de Saint-Simon, and Etienne Cabet. While each had his own particular ideas, they shared a concern over the rampant individualism and 'every-man-for-himself' attitude that capitalism encouraged and the terrible working conditions found in industrial factories. Instead, these thinkers imagined communities in which everyone worked together, marriages weren't limited to two people, children were raised communally, and men and women had equal standing under the law.

IN THE U.S.

Largely inspired utopian socialist thinkers, several utopian communities cropped up in the US during the early 1800s.

New Harmony

Robert Owen bought land in New Harmony, Indiana from the Harmonists to create "New Harmony." His goal was to create a perfect society by making education free and aoloshing social classes and personal wealth.

Icaria

Inspired by Robert Owen's experience founding a commune in Texas, Etienne Cabet gathered a group of followers from France in 1848 to bring to the US and create "Icaria," an idealized community based on the one in his novel. The land in Texas didn't prove hospitable, so they moved to INauvoo, Illinois and developed a relatively successful agricultural community with about 500 members. Education was of the highest priority, followed closely by culture. Icarians held concerts, produced theatre, and boasted the largest library in Illinois at the time with 4,000 books.When economic troubles arose, a split developed regarding the work division and food distribution. Icarian settlements later cropped up in Chelternham, Missouri; Corning, Iowa; and Cloverdale, California. The last of them disbanded in 1898.

The Hutterites

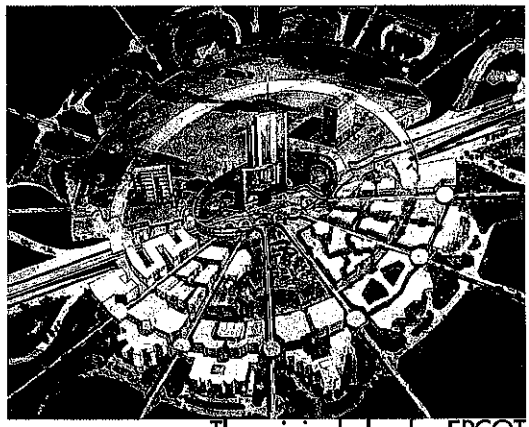
On their website, the Hutterites describe themselves as "a communal people, living on hundreds of scattered bruderhöfe or colonies throughout the prairies of northwestern North America. On average, fifteen families live and work on the typical Hutterite colony, where they farm, raise livestock and produce manufactured goods for sustenance.

modern-day Hutterite community. Image from the ational Post.

"The communal lifestyle of the Hutterites finds its roots in the biblical teachings of Christ and the Apostles. ...Each colony is led by a group of leaders, including the minister, the colony manager and the farm manager. Most Hutterites continue to earn their living in the agricultural fields, but with a greater number entering the manufacturing field in the last two decades.How Hutterites spend their leisure varies greatly from leut to leut, with some Hutterites shunning almost all forms of sport, while others condone various types of sports. Most Hutterite colonies espouse choral singing for special occasions and many, at least privately, play musical instruments in small groups. Various other leisure activities are available for Hutterite youth. Hutterites speak Hutterisch, a Carinthian-Tirolean dialect."

EPCOT

The EPCOT Center in Disneyworld (in Orlando, Florida) was originally conceived by Walt Disney as a type of Utopic community. Though it didn't turn out that way (largely due to Disney's death mid-construction) and today features international-style exhibits and shops, it retains the name "EPCOT," which stands for: Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow. As Disney imagined it, no one would own property but would merely rent it; everyone would be employed (mostly in positions serving the theme park); and, most importantly, corporations would be encouraged to develop new technology that would be immediately implemented.



The original plan for EPCOT

ACTIVITIES

CREATE YOUR OWN UTOPIA

OBJECTIVE: Students will learn about different historical attempts at utopia, and based on this knowledge, will create their own version of a perfect society.

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 9 - 12

SUPPLIES NEEDED: [redacted], access to research materials

1. Divide students into groups, and assign each group a different historical attempt at Utopia - either found in the toolkit, or others of your own choosing. Have them research the group. Some topics to consider:
   - What was happening in history at the time of the group's formation? What made them want to create their own society?
   - What values or rules made up the utopia? What did they believe would make them "perfect?"
   - Were any sacrifices made in order to be perfect?
   - What was the day to day life like?
   - Was the society a utopia, or did it fail (dystopia)?
   - Does the society still exist today? Does it exist in the same way?
2. Have each group share what they learned about their historical utopia. As a class discuss similarities and differences between utopias. Are there any overarching themes or goals?
3. Compare the historical utopias to the Community in *The Giver*. What are the similarities and differences? Is the Community a utopia (perfect society) or a dystopia (failed attempt at a perfect society)?
4. Reshuffle groups so different students are working together. Tell each group they will attempt to make their own utopia. If you would like, have them create a visual aid (poster, slideshow, etc.) Some components to consider:
   - What does "utopia" mean to you?
   - What would your utopia value? What rules would it have?
   - What would day to day life be like?
   - Would you have to give anything up in order to be perfect (whatever that means to you)?
5. Have each group share their utopia. As a class, discuss any similarities and differences. Are there any overarching themes or goals? What are the similarities and differences between the students' utopias and the Community in *The Giver*? What did you learn from this exercise?

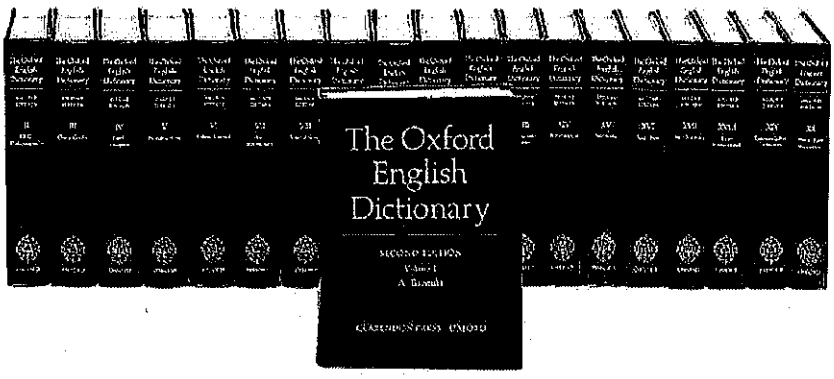
Credit: Teresa Wood Photography

Precision of Language

Before writing his iconic dystopian novel 1984 (in 1949), George Orwell wrote a famous essay titled "Politics and the English Language," in which he details all of the ways sloppy word choice can contort, obscure, or prevent meaning. Orwell was particularly interested in its effects on political discourse and how the populace might be sold on poor ideas because they were presented inaccurately—but his writing also has broader connotations. As he puts it, language "becomes ugly and inaccurate because our thoughts are foolish, but the slovenliness of our language makes it easier for us to have foolish thoughts." Sloppy language dumbs down thinking, and wreaks havoc on society.

It's not surprising, then, that the community in Sameness insists on precision of language. In so doing, they ensure clearer thought and make it more difficult to lie, or to tell an untruth in any way—be it an outright falsehood, exaggeration, or sarcastic remark. Ironically given Orwell's warning, this precision of language makes the populace easier to control, because it's harder to lie, and it forces people to quantify small variations in meaning rather than embrace larger, messier feelings that don't fit neatly into words. For instance, Mother chides Jonas when he uses the word "love" for being "inappropriate" and "imprecise." And she's right: "love" has a wide variety of meanings and uses, presumably arising from an emotion that's impossible and futile to quantify. There's a reason people often describe themselves as "speechless" or 'not knowing what to say' when faced with a strong emotion.

Many people blame the internet for a proliferation of meaningless phrases, sloppy punctuation and spelling, and numerous acronyms, and some people fear its leading to the sloppy thinking Orwell warns against. Many linguists, on the other hand, believe language changes and adpts to suit the needs of a current culture and aren't bothered by it. Once enough people use a word a certain way, it becomes a definition; once enough people 'break' a grammatical rule for enough time, it becomes the rule. For instance, the verb "google" was added to the Oxford English Dictionary on June 15, 2006 after it became common usage. The Oxford English Dictionary (or the OED) is the most comprehensive dictionary of the English language; it's been documenting the development of English from the earliest records (and formally from 1150) to the present. The second edition of the 20-volume dictionary included 171,476 words, and more are continually added online.



FURTHER READING

"Politics and the English Language" by George Orwell

Elements of Style by Strunk & White

"Is Texting Killing the English Language" by John McWhorter in Time Magazine

The Language Instinct by Steven Pinker

"VOTE WITH YOUR FEET"
FACILITATED CLASSROOM DEBATE

GA Standards in this Lesson:

ELAGSE9-10RI3: Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them

ELAGSE9-10RI8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.

ELAGSE9-10SL1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions(one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
a. Come to discussions prepared having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
b. Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.
c. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.
d. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

ELAGSE9-10SL3: Evaluate and/or reflect on a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence

L9-10WHST1: Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.
a. Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among the claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
b. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying data and evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both claim(s) and counterclaims in a discipline-appropriate form and in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.
c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.
d. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from or supports the argument presented.

L9-10WHST7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when

appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

DIRECTIONS:

Read the Article "Precision of Language" (included in this study guide). This can be done aloud as a class, or individually.

If students are reading individually, ask them to read through it once, then go back through a second time and make notes about the any arguments presented in the article, and how the writer has supported those points. If reading aloud, model this process with the class as a group.

Discuss the main points of the article as a class by playing VOTE WITH YOUR FEET.

VOTE WITH YOUR FEET

In this game, you will identify one side of the room as "Strongly Agree" and the other side of the room as "Strongly Disagree". Based on the statement you provide, students will arrange themselves as if on a spectrum across the room based on how they feel about the statement.

For example, your statement could be, "I agree with with George Orwell's point that the precision of language is important and necessary in order for people to effectively communicate." They might go all the way to one side of the room (Strongly Agree or Disagree), but they might choose to place themselves somewhere in the middle, closer to one side or the other.

Wherever students place themselves, make sure that they choose a place in the room without talking. They will get to talk later, but right now we are just seeing where our opinions fall as a class.

Choose key students to explain *why* they have placed themselves along the spectrum in their specific spot. What is their reasoning? Can they cite evidence, either from the article, literary examples, or current events?

Students may choose to change spots based on the reasoning of their classmates, if they wish!

During this discussion, be sure to cover both sides of the issues:

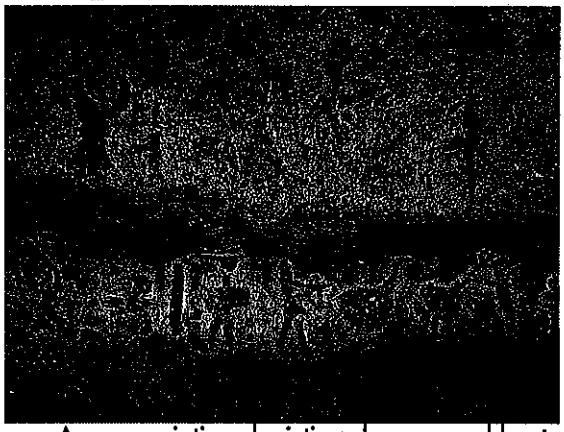
- One side being that language cannot be judged based on its "precision", and that such a view it overly literal.
- The other side (George Orwell's point of view) being that precision of language is equal to specificity and clarity of meaning, which is necessary for communicating ideas--in particular those of great importance.
- It is worth noting that both Orwell's point and the example of the community of Sameness in *The Giver* point out that precise wording makes it more difficult to lie or spin the truth.

EXTENDING THE LESSON:

If you wish to extend the lesson to include research, writing, and current or historical events, have students choose to argue for or against one of the points presented in "Precision of Language" by writing a persuasive article. They should be sure to cite support for their claims, while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both claim(s) and counterclaims. The article should end with a strong concluding statement or call to action.

Music in Culture and Society

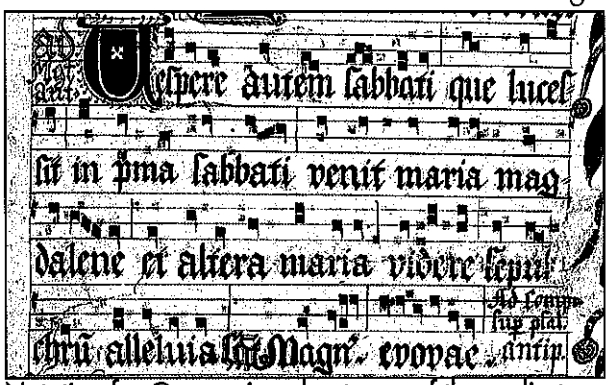
The Giver tells Jonas that he initially could 'hear beyond' and hear music. Sameness has eliminated music, but it's been an integral part of society around the world from the beginning of time—some of the earliest cave paintings found depict music and dance. The word "music" is derived from the Ancient Greek muses, the nine goddesses of art and science. Music has often been a central part of social gatherings and worship, the primary instances when communities gathered together. Music has varied greatly throughout history, depending on the geographic area, the history of a certain group of people, and the technology available.



A cave painting depicting dancers and hunters from the Magura Cave in Bulgaria, dated around 8,000 BC.

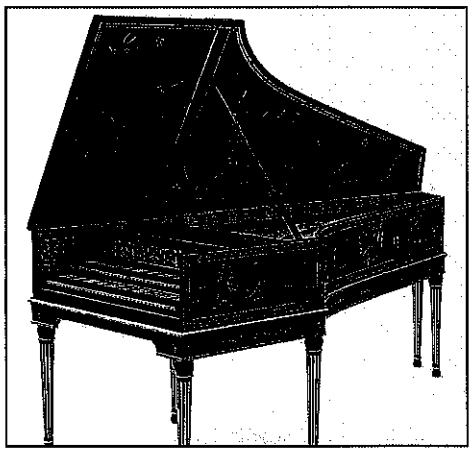
WESTERN CULTURE

In Western culture, music was most often heard in the form of church chants in the Middle Ages. Secular music began to emerge in France around the 12th and 13th centuries, and people started to travel around creating music for a living. During the Renaissance period, lyrics–what they were saying and what they signified–became a very important component in music. Royal families often commissioned artists, including musicians, to entertain the court. In the following centuries, demand for music and satisfactory entertainment grew, and wealthier families tended to educate their children to sing or play instruments; musical knowledge was seen as a sign of culture and wealth. During the eighteenth century, the middle class created a demand for public concerts and music that could be played by less skilled instrumentalists so that they could share in the culture of the upper class.



Notation for Greogorian chant, one of the earliest recorded forms of music, sung by most often by monks in monastaries.

During the early nineteenth century, music conservatories were established in Europe to educate the next generation of young talent; similar institutions followed in America. Increasing numbers of families owned pianos and regularly featured musical performances in their homes. As population rates grew and technology developed, music was more variable and popular than ever. People regularly gathered to listen to records or radio broadcasts from around the world. As television became a more popular form of entertainment, shows like The Ed Sullivan Show or American Bandstand were staples in many people's schedules. Without DVR or the Internet, thousands of people would watch the shows at the same time just to see and hear popular music acts performing live.



An 18th-century French harpsichord, a sort of precursor to the piano. From early-piano.com

ACTIVITIES

THE IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC: MAKE A CHARACTER PLAYLIST!

OBJECTIVE: Students will analyze a character from *The Giver* through curating a personal music playlist.

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 6 - 12

SUPPLIES NEEDED: Text of *The Giver*, access to a wide variety of music (i.e personal iPods, YouTube, etc.)

1. As a class, discuss the importance of music in our society. Why do we enjoy music? What benefits do we get from it? What role does music play in our society?
   - If there is time, possibly "popcorn" around the room, having students say what kind of music/artists they like - what does that tell us about them as people?
2. Direct the conversation towards *The Giver*. What would it be like to live in a world without music? Why do you think the Community has gotten rid of music?
   - *In parts 1 and 2, make sure the concepts of emotions and connecting with/understanding people come up during the discussions, if they have not already been brought up by the students.*
3. Tell the students that, since music helps us understand and relate to others (as discussed), they will try to use music to understand characters in *The Giver*. Although the Community is a world without music, the students will use their imagination to infer what music these characters might listen to.
4. Tell the students they will be creating a personal music playlist for a character in *The Giver*. Many students may want to look at Jonas or The Giver, but try to encourage some students to examine other characters: Lily, Mother, Father, Fiona, Asher, the Chief Elder, Rosemary, etc. Have students look through the text of *The Giver* for significant passages about their characters. Based on these quotes/passages, what kind of music might they like?
5. Make sure students have access to a variety of music through a personal CD collection, iPod, or YouTube - if necessary, the creation of the playlist can be done as a homework assignment. They can make a CD, an iPod playlist, a YouTube, playlist - whatever is easiest. Students should aim for 8-10 songs on their playlist (if applicable; feel free to alter for the level of your classroom). Encourage students to examine their characters and (probable) music taste from a variety of angles: what the text says about their personality, the predominant emotions they feel, their hobbies, what the world they live in is like etc. How much can you explore this character through music choices?
6. Have students share their playlists. They do not need to play every song, maybe a sample of one or two songs, but should walk the class through their choices and explain why they chose each song for that character. What does the song tell us about that character?
7. After all students have shared their playlists, discuss as a class. What were some standout song choices? Were there any suprising songs? Did any songs make you think about the characters in a different way? What did you learn from the assignment?

Credit: Teresa Wood Photography

Before the Show

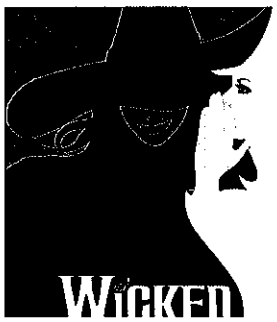
Adaptations of Literature

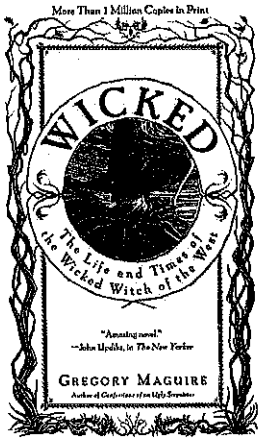
STORYTELLING

Stories have been told and retold in many different ways, but sometimes, especially if a story is very long, a story will be heavily adapted when it is retold. Sometimes in the process of retelling a story, characters will be cut from the story, or events may not happen in the same order. People love taking stories that they enjoy or that mean a lot to other people and retelling them with their own unique touch. Other people enjoy adaptations because they are able to see their favorite stories in new lights, but often adaptations are criticized for being "too different" from the original source. Perhaps the most high-profile adaptations are movies based on books, but television shows, plays, and musicals can be based on books as well. Sometimes no book is involved; Disney has adapted many ofits movies for the stage, and musicals like Rent have been the basis for movies.

DRAMATIC ADAPTATIONS

Theatre could be considered the first form of story adaptation. Many old and famous plays, including *Romeo and Juliet* and *Antigone*, are based on poems and stories that were told orally for a long time. The National Players perform both new and established adaptations of well-known books alongside the entirety of Shakespeare's works.



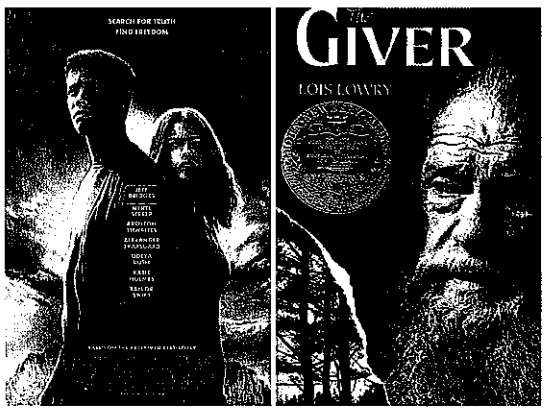


SOME FAMOUS ADAPTATIONS:

The musical *Wicked* is based on book *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West* by Gregory Maguire, itself a retelling of the story of *The Wizard of Oz* through its antagonist The Wicked Witch of the West. Maguire gave her the name "Elphaba," which he made up from the initials L.F.B. after L. Frank Baum, the author of the original *Wizard of Oz* books.

Many Disney movies are based on fairytales from around the world. *Frozen* is loosely based on the Dutch story of "The Snow Queen," in which two children grow and change through their experiences fighting with The Snow Queen, a magical witch who emerges when the snow falls.

In addition to this play, *The Giver* was adapted into a film in 2014, and several significant changes were made to the storyline, including aging up the characters; Jonas is 16 when he receives his assignment rather than 12.



ACTIVITIES

CREATE YOUR OWN ADAPTATION

OBJECTIVE: Students will be able to partake in the process of adaptation. Students will be able to compare and contrast artistic work. Students will be able to identify important aspects of *The Giver.*

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 6 - 12

SUPPLIES NEEDED: Material to adapt, writing utensils, paper

1. Discuss the idea of adaptation with students. What do they know about it? What sorts of things have they seen adapted from one form to another? What tends to happen to things when they are adapted? Refer to the "Adaptations of Literature" section of the Toolkit for information and examples.
2. Share information about Lois Lowry's sources and inspiration, as well as the adaptations of the novel (movie and play). Talk about the differences required in content, length, and structure. Discuss why these differences are necessary and how a director or playwright might make those decisions.
3. Choose a scene from the novel version of *The Giver* to analyze and adapt as a class. Work with students to understand and analyze the essence of the work: Who is present? What happens? What is the sequence of events? Where does the scene take place, and what does that environment look like? What is the tone or mood of the scene?
4. Once students answer these questions, tell them they are going to form their own adaptation of this work. To do this, they must select what elements of the work are essential and what can be altered or removed.
5. Divide students into groups or work as a class. They can rewrite the original work in a totally different format, make it into a performance piece or represent artistically. Encourage students to be creative and loose with their adaptations, adding characters or changing the time period or setting.
6. If students are working in groups, they can share their concepts with each other and exchange feedback. Ask students to identify commonalities among their adaptations and observe which elements have been adjusted and which tend to stay the same.
7. Follow through on the concepts and create a first draft of the adaptation, in part or in full, and revisit the issue of commonalities and changes.

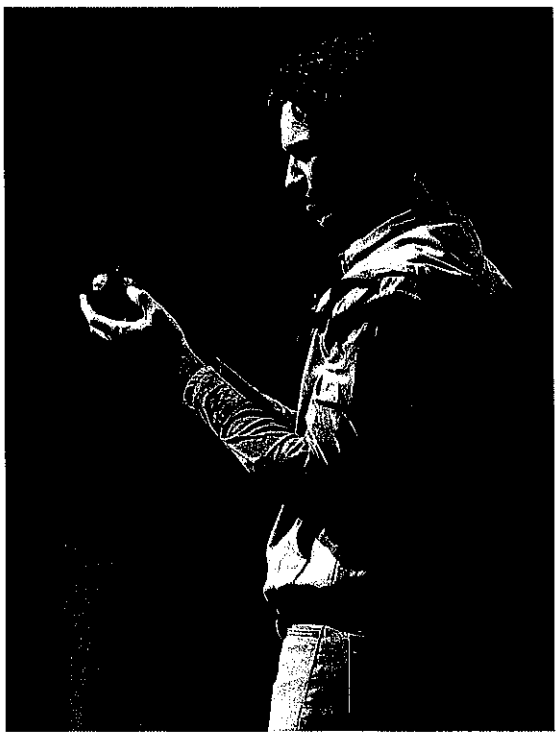
VARIATIONS:

- **WHAT ELSE HAPPENS?** The ending of *The Giver* is purposefully ambiguous. (Check out "The Power of Unanswered Questions" section of the toolkit on p. 12 for more information). What do you think happens at the end of the book/play? Does Jonas find Elsewhere? Is Elsewhere another community, or is it the afterlife? What happens to the other characters? Write a spectulative scene that follows the ending of *The Giver* and explores what may have happened to one or more characters. What are they doing? How do they feel about it? How have they changed? What other characters do they still interact with? How have those relationships changed? You don't have to write it in dramatic format, it can be a short story or even a comic book style telling.
    - Alternatively, can you think of any scenes within the play that are referenced or described that you didn't get to see? Create a "fill in the gaps" scene in the same way, filling in things before or during that play that are not depicted in the script. For example, what events happened that led to the creation of the society depicted in *The Giver*?
- **GET INSPIRED** Oftentimes, when directors are preparing for a show, they look for outside inspiration to guide them. Find another work of art (painting, picture, song, poem, novel, TV show/episode, movie) or person, place, or theme that you think represents this play well. Write about the connections you see between your inspiration piece and the play. If you were directing your own production, how would you use this inspiration piece to guide your team toward your own vision of the final product?
- **STAGE YOUR OWN** One of the best things about theatre is the enormous number of valid and interesting interpretations of great plays. Have students pick a scene from *The Giver* and have them create their own interpretation of the scene. What is happening at this moment? How do you want to present it in a theatrical way? What resources are available to you? Assign different roles to students and work together to make a version that is your own. Take a video of your work and share it with National Players online; we'd love to see what you do.

SYMBOLS OF THE GIVER: A SHADOWBOX

NOTE: This activity is most effective upon conclusion of reading* The Giver, *and/or discussing its main themes.
OBJECTIVE: Students will learn about the main themes of *The Giver* by creating a shadowbox of found objects from the novel/
SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 6 - 12
SUPPLIES NEEDED: Text of *The Giver*, variety of objects referenced in *The Giver* (depending on the execution of the assignment, students may bring objects from home), shoeboxes (again, students may bring from home)

1. Before beginning the activity, make sure students have finished the novel, and the class has discussed the novel's major themes in some capacity.
2. If you would like, divide students into groups, or keep them individual. Assign each student or group of students a theme to explore in the novel. Some themes to consider (feel free to come up with your own!):
   - Memory and the Past
   - Rules and Order
   - Choices
   - Language and Communication
   - Isolation
   - Suffering
   - Old Age
   - Tradition and Customs
3. Have each student or group examine the novel for passages, quotes, and objects that relate to their assigned theme. Encourage them to also come up with objects that might not be explicitly stated in the novel, but have some significance to the theme and the story. Some possible ideas for found objects: a red apple, Beanie babies or stuffed animals, a book, a birthday card, birthday candles, a "new mother" card, Christmas lights, hair ribbons, etc.
4. Either in class or for homework, have students create a themed "shadowbox" containing objects and quotes/passages relating to their theme. Make sure everything can fit in a shoebox.
5. Have each student or group present their shadowbox. Make sure they discuss their theme, and how each object and passage/quote relates to their theme.
6. As a class, discussed what you learned? How did focusing on objects change your perception of the novel and/or its themes?



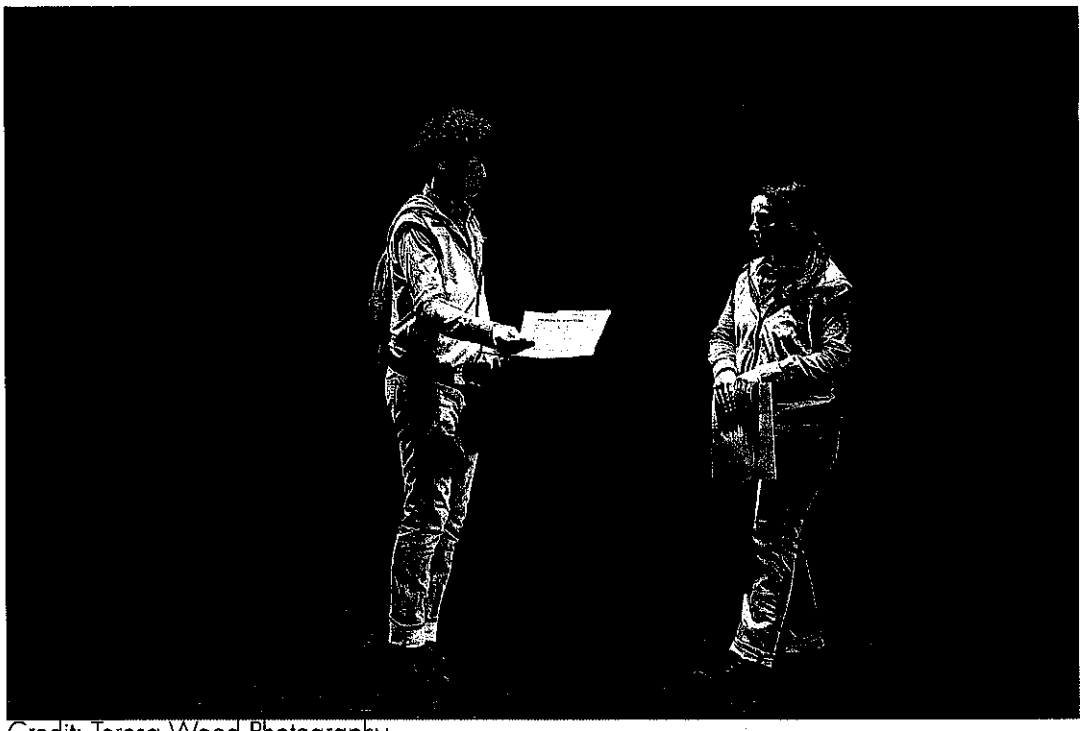
Credit: Teresa Wood Photography

ACTIVITIES

WRITE A REVIEW

Critical analysis is an important part of theatre world, giving artists insight into how well their work comes across to patrons, and allowing audiences to respond to their experiences in a professional manner. Most shows are reviewed in some form, whether by professionals in newspapers or amateurs posting on Facebook. We encourage students to write their own reviews of their experience seeing our show. You can even share these reviews by emailing them to nationalplayers@olneytheatre.org or posting them online and sharing them with us on Facebook (Facebook.com/NationalPlayers) or Twitter (@NationalPlayers).
Some guidelines on how to approach writing a review:

- The best reviews first identify what the production was attempting to achieve. Consider what you think the director, actors, and designers wanted to create through the show as a whole, as well as the intended effect of individual elements. From there, base your review on how well the show achieved those goals.
- "I didn't like it" or "It was cool" is not a useful critique. Go into specifics, identifying why things did or did not work for you.
- Remember your intended reader: other prospective audience members. Think about who the ideal audience member for this show might be, and think about what that person would or would not like.
- Don't forget that there are many separate elements within the show, and many different people contributed to the final product. Try to attribute elements to the different people who worked on the show whenever possible (reference the program for a full list of the artists who contributed to the production, from acting and directing to lighting and sound design).
- Some plot summary is useful for providing context, but a review is not meant to just describe what happens. If there are things in the performance that work best as a surprise, avoid revealing them in your review.



Credit: Teresa Wood Photography