

The Giver by Lois Lowry

Essay Choices A2

Directions: Choose one of the following topics. Develop an essay responding to the question of your choice.

1. Lois Lowry left the ending of *The Giver* purposefully ambiguous. There are a number of possibilities as to what happened at the end of the novel. What do you believe happens to Jonas and Gabe at the end of the novel?

2. *The Giver* received the Newbery Award in 1994. The Newbery Award is given to books for children that make a distinguished contribution to American literature.

In identifying "distinguished contribution to American literature," defined as text, in a book for children,

a. Committee members need to consider the following:

- Interpretation of the theme or concept
- Presentation of information including accuracy, clarity, and organization
- Development of a plot
- Delineation of characters
- Delineation of a setting

Appropriateness of style.

Note: Because the literary qualities to be considered will vary depending on content, the committee need not expect to find excellence in each of the named elements. The book should, however, have distinguished qualities in all of the elements pertinent to it.

b. Committee members must consider excellence of presentation for a child audience.

2. Each book is to be considered as a contribution to American literature. The committee is to make its decision primarily on the text. Other components of a book, such as illustrations, overall design of the book, etc., may be considered when they make the book less effective.

3. The book must be a self-contained entity, not dependent on other media (i.e., sound or film equipment) for its enjoyment.

Note: The committee should keep in mind that the award is for literary quality and quality presentation for children. The award is not for didactic content or popularity ("Terms and Criteria John Newbery Medal").

Based on the criteria used to judge books for the Newbery Award, do you agree that *The Giver* by Lois Lowry should have won the award? Use information from the criteria given by the American Library Association, class discussions, and the novel to support your essay.

3. In Socratic seminar we discussed the following as possible themes for *The Giver*:

- Don't take anything for granted.
- Ignorance is bliss.
- Learn from the past and use it to help in the future.
- Life is meant to have choices
- Perfection comes with a big price.

Which theme do you think best states the theme of the novel? Why?

Use information from the text and class discussion to support your essay.

4. A Utopia is defined as an ideally perfect place, especially in its social, political, and moral aspects.

A dystopia is defined as an imaginary place or state in which the condition of life is extremely bad, as from deprivation, oppression, or terror.

Based on what you know about the community in *The Giver*, is it a Utopia or a dystopia?

5. In literature a symbol is something that stands for something else. For example, on one level, brightness or light in a short story or novel can mean that an area is lit up or illuminated. On another level, the light can stand for knowledge.

What do you think Jonas is a symbol of in *The Giver*?