



THE GIVER: NOVEL DISCUSSION GUIDE #3

Encourage critical thinking and support your students' literacy development by asking questions during reading. Here are some questions you can ask your readers to engage them in a discussion.

Chapters 12 – 14 Sample answers

Comprehension

- How does Jonas respond when he learns about colors?
He thinks the color red is beautiful, and he is fascinated by the idea of colors and wants to see more. He asks the Giver about colors and is upset that the community had to let go of colors when they went to Sameness.
- Why does Jonas think it isn't fair that nothing has color?
He realizes that when everything is the same, there are no choices. He believes that "it's the choosing that's important."
- Give two examples of how Jonas tries to impact other characters with the new knowledge he has gained from the memories.
Jonas tries to get Asher to see the color red in some flowers, and he tries to give Lily and his father the memory of elephants.
- Why do the Elders rarely ask the Giver for advice? And how does the Giver feel about this?
The Elders only ask the Receiver of Memory for advice when they encounter something they've never experienced before. Since the community is so safe and orderly, it is rare for them to encounter new things. The Giver is disappointed about this because there are things he would like to change, but he says the Elders don't want change.
- What happened ten years ago when the previous Receiver failed?
The memories that she had received were released, and everyone in the community had access to them. The people suffered and there was chaos for a time, which reminded the Elders why a Receiver is needed to contain all the pain and the knowledge of the memories.
- Describe two instances in which the Committee of Elders asked for the Giver's advice in the past. What did they ask, and what was the Giver's advice?
The Elders once asked about the possibility of increasing the birth rate/population. He advised them to not increase the birth rates because he remembered hunger, starvation, and warfare that had resulted from overpopulation centuries ago. They also asked his advice about the plane that had flown over the community. He advised them not to shoot it down because similar hasty actions in the past led to destruction.
- What happens when Jonas soothes Gabriel during the night, and why is Jonas frightened by it?
He accidentally (and later intentionally) transmits a memory to Gabriel. Jonas is frightened because he didn't realize he had the power to transmit memories. He's also not qualified to be a Giver, and Gabriel hasn't been selected to be a Receiver, so he may have accidentally broken a rule.



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Analysis

- “We gained control of many things. But we had to let go of others.” What does this quote mean in the context of the story?

The Giver is talking about the compromises the community made when they went to Sameness. They were able to gain control of things like the climate and the land to make the world safer and more orderly. But in order to do that, they had to give up things like colors and weather and choices.

- What clues does the author give to show how the Giver feels about having the burden of the memories fall on one person? Find specific parts of the text to support your answer.

When Jonas starts talking about his science instructors' lessons about how the brain works, the Giver gets “an odd look” on his face and “bitterly” says that “they know nothing.” He describes the memories as a “burden” and has an “oddly harsh” smile when describing the “great honor” it is. These clues suggest that he feels bitter and resentful about the community forcing all of the memories on only one person.

- Describe the memory of pain that the Giver transmits to Jonas in Chapter 14. Why does the Giver give Jonas painful memories? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

The Giver transmits another memory of sledding down a snowy hill, but this one ends with Jonas breaking his leg. The Giver knows that he must give Jonas painful memories because that's part of the responsibility of being the Receiver of Memories. The Giver tells Jonas, “I suppose I can't shield you forever.” The Giver also says that pain “gives us wisdom,” which Jonas will eventually need when the Elders ask for his advice as the Receiver.

- Why does Jonas's realization that his family and friends have never known pain make him feel lonely? What does this imply about the role of the Receiver of Memory and about the Giver himself?

Jonas feels “desperately lonely” because he can never talk to his family or friends about the pain or describe it to them, partly because of the rules, but also because they couldn't grasp the concept of pain. They can't empathize or share the understanding of pain, meaning Jonas is alone in it. This means that the Receiver of Memory is an extremely lonely role, and the Giver is likely a very lonely person since no one in the community can understand the things he knows.

Personal Connection

- ★ “We really have to protect people from wrong choices.” Do you agree or disagree with this quote? Why?

Student answers will vary.



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Chapters 15 – 17 Sample answers

Comprehension

- At the end of Chapter 15, the Giver asks forgiveness for transmitting a memory to Jonas. What is the memory, and why does he ask for forgiveness?
The Giver asks for Jonas's forgiveness after transmitting the memory of warfare to Jonas. He asks forgiveness because this is the most painful memory he has transmitted to Jonas so far, and he knows that it will be extremely difficult for Jonas to handle.
- Why does Jonas want his childhood again at the beginning of Chapter 16?
Jonas wants his childhood because it was a simpler and happier time before he had experienced the burden of the memories. He has just received the memory of war, which is the most painful memory yet, so he is longing for the time before he had the memories of such painful experiences.
- In Chapter 16, the Giver transmits his favorite memory to Jonas. Describe this memory, the new words or concepts that Jonas learns from it, and how Jonas feels about the memory.
It's a warm and happy memory of a family at Christmastime. Jonas learns about grandparents and about the true feeling of love. He really enjoyed the warmth and happiness of the memory, and part of him wishes that the community could still have some of those things, even though it wasn't as safe or as organized as the community is now.
- Why does Jonas throw his pill away at the end of Chapter 16? What might this mean for Jonas's personal growth?
Something within Jonas that had grown through the memories told him to throw the pill away. He knows that the pill suppresses emotions, but now that he has been experiencing so many new emotions through the memories, he wants to continue feeling them, even if it means breaking the rules.
- Why does Jonas feel differently now about the game of good guys and bad guys that Asher and the other children are playing?
Jonas now recognizes it as a game of war. Since Jonas has experienced terrible memories of war, he is horrified by the game and tries to explain to Asher why it's a cruel game to play.
- Jonas is now aware that memories shape personal experience and the ability to understand. What is one situation in which Jonas realizes that the people in his community don't actually understand what they're feeling?
Jonas realizes that when Lily said she was "angry" about a child breaking a rule in the play area, that she wasn't truly feeling anger, just "shallow impatience and exasperation." He also realizes that when his mother said she felt "sad," that she wasn't experiencing true sadness or grief.



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Chapters 15 – 17 Sample answers

Analysis

- Give some specific examples of words and phrases in Chapter 15 that set the tone and have the strongest emotional impact. What effect does this language have on the reader?
(Examples of words and phrases will vary.) The language that the author uses in Chapter 15 helps to immerse the reader in the setting of the memory of war. There are lots of words for pain and suffering, and the description of the setting is dark and hopeless, causing the reader to feel some of the pain that Jonas is feeling as he's experiencing the memory.
- After receiving the Giver's favorite memory, Jonas admits that "it was a *dangerous* way to live" and feels that "there was *risk* involved." What does he mean by this? What danger or risk do you think he's talking about?
Jonas probably subconsciously understands that having strong feelings of love like in the memory of the family could lead to heartbreak and grief. Love might feel dangerous to Jonas because it's a strong emotion that could make the community become less organized and controlled.
- How do Jonas's parents respond when Jonas asks if they love him? How does Jonas probably feel about their response? Use specific parts of the text in your answer.
They laugh and remind him of the importance of precise language. Jonas's parents say that love is such a generalized word that it's almost "meaningless" and "obsolete." But Jonas "had never before felt anything as meaningful as the memory" of love, so he probably feels disappointed that they don't understand or embarrassed that he asked in the first place.
- Explain how the author shows that Jonas has changed in Chapter 17. Give specific quotes from the text to support your answer.
(Quotes will vary.) The author shows that Jonas has changed by discussing the ways in which he experiences the community differently now that he has received some of the memories. He sees color everywhere all of the time, and he understands more about the wider world (e.g., the river). He can't imagine calmly discussing emotions like anger or sadness at the evening meal now that he has experienced true anger, pain, and grief.

Personal Connection

- ★ The Giver shared his favorite memory with Jonas. What is one of your favorite memories? Describe the memory in as much detail as you can, including your thoughts, emotions, and sensations.

Student answers will vary.