



THE GIVER: NOVEL DISCUSSION GUIDE #4

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 18 – 20 Sample answers

Comprehension

- Who was Rosemary?

Rosemary was the previous Receiver-in-training who failed after five weeks and requested release from the community. She was also the Giver's daughter.

- According to the Giver, what was Rosemary like before she requested release?

He says Rosemary was a "remarkable young woman. Very self-possessed and serene. Intelligent, eager to learn." He says that "she listened carefully" when he tried to explain things and that her eyes were "very luminous." He also says that she was "enthusiastic" and "delighted to experience new things," and she understood her responsibility to accept the more difficult memories.

- What caused Rosemary to change? Give some specific examples that the Giver mentions to Jonas.

The difficult memories that caused Rosemary to change were ones of emotional pain, such as loneliness and loss. The Giver transmitted a memory of a child being taken from its parents that left Rosemary stunned. Memories of anguish like poverty, hunger, and terror also caused Rosemary to change.

- How are Rosemary and Jonas alike? How are they different?

They are alike because they are both curious and eager to experience the memories, and they also both take seriously the responsibility to receive difficult and painful memories. They are different because Rosemary only trained for five weeks before asking to be released, but Jonas has been training for almost a year and has never considered release.

- How does Jonas learn what release really means? How does he react when he learns the truth?

He watches the video of his father releasing the twin and realizes that release is just death. He feels stunned and horrified at what his father did. He's angry that he has been lied to his whole life about release and about Elsewhere. And he feels hopeless because he doesn't think there is anything he can do to change it.

- What do Jonas and the Giver decide to do in Chapter 20? Why do they decide this, and why do they think it will work?

Jonas and the Giver form a plan to have Jonas sneak out of the community so that all of the memories he has received will go back to the people. They hope that this will give the community wisdom and help them change for the better. They think this will work because the Giver plans to stay behind to help the people deal with the difficult emotions.

- How does the Giver feel about the plan that he and Jonas have made?

He feels hopeful for the first time that the community might be able to make a change. He wants to stay behind to help the community members and feels that this plan can actually work.

- What memory does Jonas want the Giver to keep? Why does Jonas want him to keep it?

Jonas tells the Giver to keep his memories of music. He knows that the Giver cherishes those memories because he hasn't given them away to Jonas yet, and Jonas wants the Giver to have those pleasant memories when Jonas leaves.



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Analysis

- How does the Giver feel about release, specifically the release of newchildren? What words or phrases from the text help you know how he feels?
He disapproves of releasing newchildren. He is “solemn” when he says that he wishes “they wouldn’t do that.” He firmly tells Jonas that he thinks Jonas should watch the tape, shushes Jonas, and commands him “in a strange voice” to be quiet, which shows that he is serious and feels strongly about release, and he thinks Jonas should know the truth.
- As Jonas watches the release of the twin, a memory comes back to him. What memory is it? What are the parallels between the memory and the release of the newchild? Why do you think this memory comes back to Jonas at this point?
The memory of the boy dying in the war comes back to Jonas when he sees the newchild go still. Jonas sees the newchild go limp with “his eyes half open,” which reminds Jonas of how the boy in the memory’s head fell back and “a dull blankness slid slowly across his eyes.” These similarities help both Jonas and the reader understand that the newchild is dead without actually saying it.
- Does Jonas’s father truly understand what he’s doing when he releases the twin? Do other adults in the community understand what release really is? Give evidence from the text to support your answer.
After Jonas gets angry that his father lied to him about the release ceremony for the twin, the Giver tells Jonas that “they know nothing” and that “it’s what he was told to do, and he knows nothing else.” This indicates that Jonas’s father knows that he is lying to Jonas when he tells him that somebody from Elsewhere comes to get the released newchild. But Jonas’s father may not fully understand what death is because he doesn’t have the memories or emotions that Jonas and the Giver have. Other adults in the community who don’t perform release ceremonies probably don’t know that release is death because they’ve never been told.
- How and why has Jonas’s opinion of the community changed in the year he’s been training with the Giver? What evidence from the text shows you how he feels now?
Jonas has lost trust in the community and the Elders. He no longer believes that they make the best choices for everyone in the community. He feels angry and resentful that he has been lied to his whole life. Jonas mimics the Speaker in a “cruel, sarcastic voice” and is both sad and angry after he learns the truth.

Personal Connection

- ★ The community uses the word “release” as a euphemism—a mild or pleasant way of saying something unpleasant. Some common euphemisms in English include “passed away,” “let go,” “put to sleep,” “restroom,” and many more. Why do you think people use euphemisms? Do you think euphemisms are a good thing? Why or why not?

Student answers will vary.



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Chapters 21 – 23 Sample answers

Comprehension

- Why does Jonas suddenly abandon the plan he had made with the Giver?
At the evening meal, Jonas learns that Gabriel will be released in the morning, so he flees with Gabriel in the middle of the night. Now that Jonas knows that release means death, he knows it's the only way to save Gabriel.
- How does Jonas use the memories for his and Gabriel's survival on their journey?
Jonas transmits memories of relaxation and exhaustion to help Gabriel sleep during the day so they can ride at night. He also uses memories of snow to make Gabriel and himself cold to help them avoid the heat-seeking devices on the search planes.
- How does Jonas know that the community has given up trying to find him and Gabriel?
At first, the search planes come multiple times every day and fly slowly to look carefully for Jonas and Gabriel. After a while, they come less, and when they do, they are less careful in their searches. Eventually, the search planes stop altogether, indicating that the community has given up trying to find Jonas and Gabriel.
- How does the landscape change as Jonas and Gabriel get farther away from the community?
At first there are fields, but as Jonas and Gabriel get farther away from the community, the landscape becomes more isolated. The path becomes narrower and bumpier with more trees and dark forests. For the first time, Jonas sees a waterfall and wild animals. Eventually they come to a large hill and encounter snow.
- In Chapter 22, Jonas thinks about starvation in two different ways. What are these different types of starvation?
Jonas is experiencing physical hunger for the first time now that their food has run out. He acknowledges that if he had stayed in the community, he would never have experienced hunger like this. But he also admits that if he had stayed, he would be starving on a mental/emotional level because he wouldn't have feelings or colors or love.
- In Chapter 23, Jonas has moments when he wants to give up. What keeps him going?
When Jonas wants to give up, he remembers that he is trying to save Gabriel. He knows that if he stops, then they'll both die. He also feels that Elsewhere is close, and he's already come so far that he doesn't want to give up now.
- Why does Jonas suddenly become happy as he approaches the summit of the hill?
He is overcome with joy because he remembers happy times with his family and friends back in the community.
- What does Jonas experience as he and Gabriel arrive Elsewhere?
Jonas and Gabriel find a sled waiting for them at the top of the hill, and they ride it down the hill through the snow storm. Jonas feels hopeful as he sees colorful lights and hears people singing for the first time.



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Chapters 21 – 23 Sample answers

Analysis

- How does the author build a sense of suspense throughout Chapter 21? How is this technique effective?
The author uses text breaks and flashbacks throughout Chapter 21 to build suspense. By telling the story a little bit at a time and leaving out certain parts, it makes the reader want to find out more about the events that led to this point and what will happen next.
- What does Jonas's decision to flee tell you about his character? Do you think he would have made the same choice at the beginning of the story? Why or why not?
The fact that Jonas chooses to flee in order to save Gabriel instead of waiting for his plan with the Giver shows that he is brave and selfless. He no longer trusts the community now that he knows that release is death. He cares for Gabriel and risks everything to save him. Jonas probably wouldn't have made the same choice in the beginning of the story. He hadn't experienced the memories yet, meaning he didn't feel true emotions like love, and he also didn't yet know that release is actually death.
- How has the mood and tone of the story changed by the end of Chapter 21? What are some specific parts of the story that set this new tone?
By the end of Chapter 21, the story is much darker and more serious. Jonas and Gabriel are trying to flee from the community and survive, which is much more dangerous than life in the community. The author's use of language helps set the tone. For example, when she calls Jonas and Gabriel "fugitives" and describes their situation as "dangerous," "terrifying," and "frightening."
- How does the author show in Chapter 22 that Jonas is conflicted over his choice to leave the community?
Jonas's inner thoughts about starvation show the reader that he is conflicted about leaving the community. When he's starving and cold and in pain, he remembers how easy life was in the community, and he feels he made the wrong choice in leaving. But then he remembers the lack of choice and freedom in the community and the fact that Gabriel was going to be released, and he realizes that he didn't really have a choice.
- Based on the way the book ends, what is one message the author wants readers to take away from the story? What evidence from the text supports this message?
(Student answers will vary.) One message the author might want readers to take away from the story is the importance of hope and perseverance when facing challenges. The last chapter of the book shows Jonas persevering through an extremely difficult situation. He's literally climbing a hill in the snow while carrying Gabriel, all because he is hopeful that whatever lies Elsewhere is better than the life he left behind in the community. In the end, he and Gabriel arrive in a place with warmth and love.

Personal Connection

- ★ In your opinion, is this a happy ending to the story? Why or why not?

Student answers will vary.