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INTRODUCTION

Read through any curricular documents, and you will find that the work expected of students is expressed using such academic terminology as *describe*, *determine*, *develop*, *support* and *cite*. Requirements such as these cannot be met via the comprehension-question worksheets and culminating quizzes that have long been the staples of literature guides designed for classroom use. The primary objective of those traditional activities was to make sure that students were keeping track of what was happening in the section of the novel that they had just read. Very little rigour and synthesis was asked of students – and usually none until the entire novel was read.

From a teacher's standpoint, this style of classroom analysis misses multiple opportunities to delve deeply into the details that make a specific piece of literature a classic; from a student's standpoint, this way to reflect on literature is monotonous and inflexible, and it fails to nurture the momentum experienced when one is invested in a compelling work of art. That is why the guides in the *Rigorous Reading* series aim to do much more: they aim to transform the reading of a great novel into a journey of discovery for students.

Instead of merely asking students what happened in any given section, this resource asks questions that require closer reading and deeper analysis – questions such as, "Why did the author choose to include this information?" and "How does this information further the plot or offer more insight into the themes, characters, settings, etc.?" And instead of waiting until the end of the novel to put the pieces of the puzzle in place, students will learn to add to and alter their understanding of the novel as *they are reading it*. The various activities in this resource systematically prompt students to consider and appreciate the many ingredients the author has combined to form the novel as a whole.

A CUSTOM RESOURCE

This in-depth guide has been written specifically for Lois Lowry's *The Giver*. The lessons and activities have been structured and scaffolded to maximise the experience of reading and teaching this novel.

To prepare your students for their reading of *The Giver*, utilise the **novel information** and **pre-reading activities** included on pages 7–9 of this guide. Included in this section is information about the book and its author, along with an activity designed to acclimate students to the themes and/or concepts present in the book they are about to read.

This resource provides activities that help foster comprehension and reinforce knowledge of literary elements as students read *The Giver*. These **section activities** allow students the opportunity to process short sections of the novel at a time, laying a strong foundation for their ability to engage more deeply with the chapters to come. For each section of the novel, students will complete individual and collaborative activities that encourage close reading, referencing textual evidence and drawing their own conclusions about the text.

Additionally, this resource provides students with another avenue through which they can reflect on recurring literary elements, while also connecting personally with the novel. Each student maintains his or her own **Interactive Novel Log**, using it as a way to consider and then reconsider various aspects of the novel.

Upon completion of the entire novel, students can synthesise their ideas about the novel by completing several individual and/or collaborative **post-reading activities** on pages 61–73. This section of the resource contains larger assignments including a group project, essay assignments and a research project.

On pages 74–75, **vocabulary** lists are provided for each section of the novel, along with suggestions for ways to teach vocabulary during reading and after completing the novel.

At the end of this guide, an **answer key** is provided for activities that require specific answers.

Key Notes

For a description of Interactive Novel Logs and how to use them in your classroom, see page 5 of this guide.

An ideal way to use this resource would be to follow the complete lesson plan given on page 6 of this guide.

The use of multiple texts can help build and extend knowledge about a theme or topic. It can also illustrate the similarities and differences in how multiple authors approach similar content or how an individual author approaches multiple novels. See the bottom of page 7 for suggestions about using *The Giver* as part of a text set.

When teaching other novels in your classroom, consider using the specific ideas and also the general approach presented in this resource. Ask students to mine small sections of a novel for clues to theme and characterisation. Examine the craft, structure and purpose of selected passages. Explore inferences and encourage connections.

This guide is designed for use in years 5–8. This levelling has been determined through the consideration of various educational metrics. However, teacher discretion should be used to determine if the novel and guide are appropriate for lower or higher years, as well.

KEEPING NOVEL LOGS

Great works of literature are complex texts, and complex texts are multi-layered. They enrich and reveal as they go along. Successful readers are those who “go along” with the novel, too. Interactive Novel Logs give each student a place and a space to record their thoughts and observations as they journey through the book. After each section of the novel is read, students use their Interactive Novel Logs to track the introduction and development of such literary elements as plot, setting, theme, characterisation, craft and structure, while also choosing their own ways to connect the novel to their own life experiences.

Materials needed for each student:

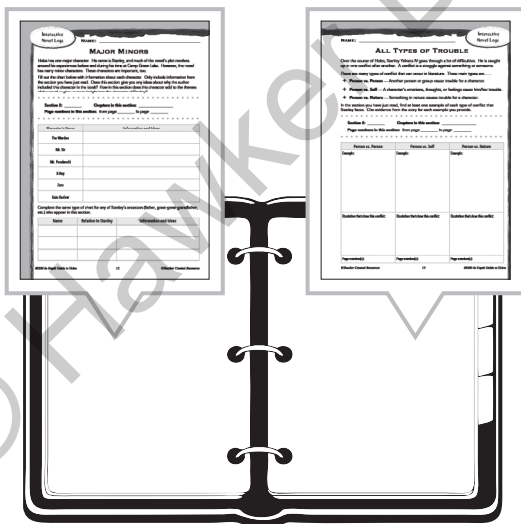
- ✦ a three-ring binder or presentation folder
- ✦ a blank sheet of plain paper with holes punched for title page
- ✦ two or three sheets of blank lined paper for Table of Contents
- ✦ several extra sheets of paper (both lined and plain) for student’s responses to the “Ideas for Your Interactive Log” prompts at the end of each section

Key Notes

One Interactive Novel Log can be kept for multiple novels, in which case a larger three-ring binder will be needed. If it will be used only for the activities included in this guide for *The Giver*, a smaller binder or presentation folder will be adequate.

Assembling the Interactive Novel Log:

1. On the plain paper, allow students to design their own title page. Have them write “Interactive Novel Log” and “*The Giver*” in the middle of the page. They should include their name and class at the bottom. Allow students to decorate the page.
2. Add blank lined paper for the Table of Contents. Have students write “Table of Contents” at the top. They will add to this list as they create new pages.



3. Before reading each section of the novel, photocopy and distribute new copies of the Interactive Novel Log worksheets (pages 10–14). Directions for completing these activities can be found in the “Teacher Instructions” that begin Section I (page 15).
4. For the final activity in each section, photocopy and distribute the “Section Log-In” page for the section. Follow the directions given. Students select one or more of the four topics in the “Ideas for Your Interactive Log” section and create an Interactive Novel Log page that responds to that topic.

5. After the class has completed the entire novel and the post-reading activities, you may have students include the “My Book Rating” worksheet (page 67) as a final entry in their Interactive Novel Logs.

NOVEL INFORMATION

Book Summary

The Giver tells the story of Jonas, an adolescent living in a futuristic community that has suppressed memory, emotion and individuality. At first, the community seems like a harmonious place that has done away with most societal problems. There is no crime, no hunger and no natural disasters. The community exercises strict population control, in both the planning and placing of babies and the release of the elderly. Anyone who does not fit in is “released” to Elsewhere. When Jonas is selected to be the new Receiver of Memory, his new-found wisdom about the importance of memories, emotions and individuality spurs him to action. When he discovers the true meaning of “release”, he can no longer accept the community’s way of life. His mentor, The Giver, helps Jonas realise that he has the power to change the community, but to do so comes with great risk.

Originally published in 1993, *The Giver* won the Newbery Medal in 1994. It is the first instalment in a quartet of novels that explore different futuristic communities through different protagonists.

About the Author

Lois Lowry, born on 20 March 1937, has proven to be a prolific and versatile writer who has authored dozens of children’s and young adult novels since her first publication in 1977. Lowry’s highly popular novels span several genres. She has written contemporary realistic fiction, historical fiction and science fiction. Many of her novels have won awards and critical acclaim, and *The Giver* is generally considered to be one of her most successful works. *The Giver* is the first in a quartet. Notably, *The Giver* has been one of the most frequently “challenged” books in America, meaning schools and libraries have banned it at times. On her website, Lowry herself addresses the irony of banning *The Giver*, a book that addresses the dangers of lack of choice and loss of freedom.

Make It a Text Set!

The following novels can form ideal text sets with *The Giver*. (**Note:** Vet books in advance to ensure they are appropriate for your students.)

Other Novels by Lois Lowry	Novels by Other Authors
<i>Gathering Blue</i> (2000)	<i>Legend</i> by Marie Lu
<i>The Messenger</i> (2004)	<i>The House of the Scorpion</i> by Nancy Farmer
<i>Son</i> (2012)	<i>The City of Ember</i> by Jeanne DuPrau