



The Giver, a play
Based on the novel by Lois Lowry
Adapted for the stage by Eric Coble

Name _____

Class _____

Viewing Guide for the ESL Classroom

■ Something to Think About

Think about the following questions on your own. After you have answered them, share your answers with another student or a group.

- a. Do you know the word "**utopia**?" What does it mean?
- b. What are some characteristics of a utopia?
- c. Would you like to live in a utopia? Why or why not?
- d. If you were the leader of a utopia, what three rules would you create?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

■ READING: Summary Of *The Giver*

Read the following summary two times. First, read the summary straight through. If you don't know a word, circle and skip it. Don't use a dictionary. Second, read the summary again. This time, use a dictionary and look up the words that you don't know.

Jonas's world is perfect. He lives in a **utopia** with his father, mother, and sister. It has no war or fear or pain. Everyone is **polite** and everyone has what they need.

- At first, Jonas's community seems to be a good place to live. Jonas soon learns more about the community. What he learns is **unsettling**. Children are born to mothers who never see them. When a
- 5 baby is born, they are sent to the *Nurturing Center*¹, where Jonas's father works. After two months, they are given to **compatible** couples who have applied for a child. Each family can only have two children.

- When the children are grown, the parents go to live in the *Childless Adult Area*. Later, when the adults no longer **contribute** to the community, they go to the *House of the Old* until they are released.
- 10 Release² happens to old people, **unacceptable** children, and people who break three rules. Release is actually death, but is not called that. Talking about death and other unsettling topics is

unacceptable. People in the community cannot see color and they cannot feel love. They have no memories of the past. This started many generations ago when the community went to *Sameness*³.

15 When Jonas turns twelve years old, he receives an unusual job. He becomes the new *Receiver of Memory*, the person who is **responsible** for all of the memories of the community. The current Receiver gives his memories to Jonas. There are many, many memories to pass to Jonas. There are all the memories of the past: war, **famine**, floods, and many happy memories as well. The current Receiver, who tells Jonas to call him *the Giver*, has much to give.

20 As Jonas learns the memories of the past, he grows. Jonas realizes how much he has been missing, how much his community has been missing. They have avoided **suffering**, but at a high cost. As Jonas learns more, he becomes more and more unsettled with his utopian life.

A distance develops between Jonas and his friends, Asher and Fiona. Jonas becomes able to feel love, and they cannot. In the meantime, Jonas and *the Giver* grow closer. *The Giver* understands him. He has felt like Jonas feels for years. As Jonas becomes more unsettled, *the Giver* says that they can make a plan to change things. But, before they make a change, time runs out.

25 One day, Jonas's dad brings home a new child who needs special attention. His name is Gabriel. Jonas helps his family care for Gabriel and becomes attached to him. Later, Jonas finds out that the *Nurturing Center* plans to release Gabriel because he is unacceptable.

30 Finally, Jonas decides to run away with Gabriel. They travel many days in winter weather. It is a difficult **journey**.

1. *Nurturing Center* – (n.) a place where newborn babies are cared for.

2. *Release* – (v.) to kill, (n.) death.

3. *Sameness* – (n.) time when everyone became the same (hair color, eye color, skin color, no emotions, etc.)

■ Vocabulary Check

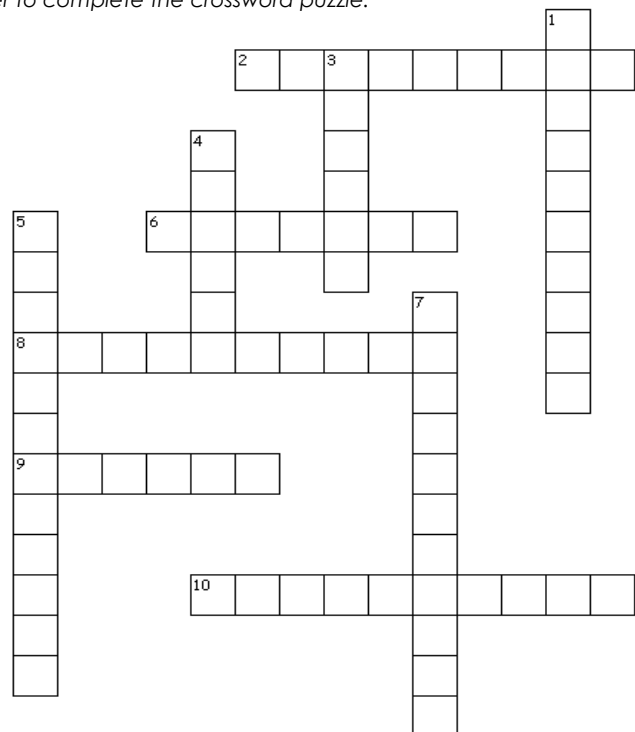
Use the boldfaced words from the Summary of *The Giver* to complete the crossword puzzle.

Across

- 2. extreme hurt, pain, or discomfort
- 6. long trip
- 8. good match
- 9. using good manners and behavior
- 10. to give in a positive way, to help others

Down

- 1. something that causes alarm, uncomfortable feeling
- 3. not having food
- 4. perfect community, peaceful and happy
- 5. not wanted, bad quality
- 7. taking ownership of one's actions or job



■ Comprehension Check

Complete the statements or answer the following questions about the Summary of the Giver. Some questions may have more than one answer.

- Jonas lived in a _____ community.
 - polite
 - utopian
 - violent
 - perfect
- Jonas's father _____.
 - lives in the Nurturing Center
 - takes care of children
 - is the Giver
 - brings Gabriel home from his job
- Release happens to _____ and people who break the rules.
 - all children
 - old people
 - parents with children
 - babies with problems
- What happens when Jonas turns twelve?
 - He runs away.
 - He gets a girlfriend.
 - He gets a new job.
 - He becomes the Giver.
- When Jonas learns about the true history of his community, he feels _____.
 - lonely
 - upset
 - happy
 - nervous
- In the end, why does Jonas run away from his home?
 - He wants a new life.
 - He wants to keep the memories for himself.
 - He wants to have a family.
 - He wants to save Gabriel from being killed.

■ Discussion Questions

Answer the following questions, then discuss them in groups or with your class.

1. Imagine you are living in a utopian community like Jonas. What are the good points and bad points of living in such a place?
2. Do you think it is possible to make a utopian community? Are there places in the world today that are utopian societies?
3. At the end of the story, what do you think Jonas finds on his journey? Use the back of this paper to write the ending of the story. Is it a happy ending? Is it a sad ending? Is it a surprising ending?