# ACA Summer Reading: 8th Grade

Required Selection:
The Giver by Lois Lowry

The Giver is a 1993 American young adult dystopian novel by Lois Lowry. It is set in a society which at first appears to be utopian but is revealed to be dystopian as the story progresses. The novel follows a 12-year-old boy named Jonas. *The Giver* has many universal themes which we will be delving into at the beginning of the year. We'll revisit novel, including the themes, characters and character development, story structure, and more, especially as these things relate to other novel studies we will do throughout the course of the year.
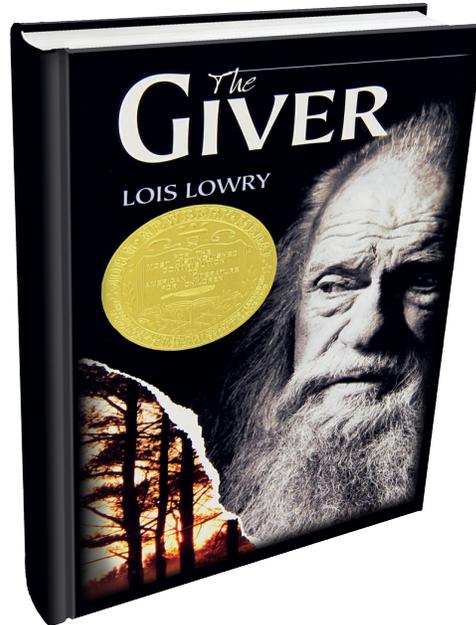
Please purchase a copy of *The Giver*. This book is available through Barnes and Noble and other sources. **You will need to have your own hard copy for annotating.** This document includes the assignments you will need to complete along with the summer reading. We encourage you to start your eighth-grade year off strong!

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2-Part Assignment Due Date
- Students are required to bring their books and typed assignments to class on the second day of school, **Friday, August 11**
- Any student who is **absent** on this day will be required to submit **a hard copy the day he or she returns to school**

Comprehensive Reading Test
- Students will be tested on the reading on **Wednesday, August 16**

Part 1: ANNOTATION

In higher-level learning, you are encouraged to practice and skillfully master the art of avid note-taking. As you read the summer novel, annotate the text. Annotating can be completed through underlining, highlighting, and note taking within the margins. However, simply highlighting and underlining is not enough. I will be looking for evidence that the book was read in its entirety and that you understood the book. Reading is thinking; through annotating, you reflect on your own metacognition—that is to say, you *think* about your thinking.

Things to look for:
- Important plot events
- Setting
- Conflicts (internal and external)
- Foreshadow
- Characterization
- Irony
- Mood
- Flashback

- Passages that describe or reveal characteristics
- Imagery
- Patterns (in meaning and syntax)
- Symbolism
- Themes
- Figurative language (such as similes, metaphors, personification)
- Your thoughts, analysis, and opinion of the writing and the plot

DO NOT MARK for the sake of marking. Annotating should make essay writing easier because you have front loaded all your thinking. Consider the difference in these examples:

- Bad example: "Wow. So cool."
- **Good example:** "That's a bold move. Until now, he seemed cowardly."
- Bad example: "What does this word mean?"
- **Good example:** "Capricious: prone to making sudden changes." Same as unpredictable?
- Bad example: "Lol."
- **Good example:** "It's funny to picture someone screaming in high-tiered vocabulary."

Annotation Scoring Rubric

60%	60-69%	70-79%	80-89%	90-100%
• Simple highlighting or identification is present throughout the <u>entire</u> book • Observations lack purpose and/or variety.	• Highlighting or underlining, while intentional, is not accompanied by commentary. • The reader did **not analyze** the text.	• Lots of highlighting and underling, but noted commentary is infrequent; many pages are empty. • Annotations show comprehension but **not analysis**. • Annotations offer some variety.	• Annotations are above the average. • There are notes on every other page. • Annotations show comprehension and **analysis**. • Annotations vary in content.	• Annotations are among the best in the class. • There are multiple annotations on **each** page. • Annotations are **analytical and unique.** • Annotations vary in content.

Part 2: WRITING
For this section you will be required to complete three different writing assignments for the novel in reference to the themes. All assignments should be typed out in Times New Roman, 12 point font. Your responses should be 100-250 words.

1. ***Sameness***: In her Newbery Award acceptance speech, Lois Lowry said: "I've never been a writer of fairy tales. And if I've learned anything through that river of memories, it is that we can't live in a walled world, in an 'only us, only now' world where we are all the same and feel safe. We would have to sacrifice too much."

   The Giver says, "Our people made… the choice to go to Sameness… We relinquished color when we relinquished sunshine and did away with differences… We gained control of many things. But we had to let go of others." (Novel, p. 95)

   Related Questions: Why do you think the creators of the Community decided to eliminate differences in color, in terrain, in weather, etc.? How would our society be different if we eliminated these kinds of diversity? What if, like in The Giver, there were no differences in our skin tones? What if we all dressed alike, and all lived in exactly the same kind of house, with exactly the same size of family? What would we gain? What might we lose?

2. ***Memory/History***: To people in Jonas's community, memories are limited to personal experience. Father and Mother recall their own childhoods, but there is no common knowledge of any time before.

   The Giver explains to Jonas "There's much more" than the world of "only us, only now." He adds, "There's all that goes beyond—all that is Elsewhere—and all that goes back and back and back. . . It is how wisdom comes and how we shape our future." (Novel, p. 78; Script, p. 21-22)

Related Questions: Imagine if the entire history of our society, through present day, was erased, and we had no memories. Would people be better or worse off without any individual or collective memories of the past? Why? Why does it matter that we study and preserve our history, and also our cultural artifacts, including music and artworks? How does preserving the past help us in the present?

3. *Utopia* : "A utopia is an imagined place or state of things in which everything is perfect. A dystopia is an imagined place or state in which everything is bad; in other words, the opposite of a utopia." In her Newbery Award acceptance speech, Lois Lowry also said: "In beginning to write The Giver I … tried to make Jonas's world seem familiar, comfortable, and safe, and I tried to seduce the reader. I seduced myself along the way. It did feel good, that world. I got rid of all the things I fear and dislike; all the violence, prejudice, poverty, and injustice, and I even threw in good manners as a way of life because I liked the idea of it… It was very, very tempting to leave it at that."

Related Questions: In what ways is Jonas's community a utopia? Could the community also be seen as a dystopia? Is it possible for a society to go from utopia to dystopia? How might this transformation occur? What would happen if, through science and technology, we gained the ability to master nature and our environment, and eliminate disease and hunger? Do you think it would be a good thing for a society, or a bad thing?

PLAGIARISM POLICY

If any form of plagiarism is detected on the assignment(s) submitted, the assignment(s) will not receive FULL credit or ANY credit, at the discretion of the teacher and the school. Therefore, it is imperative to **cite any borrowed material and quotes that you choose to incorporate in your responses**.

Plagiarism is a very serious issue in the academic world. Sometimes labeled as "literary theft," plagiarism is defined as follows:

In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer…uses someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source. This definition applies to texts published in print or online, to manuscripts, and to the work of other student writers.

- The Council of Writing Program Administrators, in affiliation with
Purdue University's On-Line Writing Lab, http://www.wpacouncil.org/node/9

Plagiarism is the act of appropriating either the words or the ideas of any other writer without properly acknowledging the source of those words or ideas. It is cheating! God has given you increased potential to be in this class, and I would encourage you to learn how to tap into this potential throughout the school year.