

Activity 1

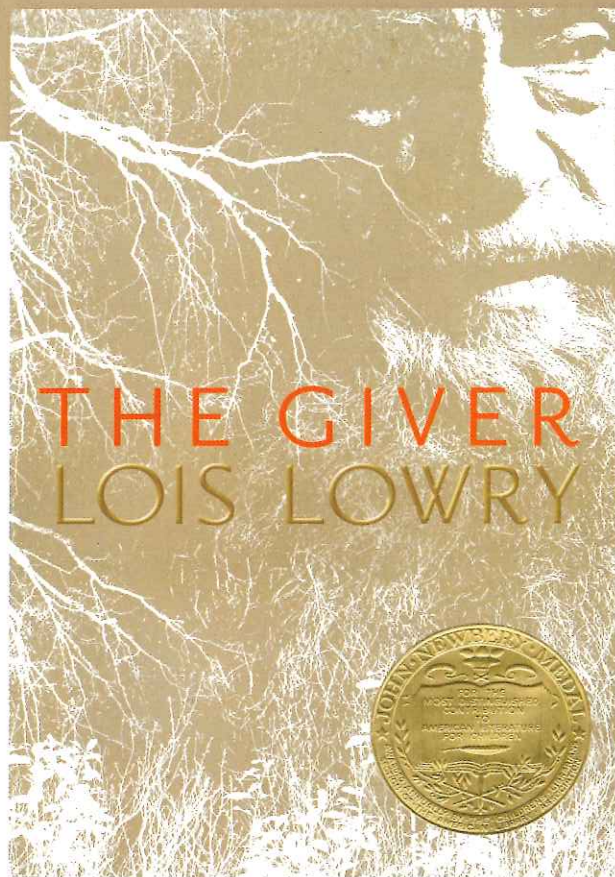
“Other Rivers Flowing”: Using Lois Lowry’s Newbery Award Acceptance Speech

In her speech accepting the 1994 Newbery Award for *The Giver*, Lois Lowry discussed two questions she was often asked by students: “How do you know where to start?” and “How did you get this idea?” This activity will give your students a chance to read the informational text and use it to examine *The Giver*.

Class Activity:

A video of Lois Lowry delivering her Newbery Award acceptance speech, as well as a transcript of that speech, can be found online at loislowry.com. Click “Collections” on the main page, then “Speeches.” Read or watch the speech, bringing your students’ attention specifically to the selections below:

- “I’d like...to...try to tell you the origins of this book. It is a little like Jonas looking into the river and realizing that it carries with it everything that has come from an Elsewhere. A spring, perhaps, at the beginning, bubbling up from the earth; then a trickle from a glacier; a mountain stream entering farther along; and each tributary bringing with it collected bits and pieces from the past...from the countless Elsewheres...For me, the tributaries are memories, and I’ve selected only a few...”
- “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. One child has pointed out in a letter that the people in Jonas’s world didn’t even have to do the dishes...”



Class Discussion:

After reading and discussing Lowry’s speech, ask your students to think first about the “tributaries”—or Lois Lowry’s memories—that have contributed to *The Giver*. How do these memories appear in *The Giver*? Ask them to record their observations individually or share them with partners or the full class.

Next, ask students to look out for what Lowry calls “the good things” about the world of *The Giver* as they read the book. Ask them to identify their opinions of these “good things” and if they change as the story progresses. Why or why not?

