

At a Glance – “Against the Rules”

- **Lesson Objective:** Examine the characteristics of a community and its response to an unusual event.
- **In the Novel:** A young boy, Jonas, recalls the frightening event of a jet flying over his community as he wrestles with his current feelings of apprehension. Through Jonas’ recollections, we begin to learn that the community is governed by strict and unusual rules.
- **Key Questions:** Questions 2, 3, 7, and 9 (see student packet) are the most important questions of the day and should not be skipped.
- **Words to Watch For:**
 - **jeering** (p. 3): making rude or mocking comments
 - **palpable** (p. 4): so intense that you feel like you can touch it
 - **distraught** (p. 5): deeply upset or worried
- **Homework Options:**
 - Questions from the lesson that were skipped for time
 - Study the Knowledge Organizer
 - Vocabulary situations

Agenda:

- Do Now (10 minutes)
- Explicit Vocabulary and Active Practice (10 minutes)
- Introduce *The Giver* (1 minute)
- Cycle 1 – Read Aloud: Novel Pages 1-3 (10 minutes)
- Cycle 2 – AIR: Reread Novel Pages 1-3 (20 minutes)
- Cycle 3 – AIR: Novel Page 3 (15 minutes)
- Cycle 4 – FASE Reading or Read Aloud: Novel Pages 4-6 and “World Building in Science Fiction” Non-Fiction (15 minutes)
- Exit Ticket (10 minutes)

Lesson Plan

Do Now (10 minutes) 5

- Give students 3-4 minutes to answer the two questions about the picture. Lead a brief discussion in which students share their observations. 5 min
- Q1: What do you notice about this neighborhood? CC
○ The houses in the neighborhood all look the same. The neighborhood looks well maintained and orderly, and the houses look relatively large and spacious.
- Q2: Why might someone want to live in a neighborhood like this? Why might someone not want to live in a neighborhood like this? TT → CC
○ A neighborhood like this might appeal to someone who was looking for order and predictability. There are not visible signs of hardship or poverty, and there wouldn't be much competition among neighbors because all the houses are the same. However, someone looking for something special or unique probably wouldn't like this neighborhood. There also may not be much privacy because the houses look relatively close together and there do not appear to be any fences dividing them.

Explicit Vocabulary Instruction (10 minutes) – Obedient, Apprehensive

- Teach each word one at a time to students.
- Read or ask a student to read the example sentence that includes the vocabulary word.
- Shift focus to how each picture demonstrates the word (*while projecting the image*).
- Lead Active Practice questions

Introduce the Novel (1 minute)

- **Frame:** Before beginning to read, give students a 1-2 sentence explanation of the new novel. You may choose to use or adapt the following language:
 - I'm so excited to introduce to you our new novel, *The Giver*, by Lois Lowry, an award-winning female author. This is a science fiction novel about a young boy named Jonas and his life in his community. Today, we will start to learn more about Jonas's community and the world of the novel. Don't worry if events seem confusing – part of the fun of this book is that it's a bit of a mystery.

Cycle 1 (10 minutes) – Pages 1-3

- **Note:** Introduce the novel methodically, reading the first few pages whole-group and then again, independently. This will allow students to first orient themselves within the events of the text, then dive more deeply into the richness of the language and imagery of the section.
- **Read: Read Aloud** pages 1-3, stopping after “He had trembled” on the top of page 3. This will help students develop an ear for the author’s tone and convey the mood of the opening flashback.
- **Write:** After reading, ask students to reflect for a moment in writing by answering Q1. Give students about 2 minutes to jot down initial observations and circulate to make note of what they have noticed (or misinterpreted). If note-taking is new for students, you might model the first note before asking students to work independently ✱
 - **Q1: The opening of the novel describes a flashback, when a character recalls a previous event. What event is Jonas remembering? What details strike you as important? Make some notes below and be sure to include page numbers for any text references.** *↳ listen while I read*

Cycle 2 (20-25 minutes) – Re-read Pages 1-3

- **Read:** Ask students to use AIR to reread and annotate pages 1-3 independently, underlining details that help us understand why this event is frightening.
- **Note:** Circulate as students reread and annotate the text, being mindful of students’ annotations and cueing them to annotate important details as needed.
- **Discuss:** Briefly review the annotation focus. You might **Show Call** a few exemplar student annotations to help establish expectations.
 - Possible Annotations:
 - Page 1
 - Frightened was the way he had felt a year ago when an unidentified aircraft had overflowed the community twice.
 - ✱ • He had never seen aircraft so close, for it was against the rules for Pilots to fly over the community
 - Page 2
 - ✱ • But the aircraft a year ago had been different. It was not a squat, fat-bellied cargo plane but a needle-nosed single-pilot jet.
 - Jonas, looking around anxiously, had seen others – adults as well as children – stop what they were doing and wait, confused, for an explanation of the frightening event.
 - ✱ • Then all of the citizens had been ordered to go into the nearest building and stay there. IMMEDIATELY, the rasping voice through the speakers had said. LEAVE YOUR BICYCLES WHERE THEY ARE.

©Reading Reconsidered Curriculum – “He saw only...”

○ **Key Ideas:**

- Jonas is remembering seeing a single-pilot jet fly over the neighborhood twice. This is unusual – and even frightening – because it is “against the rules.” This event also seems unusual because of the way the community reacts. It is strange and surprising that the seemingly benign event of a plane flying over elicits such fear in the community, and that the mysterious voice from the loudspeaker responds with such urgency.

● **Write:** Ask students to respond to Q2a. *TTT first, write together*

● **Discuss:** Lead a **brief discussion** whole group, reinforcing key ideas.

● **Note:** *If students struggle, you might guide them toward specific words or phrases in the text.* → *Prompt to consider other details*

- **Q2a: What strikes you about this comparison between the jet and the cargo plane**

- The cargo plane is described as “squat” and “fat-bellied,” which imply a slow moving, non-threatening plane. Cargo planes carry and deliver supplies and are often used to provide aid or assistance to people in need. The jet is sleek and fast, described as “needle-nosed,” which implies a piercing presence as it cuts through the sky. These types of jets are frequently used during war, so the jet feels ominous and threatening.

● **Write:** If time permits, ask students to briefly **Turn and Talk** in response to Q2b, jotting notes in the space provided.

● **Discuss:** Lead a **brief discussion**, reinforcing key ideas:

- ~~Q2b: Why might the jet and Jonas's memory of it be important enough to begin the novel?~~

- The jet seems to suggest a threat or danger intruding upon the community. It mirrors Jonas' sense of foreboding in the first lines of the novel, and hints at something ominous invading the structured order of the community.

● **Write:** Ask students to respond to Q3.

● **Discuss:** Whole group, reinforcing key ideas.

- **Q3a: What are Jonas and the others waiting for in Detail 1?** *simplify → waiting for explanation*

- Even though the community members are frightened of the jet, nobody takes action independently – they “wait, confused” to be told what to do. This suggests that the members of the community are accustomed to following orders and that they are not comfortable thinking or acting for themselves.

- **Q3b: Who or what is Jonas obeying in Detail 2?**

- Detail 2 shows us the community's immediate response to the voice over the loudspeaker. They follow orders without hesitation, which suggests that this is a regular part of community living, and they are even willing to leave their belongings in the street. It seems as though the members of the community do not question authority, even when that authority comes from a disembodied voice over a speaker.

- **Q3c: What do you make of these reactions? What details make the community members seem apprehensive?**

} in 3c

- Details like the “one wheel revolving slowly,” and the fact that everyone “stop[s] what they are doing” enhances the eeriness and apprehension of the scene, implying a complete disruption to the normalcy of the community.

● **Write:** Shift focus to the **Sensitivity Analysis (Q4)**.

● **Discuss:** Lead a **brief discussion**, reinforcing key ideas.

- **Q4: What do you notice about the difference between the two versions?**

- In the first line, Jonas is frightened when he thinks of “his own community.” His fear is not just for himself, but for the collective. The words “his own” imply a sense of ownership and belonging; Jonas feels so much a part of the community that he can sense and feel the tension of the group. The second line changes the words “his own community” to “everyone in the community.” These words imply a set of individuals, whereas the community is one entity; Jonas isn’t frightened for the individual people, but for the more abstract, singular idea of the community. This change illustrates the de-emphasis on the individual that seems to exist in the community. ← if time, TA / model this idea when reading

Cycle 3 (15-20 minutes) – Page 3 RA

- **Read:** ~~Ask students to use AIR~~ to read from the top of page 3 (“But it had been nothing”) to the bottom of the page, pausing at “apologized to Asher after the game.” Ask students to **annotate** using the following guidelines:
 - Underline evidence that helps you understand what happened to the Pilot
 - Circle the words or phrases in the text that are associated with the term “released”
- **Discuss:** Briefly review the annotation focus; you might **Show Call** a few exemplar student annotations to help establish expectations.
 - **Possible Annotations:**
 - Page 3
 - ✖ ○ A Pilot-in-Training had misread his navigational instructions and made a wrong turn. Desperately the Pilot had been trying to make his way back before his error was noticed.
 - ✖ ○ NEEDLESS TO SAY, HE WILL BE RELEASED, the voice said, followed by silence.
 - ~~But the aircraft a year ago had been different. It was not a squat, fat-bellied cargo plane but a needle-nosed single-pilot jet.~~
 - grim statement
 - ✖ ○ a final decision, a terrible punishment, an overwhelming statement of failure
 - ✖ ○ Even the children were scolded if they used the term lightly at play
 - hung his head with guilt and embarrassment
 - **Key Ideas:**

- The Pilot made a mistake. He misread his directions and took a wrong turn, and now he is going to be “released.” Release seems like a horrible thing. We do not know exactly what it is or what it means, but it seems to be so bad and serious that even children aren't allowed to joke about it.
- **Discuss:** Ask students to briefly **Turn and Talk** to respond to **Q5**. Lead a whole group discussion to review. You may wish to **Cold Call** students with strong understanding.
 - **Q5: Would you describe the Pilot as disobedient? Why or why not?**
 - The Pilot isn't disobedient because he didn't willfully ignore orders; he simply made a mistake and misread his instructions. This makes the punishment of release seem even more brutal, because the Pilot didn't intentionally do anything wrong. We are beginning to understand how seriously the community takes its rules.
 - **Write:** Ask students to answer **Q6**.
 - **Discuss:** Review using **Cold Call**, **Show Call**, or **share out**.
 - **Q6: Complete the following sentences**
 - The Pilot tried to fly back over the community...
 - **because** he knew he had made a mistake and he was afraid of getting caught.
 - **but** he could not avoid getting caught and now he is going to be released.

Cycle 4 (20-25 minutes) – Pages 4-6 and Meta Embedded Nonfiction

- **Read: Read Aloud** or use **FASE Reading** to read pages 4-6, picking up at the top of p. 4 and pausing at the top of page 6 (“That’s what I am.”).
- **Write:** Ask students to respond to the Sensitivity Analysis (**Q7a-Q7b**). If time allows, have students briefly Turn and Talk to discuss **Q7c**. *focus on part C I draw out key ideas from a-b*
- **Note:** Direct students’ attention to the *image and caption about hymns before they answer 7b*.
- **Discuss:** Lead a **brief discussion** whole group, reinforcing key ideas:
 - **Q7a: What’s different about the version below?**
 - In the original version, “public apology” emphasizes the ritualized, performative aspect of the scene as opposed to the more informal, conversational “apologize.” Public punishments or consequences imply an intent to shame or embarrass, which illustrates the intensity with which the community responds to mistakes. Similarly, “as was required” signals that this apology is a rule or expectation of the community. If Asher simply “knew he had to” make an apology, he might have agency or control over his own actions. But the phrase “as was required” takes control away from Asher. It seems as though the behavior of the members of the community is strictly regulated by the rules of the community.
 - **Q7b: What do you notice about the difference between this line and the original text?**

- In the original version, the children are described as “chanting” the morning anthem, which implies a sense of devotion and worship. “Singing” simply implies that the children are saying the anthem from memory and to a tune, which might be true, but doesn’t have the same sense of ritual as chanting. Similarly, a “song” doesn’t have the religious connotation of a “hymn.” This might signal the degree to which the community values allegiance and full commitment to its rules and expectations, and the way in which citizens show religious devotion to the norms of the community.
- **Q7c: What new understandings or realizations do you have about the community?**
 - Answers will vary
- **Read: Read Aloud** or use **FASE Reading** to read the embedded text titled “World-Building in Science Fiction.”
- **Write:** Ask students to work through **Q8-Q9**.
- **Note:** You may opt to take hands, or have students **Turn and Talk** for **Q8** to support pacing.
- **Discuss:** Whole group, reinforcing key ideas:
 - **Q8: Does the world of *The Giver* seem more like a fantasy world or an alternate reality? Why?**
 - The world of *The Giver* seems more like an alternate reality than a fantasy world. There are familiar things, like children at school, but some elements seem strange or unusual, like the voice over the loudspeaker.
 - **Q9: How would you describe Lois Lowry’s world-building in these pages? You might reflect on Lowry’s use of suspense and ambiguity, or on the mood and tone of the opening of the novel.**
 - Lowry is using suspense as she creates the world of the novel in order to build apprehension in the reader. She suggests that something bad might be coming, and she gives hints about the strangeness of the world, but we don’t yet fully understand what’s happening or how the community functions.

Exit Ticket (10 minutes)

- **Q1: Name at least two rules that exist in the community, and list at least two things about the community that are still ambiguous**

Rules	Ambiguities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Planes are not allowed to fly over the community. ○ Community members must follow the directions of the loudspeaker. ○ If someone makes a big mistake or failure, they will be released. ○ Students must publicly apologize when they are late. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is Jonas apprehensive about? ○ Why was the aircraft so frightening/why is it against the rules for it to fly over the community? ○ What does it mean to be released?

- **Q2: In one carefully crafted sentence, describe the degree to which members of the community seem apprehensive or obedient.**
 - **Possible Response:** Unquestioningly obedient to the voices of authority, the members of the community seem apprehensive when something happens that appears unusual or against the rules.