

Teacher Tool 41: A Conversation with Lois Lowry Study Guide

Study Guide for Literature 1: A Conversation with Lois Lowry, author of "The Giver"

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A Conversation with Lois Lowry

Original Date: October 7, 2010

Grade Levels: 6-10

Program Description:

In this first of a series of four HEC-TV Live! programs focusing on Lois Lowry's Newberry Medal winning young adult novel, "The Giver," students had the unique opportunity to hear directly from the author herself. View this program archive to see students ask the author questions about her background and writing style as well as questions about the plot, characters, setting, themes, and language of the novel itself. Discussion of "The Giver" forms the core of the program. We recommend students viewing the program either have already read the novel or be in the process of doing so. Elements of the story including important moments of the plot as well as themes and concepts will be revealed during the program. If you don't want students to know the entire story before reading it for themselves, you may choose to watch the archive yourself before showing it to students to determine any sections you might want to skip with your class until they have finished reading the book.

This series of programs was produced in conjunction with Washington University in St. Louis and Metro Theater Company of St. Louis as they prepared and presented a stage adaptation of the novel to be presented at Edison Theatre on the campus of Washington University in January 2011. Other programs in the series available on Educate.Today include:

Literature 2 "The Giver—Issues and Themes 1"

Literature 3 "The Giver—Issues and Themes 2"

Theater 15 "The Giver—Bringing the Characters to Life 1"

Theater 16 "The Giver—Bringing the Characters to Life 2"

Theater 14 "The Giver—Producing the Play"

Program Objectives:

1. The participant will explore the elements of plot, theme, character and language in the novel, "The Giver."

2. The participant will interact with Lois Lowry, author of "The Giver," to learn more about her background and writing style as well as the inspiration for, writing process of, and elements of the novel.

Program Format:

1. Welcome and Introduction—Student groups and experts will be introduced and welcomed to the program.
2. Conversation with Lois Lowry—Students will view a conversation between Lois Lowry and students. Topics will include her background, influences, and writing style with special emphasis on her novel “The Giver.” The discussion will explore the plot, setting, character, themes, and language of the novel.
3. Summary and Closing—We’ll summarize the major concepts learned today and seek final questions from students.

Featured National Standards:

English/Language Arts Standards Developed by International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English

2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, and aesthetic) of human experience.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, and graphics).
8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, and video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

Featured State Standards (Missouri):

Schools from across the country are invited to join in the program. Missouri state standards are provided for Missouri schools since partial funding for this program comes from various Missouri organizations.

Communication Arts Grade Level Expectations

1H: Apply post-reading skills to comprehend and interpret text

- question to clarify
- reflect
- analyze
- draw conclusions
- summarize
- paraphrase

1I Compare, contrast, analyze and evaluate connections between

- information and relationships in various fiction and non-fiction works
- text ideas and own experiences
- text ideas and the world by analyzing the relationship between literature and its historical period and culture

2C Use details from text to analyze character, plot, setting, point of view and development of theme

Program-Related Activity Suggestions:

1. Learn About “The Giver”—Students should read and discuss “The Giver” by Lois Lowry. Students may do this as a class project or could choose to do it individually before viewing the program. The following web resources include information about the author and novel as well as curriculum ideas and lesson plans for discussion of the book.

<http://www.loislowry.com/>

The author’s website with biographical information as well as information about her novels.

<http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/giver>

<http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/guides/give.html>

http://theliterarylink.com/giver_lessons.html

<http://ethemes.missouri.edu/themes/1672>

2. Have each student journal about how their experience in the videoconference has influenced their ideas about the setting of the novel, the characters in the novel, and/or the author of the novel. What new things have they learned? What new questions do they have? What new insights into the novel have they developed? How might it have influenced what they think it means to be a writer and how to bring a story to life that they’d like to put down on paper?

3. If they have not yet completed reading the novel, have students complete reading the novel and notice when information and insights they have learned through the program influence their understanding and/or appreciation of the novel. Have them record these insights in a student journal, and/or share them with peers or with the class as a whole.