

Lesson

1

Literary Elements:
Author's Craft—Word Choice**Objectives:**

- Introduce students to the world of *The Giver*.
- Encourage students to consider word choice as part of the author's craft.
- Explore terms associated with word choice, such as *connotation*, *denotation*, and *euphemism*.

Vocabulary:

apprehensive
distracted
distraught

Assigned Reading:

Chapters 1–3
(pages 1–25)

Writing Prompts:

- Choose three or four words and phrases that you especially noticed in the first three chapters of *The Giver*. Explain why they stand out to you.
- As you enter the world of *The Giver*, what strikes you as interesting or strange?
- What possible conflicts do you see building in the story's plot?
- Identify places in the chapters where Lowry tries to build suspense or raise questions in your mind.

- Encouraging students to review previous units and learn from past mistakes and successes is an important part of Book Club. Begin the day's lesson by passing back students' reading logs and self-assessment sheets from the last Book Club unit. Have students evaluate their work and review the goals they set at the end of the unit for future reading logs and book club groups. Then ask them to plan for their logs and book discussions during this unit. Students can refer to Evaluation Sheets 7–10.
- To introduce *The Giver*, invite students to respond briefly to this simple writing prompt: *Describe the perfect world*. Invite them to share their responses in a whole-class discussion. Responses to this prompt often describe a world without poverty, disease, war, pain, and unhappiness. You might ask students to think about how their perfect worlds could be achieved and then write their ideas on chart paper or on the chalkboard. One Book Club teacher ends this discussion by passing out copies of *The Giver* and telling students, "Here it is: your perfect world."
- Continue the day's opening lesson by telling students that word choice is an important part of *The Giver*. Explain that word choice refers to a writer's process of carefully selecting words to create mood and meaning. Tell students that special language plays an important role in the world Lowry creates in *The Giver*. Then introduce students to the following terms:
 - denotation**: the dictionary definition of a word
 - connotation**: the ideas and feelings associated with a word
 - euphemism**: a mild or pleasant expression that is used in place of one that is harsher or unpleasant
- To illustrate the meanings of *denotation/connotation*, write the words *frightened* and *apprehensive* on the chalkboard. Tell students that these two words appear in Chapter 1 of the novel. Explain that while their denotative meanings are similar, to many people their connotative meanings are quite different. Explore with students the denotative and connotative meanings of the words.
- To illustrate the meaning of *euphemism*, ask students to think about pleasant words and phrases in our own language that distance us from unpleasant things, such as *passed away* for *died*.