

Messenger by Lois Lowry (Published by Houghton Mifflin)

Approved for use in Communication Arts, Grade 8

Summary

This novel reunites characters from *The Giver* and *Gathering Blue* to end Lowry's saga. The central character in this book is an older Matty, originally from *Gathering Blue*. He lives with Kira's father, the blind man now called Seer, in the community of Village. It was once a welcoming community where refugees from other towns would be greeted with open arms. Things are changing, though. People are becoming less friendly, often due to trading their good qualities away in order to get things they want. Several people have noticed these changes, including Leader, once known as Jonas. These transformations have taken the form of selfishness, as the community votes to close its borders to future refugees.

Connection to the Curriculum

Story elements are beautifully crafted into a story full of symbolism, imagery, and character. Vocabulary is colorful and the themes are universal. This high interest novel allows students to examine character development, character depth, cause and effect, and conflict. Students can also examine the art of crafting a sequel.

Standards

Course Objectives (Benchmarks)

Reading: 1.3- The students expand vocabulary. 1.4- The students comprehend a variety of texts.

Literature: 2.1- The students use literary concepts to interpret and respond to text. 2.2- The students understand the significance of literature and its contributions to various cultures.

Possible Skills Taught (Indicators)

Reading:

1.3.5- The student determines the meaning of words or phrases using context clues from sentences or paragraphs.

1.3.7- The student determines meaning of words through structural analysis, using knowledge of Greek, Latin, and Anglo-Saxon roots, prefixes, and suffixes to understand complex words, including words in science, mathematics, and social studies.

1.3.8- The student identifies and determines the meaning of figurative language including similes, metaphors, analogies, hyperbole, onomatopoeia, personification, and idioms.

1.4.17- The student compares and contrasts varying aspects (characters' traits and motives, themes, problem-solution, cause-effect relationships, ideas and concepts, procedures, viewpoints) in one or more appropriate-level texts.

1.4.20- The student identifies the topic, main idea(s), supporting details, and theme(s) in text across the content areas and from a variety of sources in appropriate-level text.

Literature:

2.1.1- The student describes different aspects of characters (e.g., their physical traits, personality traits, feelings, actions, motives) and analyzes how major characters are developed (through their thoughts, words, speech patterns, actions) and how they change over time.

2.1.2- The student identifies and describes the setting (e.g., environment, time of day or year, historical period, situation, place) and analyzes connections between the setting and other story elements (e.g., character, plot).

2.1.3- The student identifies major and minor elements of the plot (e.g., conflict, crisis/turning moment, climax, resolution, rising action, falling action, subplots, parallel episodes) and explains how these elements relate to another.

2.1.4- The student understands aspects of theme (e.g. moral, lesson, meaning, message, author's ideas about the subject) and supports with implicit/explicit information from the text.

2.1.5- The student identifies the use of literary devices (foreshadowing, flashback, figurative language, imagery, symbolism) in a text and how the author uses such devices to help establish tone and mood.

A Note on the Text

(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)
*In this science fiction tale of a broken utopian society, readers encounter characters from the two previous tales (*The Giver* and *Gathering Blue*). Readers meet characters with gifts of seeing and healing. There is some limited violence in the tale.*

Additional Unit Design Connections

Coming soon:
To be completed during future curriculum