

## A Colorful Journey through Fiction: *The Giver* and *Pleasantville*

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### Introduction

Imagine a day in which there is a slight rain drizzle, but the sun continues to shine up in the sky. What we call a rainbow appears in the far off distance and certainly catches everyone's attention. The beginning and ending of the arc is unseen; however the top curve reaches infinitely up in the sky. A crowd of people gather; many point their fingers in amazement.

Now imagine that color doesn't exist. The rainbows these people are amazed with are different shades of gray, white, and black. There is nothing wrong with these peoples' eyes; they are not wearing sunglasses, nor are they colorblind. Instead color is not a part of their world or vocabulary. It simple doesn't exist. They have seen these rainbows before and are still amazed, but have no recollection of what red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet look like, mean, or are. The novel *The Giver* by Lois Lowery and the film *Pleasantville* create such worlds, and I will do the same for my students within this unit.

### Rationale

Throughout my experiences of teaching English and Language Arts in an urban inner-city setting, I have learned that everyone must find the key that unlocks their students' academic and behavioral success. As a struggling first year 7<sup>th</sup> grade LA teacher, I recall constant interruptions, arguments, back-talk, and unfortunately not a lot of learning or teaching. Like many other beginning teachers, I questioned my abilities as an educator and whether or not I should continue in the profession that I had chosen. I knew that if I was going to continue being a teacher something would have to change.

This change came in the form of a novel. I discovered thirty copies of Walter Dean Myers' adolescent novel titled *Scorpions* resting on the shelves of our school's book room. As I read the book the first time, I knew that my students would identify with the twelve year old protagonist who struggled with life challenges. I began immersing my students in the lives of the characters and the setting in which they lived. I encouraged my students to compare their lives to the words they were reading on the pages.

While I would love to write and admit that *all* the disrespect and arguments I had my first year ceased when I began reading this novel with my students, that simply is not the

case. However, I did notice a change in many students. Some participated more in class when it came to discussing the novel out loud, while some began completing writing assignments based on the novel for the very first time. I had finally found my key to success, and I am proud to say that I have been taking advantage of it ever since.

This five week unit will immerse students into the two colorless fictional worlds of *The Giver* and *Pleasantville*. I teach English I to freshmen at West Mecklenburg High School (West Meck) in Charlotte, NC. Based on the percentage of free and reduced lunch students and previous years of poor state test score results, West Mecklenburg High School is considered to be part of the Charlotte Mecklenburg School System's "Achievement Zone." As such, additional money and support is provided to teachers and staff members in an effort to raise test scores. My students are bussed from a variety of neighborhoods. Based on my interactions with students, I have seen that some take pride in where they live, while others often find themselves feeling unsafe due to gang activity and violence. Unfortunately many of the issues that occur in my students' neighborhoods are brought with them to school. This unit will attempt to provide students with an outlet to compare and contrast their world to those they will experience in the novel and watch within the film.

All of my students take the English I North Carolina End Of Course (EOC) test in June. This is a two part test in which students are required to analyze literature and correct grammatical errors in written texts. The design of this unit will be focused on enhancing my students' ability to recognize and analyze the elements of literature to prepare them for the literary component of their EOC and is aligned with the NC Standard Course of Study grade 9.<sup>1</sup> These elements include plot, setting, character, conflict and theme. In addition a major emphasis will be placed on analyzing symbolism throughout the works of fiction. As defined in the *Elements of Literature*, symbolism is when a person, place, thing or event stands for itself and for something beyond itself as well.<sup>2</sup> I have found that this is often a major challenge for students to learn and for teachers to teach. Since some of my students struggle with decoding and pronouncing words and reading comprehension, it is difficult to ask them to think abstractly when it comes to analyzing symbolism in a text. Another objective of this unit will focus on how colors are used as symbols both in fiction and the real world. Students will reflect and analyze how an author can use specific colors to enhance their characters, conflicts, settings, and plots. I will encourage my students to think about why an author would chose to include specific items, such as a red apple or rose, and what these objects symbolize or represent. *What does the color red typically represent in the world today? What feelings are associated with the color red? How would the world be different if red didn't exist? How would the story be different if the apple was green, or the rose white?* I believe that by focusing on something all students are familiar with, such as color, they will be able to grasp and analyze how colors represent so many emotions, ideas, and concepts in their worlds.

## **Background**

### Color

Although the main objective of this unit consists of analyzing fiction, background information about the scientific nature of color will enhance students' comprehension of how color is perceived. Without wondering, we instinctively know what color an object is, but have you ever wondered why it is we actually see that specific color? Like Jonas discovering the color red in the novel for the first time, I have been introduced to and taught how colors are perceived in the world.

It is important to keep in mind that all color originates from light. Sir Isaac Newton discovered that white light was actually a combination of different colors. Passing light through a prism creates the colors red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. Depending on the wavelength of the light, the colors of the rainbow are perceived. Also, it was discovered that when the individual colors of the spectrum were combined, they would create new colors. For example combining individual red and green lights together (additive mixing), creates yellow light.

When light hits a certain object the light will be reflected, scattered, and/or absorbed. As a result colors are perceived. If an object, such as a pool eight ball, is completely black, all the light is being absorbed. Conversely, a white movie screen reflects all of the light and we perceive white. When an object is colored it is the result of light being both absorbed and reflected. For example as Jonas sees a red apple for the first time, the light shining on the apple is absorbed at all wavelengths except for those corresponding to the color red which is being reflected. It is as if the light is partially blocked by the object and what bounces back is seen as the specific color. White light contains all the wavelengths of visible light; thus when some wavelengths are missing, the light is colored.

For Jonas to perceive the redness of the apple, his eyes must be capable of detecting the change in light reflected from it. In other words, his retina must contain both working rod cells and cone cells. These are the light-sensitive cells in the eye, named after their shapes. Cone cells allow us to see colors in daylight. While there are more rod cells within the retina, they are more sensitive to light; as a result rods are responsible for allowing us to see during the night or in a dim room. There are fewer cone cells in the eye and they are sensitive to red, green, and blue light; therefore they are responsible for viewing color during the day or in a lighted room. Genetic color blindness is caused by the absence or malfunction of one of the three cones that detect red, green, or blue. The absence of any cone cells within the retina will result in achromatopsia, which is a rare genetic condition in which people see only shades of gray. This disorder will be explored by students after reading the novel and viewing the film.

## **Summaries**

*The Giver* by Lois Lowry

*The Giver* is a Newberry award winning novel by Lois Lowry. The main character, Jonas, lives in what appears to be a utopian society that has no pain, suffering, jealousy, or differences. In this world, rules and regulations are designed so that marriages are arranged, jobs are assigned, and adherence to a standard code of conduct is expected of all members of the community. Jonas is at the all-important age of twelve when he will leave school and be given his “assignment.” This “assignment” is specifically chosen for him by the elders in the community and will serve as his role and career within the community. Within the weeks leading up to the “Assignment Ceremony,” Jonas experiences an odd occurrence when playing a simple game of toss with one of his best friends. Like many times before, they were tossing an apple back and forth. As the apple travels mid-air Jonas notices that something about it is different. He is confused because the shape and size remain the same, but he knows that something has changed. To make matters more bewildering, he notices this same exact change in a friend’s hair.

It isn’t until Jonas is selected to become the community’s “Receiver” that he truly understands the meaning of these changes. This is a unique job that is well-honored in the community and requires intelligence, integrity, courage, and wisdom. His job requires him to visit with the town’s “Giver” who holds all the memories from the past including those of suffering, love, war, and joy. By placing his hand on Jonas, the memories are transmitted from the “Giver” to Jonas, the “Receiver.” His first received memory is that of riding a sled down a snow covered hill. The sled reminds him of the changes he noticed within the apple and his friend’s hair. When he mentions this to the “Giver,” he learns that he has the ability to see the color red. He had never heard of the quality of color before, simply because the memories of all colors had been erased from his mind as they had from all members of society to make everyone equal. To help him understand, The Giver transports the memory of a rainbow.

Once Jonas experiences colors, he longs to not only learn more about them, but share them with others around him. This is not possible because his family and friends have no recollection of what colors are. Sadly to Jonas, they see only grays, whites, and blacks. As Jonas continues to experience other memories of the past such as war, Christmas, pain and sunshine, he questions whether his community is truly perfect and begins a journey that ultimately changes him.

Lowry does an amazing job of slowly revealing the dark secrets of the true costs of the society members’ bland and pleasant lives, and she places Jonas in a perilous world in which he suddenly becomes an outcast. When reading the book, students are shocked to learn that color has been erased so that everything is the same; nothing can be beautiful or appealing because that would disrupt the harmony of life. The leaders of the community want everything the same perhaps to eliminate any prejudice, jealousy, and or beauty. As

he begins to understand, Jonas becomes a catalyst for true freedom, change, and knowledge.

An interesting fact to share with students about *The Giver* is that the old man on the cover of the novel was a painter named Carl Nelson. Lowry interviewed and befriended Nelson and was saddened to learn that in his old age he grew to be colorblind. In her Newberry acceptance speech she says Nelson “lost colors but not the memories of them.”<sup>3</sup>

### *Pleasantville* Directed by Garry Ross

Similar to *The Giver*, the film *Pleasantville* depicts a society in which all colors are obsolete. The movie begins in a present day suburban neighborhood. Teenage siblings, David and Jennifer, argue over the remote control for the family television. David wants to watch a marathon of his favorite 1950s’ black and white old-time family sitcom titled *Pleasantville*, while Jennifer wants the television to entertain the boy she has coming over this night. Just as the remote shatters to pieces, a mysterious repair man rings the door bell and brings them a new and strange remote. When David turns the television station to *Pleasantville*, they are magically transported into the actual sitcom as the two characters Bud and Mary Sue. At this moment, the film switches from color to black and white. Jennifer is devastated to discover her bright red tank top and tight fitting blue jeans have been replaced with a plain white sweater and poodle dress, thus transforming her into the character of Mary Sue. She looks at her skin tone and complains, “Look at me, I’m all pasty!”

As the film continues, Jennifer and David must live their lives as Bud and Mary Sue within the odd town of *Pleasantville*. In *Pleasantville* there are no colors to see, fires to put out, or words to read within books. While David tries to maintain Bud’s moralistic character, Jennifer changes Mary Sue into a rebel. Making the best of the situation, Jennifer invites her boyfriend Skip to lover’s lane where she seduces him. As he drives home from the date Skip, who has now experienced sex and love, notices something. He turns to the bushes and sees something different and wild in the roses that were, up until this point, always a dark shade. For the first time, he sees the color red.

This experience sets in motion a chain of events that turns the town of *Pleasantville* upside down and inside out. When a character experiences something new and exciting, such as love, art, beauty, or knowledge, it appears that changes are made inside of them that allow them to see colors for the first time. Not only do characters start to see color in objects, they themselves are turning colors as well. Problems begin to arise when the town’s leaders become upset at all the different changes that are showing up around *Pleasantville*. They fear these changes and the impacts they have on the people and attempt to stop them from occurring. New rules and curfews are set up for the teenagers,

and signs that read “NO COLOREDS” start appearing in store windows. While the colored characters are embracing their new knowledge and feelings, the old black and white characters begin a witch hunt to prevent things from ever changing completely. In the end, all of the characters experience an internal transformation and the entire town of Pleasantville is colorized and changed forever.

While the plot of two teenagers being sucked into a television show is completely implausible, the film manages to explore so many societal conflicts such as prejudice, injustice, and conformity. Like the characters in the film, the audience also experiences colors as if seeing them for the first time. The first sight of the red colored rose is simply breathtaking because it contrasts with the black, white and gray our eyes have become accustomed to while watching the film. Students will get a sense of what a world without color looks like, and then how color changes everything around them.

In addition, the film also replicates the treatment of African Americans during segregation. The use of the “NO COLOREDS” sign is a direct comparison to that of signs used during the 1930’s Jim Crow Laws in which separate but equal laws existed. Separate restaurants, restrooms, water fountains, schools and other public buildings were established to keep African Americans from entering white establishments, just as the “NO COLOREDS” sign prohibits character who see and are in color from entering establishments run by black and white characters. The movie also uses the word “colored” as derogatory term when Mary Sue, Bud’s sister who is colorful, is harassed because of her skin toned flesh. Students will be able to connect the racial prejudice and discrimination African Americans endured to that of the colorful characters in the film.

In researching the film, I learned that the entire movie was shot in color. The footage was then digitally manipulated and all colors were taken out leaving it black and white. The filmmakers were not happy with the simple black and white look so they adjusted the level of darkness to visually create the colorless world of Pleasantville. The colors that begin to appear were digitally added. Often times the colors were brightened to contrast with the darkness or muted to blend in with the black and white. The filmmakers were able to take a film shot in color, erase all the colors, and then add colors back as if they were painting the film.<sup>4</sup> For further information about how the film was made, watch the DVD with the director’s commentary and the “making of features” located in the special features.

## **Unit Plan**

### *Pre-reading of *The Giver**

At the start of the unit, students will explore the importance of color within the world and within their own lives. Students will be broken up into groups and given chart paper to

discuss and outline three main purposes that color serves in society. Students should think about how color is important to them, how it impacts their daily lives, and how it represents the world. These outlines should be displayed somewhere in the room throughout the entire unit and will be revisited at the conclusion of the unit. After each group presents their outline, they will be given an individual second task. This will require students to imagine a world with absolutely no color. In essence they should imagine themselves living in a black and white world. Questions to initiate their thought process are: *How would they feel living in a colorless world? What would it look like? What problems would exist? How would these problems be handled or solved? What would you be unable to do without color clues? What benefits would your world have since there are no colors?* Through writing, students will begin reflecting on how their world would be different if colors no longer existed, thus preparing them to compare and contrast their views of the world to that of the literature they are about to read.

At this point, I will introduce the concept of a utopian society. Utopian societies are ideal communities that strive to keep peace and harmony for all to enjoy and feel safe from harm. In order to establish the elements of a utopian society and how one can function, students will use the internet to research various utopian communities. The Acorn Community is an egalitarian society in which all members share property, housing, and income to establish a sustainable and harmonic society.<sup>5</sup> Another example is Twins Oaks Intentional Community in which the established community promotes “values of cooperation, sharing, nonviolence, equality, and ecology.”<sup>6</sup> As students research these examples, they will look for information about how each community attempts to handle societal issues such as crime, work-force, money, government, and pleasure. Once students have researched these elements, they will work in groups on designing their own utopian society. As a group they will be asked to be the leaders of a brand new utopia. Their task, as leaders, is to establish a functioning utopia free from societal upheaval or disarray. Students must describe how their community is one of peace, fairness, and equality. Students will name their society, create a symbolic representation of it, and write a list of rules and regulations that govern the people. Students will present their utopian societies to the class. This activity will be continued throughout reading the novel so that students can add, delete, or adjust their ideas of a utopian society.

#### During Reading of *The Giver*

Once students have grasped the idea of utopian societies, they will begin to read the novel. As they read, students will keep a running chart of how the community in the novel attempts to set up a utopia. For example, students will first learn and note that individual birthdays don't exist in this community. Instead, everyone grows older at the exact same time and celebrates by being issued new items or responsibilities within the community. As students discover the rules of the community, a discussion will be held to outline the benefits and disadvantages of each. I will constantly probe my students to

think of how such a rule could actually benefit today's society and also how each rule could negatively affect their lives.

In doing this, students will explore the literary elements of plot, setting, character, conflict, theme and symbolism and apply them to the novel and their lives. As Jonas experiences conflicts within his community, students will analyze his actions and decisions and the impact he makes on the setting. My students will also imagine how they themselves would handle and solve similar conflicts in today's society. For example, when Jonas realizes that his adopted baby brother Gabriel is going to be murdered in order to keep status quo in the community, students will reflect on how they would solve the problem. Before reading what Jonas actually decides, students will write letters to the main character offering advice on what should be done. I will have students interact with the characters throughout the novel so that their comprehension and analysis of the literary text is continuous, creative, and personal.

At the time when Jonas discovers the color red and receives the memory of a rainbow, the focus of the unit shifts to how color impacts literature and the world. Using short sections of the book *Color: a Natural History of the Palette*, students will read and discover non-fictional accounts of how colored materials, dyes and paints were created. Students will explore how colors represent more than just a shade, as they come to realize that each color has an origin and story. In reading brief sections of this book, students will explore how colored paints and dyes were discovered.

To begin, students will be questioned about why Lowry would introduce red as the first color. According to *Pigments through the Ages* red is the first color that was perceived by man, is the first color a brain-injured person can perceive if color vision is restored, and is the first color named as languages developed color vocabulary<sup>7</sup>. Also interesting, is the history of how red dyes and paints were originally created from bugs. When Spaniards arrived in Mexico in the 1500s, they began harvesting cochineal bugs on the leaves of cactus plants. The bugs were dried and exported thus becoming a major industry. Exporters tried hard to keep the secret of these bugs, that when boiled could create magnificent reds, but eventually they were discovered and harvested around the world. Cochineal continues to be a red dye used in make up, food and drinks today. As Jonas discovers a new color, some interesting facts about the history of that color will be taught.

### Color Chart

In addition, to learning the origins of color, students will also fill in a color symbolism chart while reading the novel (Appendix A). The chart consists of rows and columns that ask students to identify how colors represent different objects, emotions, tastes, smells, sounds, and idioms. As Jonas discovers new colors, students will analyze them using the

chart. The color red is perfect to start with since it has so many connotations. While being a symbol of love and passion, it also represents the color of blood associating it with death or violence. Red means stop, and if you don't you may end up in a wreck. Our faces turn red when we are embarrassed. Have you ever touched or tasted something that is burning hot? Just as Jonas explores new colors, students will also experience the importance of colors in the world. Students will also be required to express how viewing colors internally changes Jonas. Students will re-visit this chart throughout watching the film and it will be used as a brainstorm/pre-write for a culminating activity at the end of the unit.

### Post Reading of *The Giver*

The conclusion of the novel is extremely ambiguous. Within her Newberry acceptance speech, Lowry relates how several people have responded to the ending of her book. Some are angry because they want to know what happens to Jonas, while others find the ending engaging since there is no answer. The ending offers students an excellent opportunity to creatively respond to the novel. Students will be asked to write one more chapter to the novel describing what they feel happens to Jonas and Gabe as they sled towards the colorful unknown (assignment and grading rubric given in Appendix B). In writing their last chapter, students are expected to detail how they envision Jonas and Gabe in the future. *Did they escape from their community? If so, where are they and what is this new community? Who are the people "waiting" for Jonas and Gabe? Are they ever looked for by their parents, friends, or community members? What happened to the community they left behind?* If students are intrigued, Lowry wrote two novels after *The Giver* titled *Gathering Blue* and *The Messenger*. Both novels are set in different communities and connect with *The Giver*.

Since the ending of the film is also ambiguous, another option would be to allow students to write a sequel scene that explains what happens at the end of *Pleasantville*. Once students have completed the film, they should imagine what happens to the newly colored world of *Pleasantville*. *Does it stay the same or continue to change? What happens to Mary-Sue now that she has decided to stay in the Pleasantville world? How does Bud cope with returning to the 1990s? What happens to all of the characters living in Pleasantville?* Students can write the sequel in a movie script style and create a story-board for how they imagine their scene to look.

### Film

After reading the novel, students will view the film. I have found that providing ancillary material after reading a text provides students with an opportunity to explore the reading material on a different level. I use films in many cases so that another level of analysis is

added to what students have read. Films are excellent tools to use in an English classroom because they also utilize the literary elements of fiction. The use of the film will also aide struggling readers who may need a visual representation of what they read. Since students have read the entire novel, their task will be to apply what they have previously learned to the film. It is important that students are engaged while watching the film. While watching *Pleasantville*, I will ask students to constantly list similarities and differences between the literary elements of the film and novel. On occasion, I will stop the film and ask students to share what they found with the entire class. As they share, we will organize their thoughts on multiple poster board sized Venn-diagram graphic organizers that are categorized by setting, plot, character, conflict, and theme. Using post-it notes, students will write their similarities and differences and place it on the appropriate Venn-diagram in the appropriate area. This activity will increase student's comprehension and analysis of the literary elements in both the film and novel.

While watching the film, students will revisit and add information to their color charts based on the film. Similar to charting how colors were introduced within the novel, students will now analyze what colors are introduced in the film, and how these colors affect the characters. Students will analyze how each color affects a character, and how this effect brings about change within the plot of the film. Throughout the film, objects and people change color based on their changing feelings and emotions. As this occurs, students will identify what causes the internal change in a character and what colors are used to symbolize it.

It is important to note that the same first color (red) is viewed by the characters in the novel and film; however, the objects are different: an apple in *The Giver* and a rose in *Pleasantville*. This will offer students another opportunity to analyze symbolism. Students will be asked to brainstorm things that are associated with apples and roses. Once this list is made, students can then apply their ideas to how the items are symbols within the film and novel. Students will be asked how Jonas' experience with seeing red for the first time is both similar and different from Skip's first encounter. Since an apple is also used as a symbol in *Pleasantville*, a discussion should be held on how they represent knowledge (sometimes forbidden). As students discuss this symbol, they will be asked the following questions: *Why would the author and filmmaker choose this as a symbol in their works? Who are the characters that seek knowledge throughout the plot? Is the knowledge ever obtained? What knowledge is forbidden throughout the film and novel? How do these plots relate to the story of Adam and Eve?* Students will reflect on questions such as: *Why is color so important to each character? How does the character change after seeing colors? What is the significance of the changes? What color affects you the most in the world and how?*

Lack of Color

Not only will students analyze color use in the book and film, they will also note that other characters in both remain colorless or unable to see color. Students will discover the dangers of being different from others in their communities and also how lonely this ultimately becomes. Jonas wants to share colors with his friends and is frustrated when they can't see the vibrant yellow of a patch of daffodils. Similarly in *Pleasantville*, Bud's mother fears that she will be ostracized due to her turning color. Her fear leads her to hide her color behind black and white makeup so that she doesn't stick out.

In discussing this, students will be introduced to the challenges that colorblind people experience in today's society. Achromatopsia is genetic condition in which people are completely colorblind. Due to the absence of cone cells in the eye, achromatopes, people who suffer from achromatopsia, have no color perception and view only shades of grey. Although this is a rare genetic condition, Dr. Oliver Sachs researched the tiny Pacific island of Pingelap in which one in twelve inhabitants is colorblind. In 1775 a typhoon destroyed ninety percent of the population on the island. One survivor was a carrier of achromatopsia. As the inhabitants began procreating the percentage of babies born with achromatopsia increased significantly due to the isolation of the island population and to inbreeding. Oliver Sach's *Island of the Colorblind* book and documentary chronicles how one out of twelve inhabitants suffer from colorblindness.<sup>8</sup> Viewing web videos, students will experience how the young children of the island can't distinguish between the color red and black. Like the fictional characters, they don't know what red means. Sach's research depicts how achromatopes are constantly squinting due to the overwhelming bright lights they see instead of vibrant colors. As students learn about Pingelap, they can compare and contrast the fictional colorless worlds of *The Giver* to an actual setting. In addition, students can reflect on how it would feel to be a minority person who can see color surrounded by those who could not.

### **Culminating Activity**

Now that students have read the novel and viewed the film, they will revisit their original color outlines which they created prior to reading the novel. These outlines display the impact and importance color has on their world, and how society is affected by color. Students will be grouped and now be asked to create new outlines that express the different ways color impacted the characters and settings of both *Pleasantville* and *The Giver*. Students will share their outlines and compare and contrast it to their original outline made before reading the novel and viewing the film.

Once students have analyzed both the film and novel and compared the impact of colors within both, they will write a culminating narrative on a self-selected color. Students will choose a color and write a speech from the perspective of this color (assignment described in Appendix C). For example, students will be asked to imagine if the color red were to walk in the door and deliver a speech about itself. *What would he or*

*she say?* Within their speeches, students will be asked to discuss the history, meanings, and emotions that are often associated with their color. Also, students will write how their particular color impacted the literary elements within *The Giver* and *Pleasantville*. Students will be asked to identify one literary element and write from the color's perspective of how it impacted or changed the world within the fictional piece.

Along with writing the speech, students will sign up for days to deliver the speech to the classroom. Students will be expected to have a visual aid (poster board or tri-fold) that displays symbols, pictures, and idioms that are associated with their chosen color.

Since students have learned how color impacts both literature and their own life, I believe this activity is a creative and challenging way to allow students to display not only what they have learned but also how they feel. In developing this speech, students will be combining the elements of their own lives with the material that was taught throughout the unit.

## Resources

"Achromatopsia." Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Achromatopsia> (accessed November 14, 2009). This resource provides further description of achromatopsia including causes and symptoms. This information may be worth students while as they imagine living in a world without color, or living in a world without the ability to see color.

"Color Matters for Kids." Color Matters. <http://www.colormatters.com/brain.html> (accessed November 7, 2009). This is another website dedicated to colors. This website provides descriptions of the emotions and symbols associated with color. This would be another resource students could access when writing their color speech.

"Color symbolism and psychology." Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Color\\_psychology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Color_psychology) (accessed November 14, 2009). This resource allows students to click on various colors and read facts including origins, idioms, and associations with the specific color. Students should access this sight while researching information for their culminating color speech.

Cottin, Menena, Rosana Faría, and Elisa Amado. 2008. *The Black Book of Colors*. Toronto: Groundwood Books. This is an amazing picture book that is written from the point of view of blind child. Since each page is completely black with white lettering, colors are described using the sense of touch, sound, taste, and smell. This allows the reader to imagine being blind and sense what colors are without visually seeing them.

This would be a great resource for students to read and view as they learn about achromatopsia.

Finlay, Victoria. 2002. *Color: A Natural History of the Palette* New York: Random House. Written in first person, Finlay relates her journey around the world to uncover the mysteries of colors. The book provides amazing stories of the history and origins of colors throughout the ages. Included in the book is the description and story of the cochineal bug that is used to create red dye. While Jonas discovers colors throughout the novel, excerpts from the book would be a great source of non-fiction text to enhance student's knowledge of colors.

Lowry, Lois. 1993. *Gathering Blue*. New York: Random House. This is another adolescent novel by the author of *The Giver*. Similar to *The Giver*, the setting is another dystopian society, in which jobs are also assigned based on individual worth. The main character, Kira, has a twisted leg and must prove her worth within the community or face expulsion. Although the novel makes no mention of Jonas or Gabe from *The Giver*, this novel is an excellent companion to the novel. A suggested assignment would be to have students compare and contrast the two communities and main characters of the books.

Lowry, Lois. *The Messenger*. New York: Random House.

A third book by Lowry set in another community which is currently being lead by a boy who arrived on a red sled. Although not named, students may believe this leader to be Jonas from *The Giver*. Matty, a character first introduced in *Gathering Blue*, has a unique ability to heal. Matty struggles with turning from a boy to man as he is faced with decisions to make within his community. Kira, from *Gathering Blue*, also appears as a character. This is yet another great novel students could compare to *The Giver* and *Gathering Blue*.

“Make a splash with color.” The Tech.

<http://www.thetech.org/exhibits/online/color/intro> (accessed on November 10, 2009).

This resource is a very kid friendly website pertaining to seeing colors. Students will learn about how colors are formed, how light is used to create color, and how the eye allows us to see color. The website is interactive and provides excellent visuals that explain the act of seeing a color.

“Pigments through the Ages.” Webexhibits. <http://www.webexhibits.org/pigments> (accessed on November 7, 2009). This website offers great information about a variety of colors. It includes origins of colors along with connotations associated with the color. It also has great images of paintings in which students could analyze the use colors within them. I would recommend students use this website when developing their speeches and creating their visuals.

Sacks, Oliver W., and Oliver W. Sacks. 1997. *The Island of the Colorblind; and, Cycad Island*. New York: A.A. Knopf. This is an astonishing book that chronicles Sack's research of achromatopsia on the small Pacific Island Pingelap. Paired with the YouTube video, excerpts from this book will offer students an astounding look at a community in which approximately 1 and 12 inhabitants are color blind. This resource could be used in discussing how Jonas's fellow community members exist without seeing or knowing what colors are. A possible activity may be to have students write a letter to these inhabitants explaining what color is and how it impacts their lives.

*Schindler's List*. Dir. Steven Spielberg. Writ. Steven Zaillian. Universal Pictures, 1993. This academy award winning film is shot entirely in black and white, except for one fantastic scene. There is a scene in which a little girl is walking with a red coat. While the movie is rated R, this scene could be viewed as another example of how color is used within a film for symbolic purpose. Students can analyze why Spielberg decided to add this one specific color within his film and compare it to how the color red is first viewed in *Pleasantville* and *The Giver*.

*The Wizard of Oz*. Dir. Victor Fleming. Writ. Noel Langley and Florence Ryerson. Warner Brothers Pictures, 1939. Another great example of how a film uses colors to enhance literary elements of fiction. The film begins without color as Dorothy longs for excitement and adventure in her life on a farm. Stepping out of her house into the Land of Oz for the first time, the film suddenly changes to bright colors. A great activity would be to compare this scene to that of the first time color is viewed in *Pleasantville*.



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Appendix B  
**Missing Chapter Assignment**

**Introduction:** Lois Lowry certainly wants us to imagine what happened to Jonas and Gabe at the end of her novel. Here is your chance to explain just that!

**Task:** Since we are left with so many unanswered questions at the conclusion of the novel *The Giver*, your job is to write a sequel chapter that explains what happened to Jonas and Gabriel. Follow the rubric guide to understand what is expected from your final chapter.

**Rubric:**

Description	Points	Comments
Student continues the story of <i>The Giver</i> and develops a final chapter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Explain what happens to Jonas and Gabe.</li> <li>➤ Where do they end up and how are they treated?</li> </ul>	____/25	
Student maintains the characters thoughts, emotions, and actions that were prevalent within the novel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Do not change Jonas or Gabriel’s characteristics, simply continue the story</li> </ul>	____/25	
Student uses creativity in their writing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Add color to enhance setting, conflict, character, theme, and plot.</li> <li>➤ Use vivid description so that the reader can visualize your writing.</li> </ul>	____/25	
Student writes with minimal spelling, punctuation, and grammar mistakes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Follow comma rules and vary your sentence lengths.</li> </ul>	____/25	

Appendix C  
**Color Speech**

**Introduction:** Colors were introduced to Jonas within the novel *The Giver* and to several characters within the film *Pleasantville*. I wonder how these colors feel about their roles in the world.

**Task:** Your job is to write a speech from the perspective of an individual color. Your speech should be written in first person as if the color was an actual person or character. Your speech should relate the following topics:

- Your historical background
- Your personality
- The emotions you are associated with
- Significant objects that use your color
- How did you affect the characters within *The Giver* and *Pleasantville*?
- What are some interesting facts about you?

**Visual:** In addition to writing the speech, you should create a visual aide (poster, tri-fold, power point) for your presentation. The visual should creatively represent your specific color and help the class understand your color better.

**Presentation:** Everyone will deliver their speech in front of the class. The presentation should be between 4-6 minutes. During this time you will deliver your speech and show your visual. The presentation is your chance to *become* that color.

**Creativity:** As always, I encourage you to be creative and have fun with this assignment. Think of a way that will distinguish your speech and presentation from everyone else in the room!

**Rubric:** Here is how you will be graded:

Description	Points	Comments
Written speech is from the color's perspective and relates the significance of that color.	___/25	
Visual design represents the significance of the color and how it impacts the world.	___/25	
Presentation is well organized, rehearsed, and detailed.	___/25	
Creativity is evident throughout		

each task.	___/25	
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## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> North Carolina Standard Course of Study, “English I,”  
<http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/curriculum>.

<sup>2</sup> Wood, Laura. *Elements of Literature Third Course*. Orlando: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Lois Lowry, “Speeches,” <http://www.loislowry.com/speeches.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Cinema Review, “Pleasantville: The Design and Technical Production,”  
<http://www.cinemareview.com/production.asp?prodid=349>

<sup>5</sup> Acorn Community, “Living in an egalitarian community,” <http://www.acorncommunity.org/>

<sup>6</sup> Twin Oaks Intentional Community, “100 People Sharing our Lives,”  
<http://www.twinoaks.org/>

<sup>7</sup> Pigments Through the Ages, “Red Pigments,”  
<http://www.webexhibits.org/pigments/indiv/color/reds.html>

<sup>8</sup> Oliver Sacks, "Island of the Colorblind-Part 1 of 6." YouTube.  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CM06G26X-rQ>