

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Giver, Day 1



Key Paragraph, p. 2

“Needless to say he will be released,’ the voice had said, followed by silence. There was an ironic tone to that final message, as if the Speaker found it amusing; and Jonas had smiled a little, though he knew what a grim statement it had been. For a contributing citizen to be release from the community was a final decision, a terrible punishment, and an overwhelming statement of failure” (p. 2).

Writing Task

What does this paragraph tell you about Jonas’s community? Does it seem like a place of tolerance? Does it appear to be a place where people are allowed to make mistakes and possibly learn from their mistakes?

“Integrity moves me to try difficult and new things.”

Do you think it would be difficult to try difficult and new things if you lived in Jonas’s community? **Write a paragraph explaining why or why not.**

When answering the question above, consider the following:

- What do mistakes teach us?
- Is it possible to learn and grow without making mistakes?
- Why is it important to recognize our mistakes and furthermore share our learning and experience from them with others?
- Think about this quote “Honest people learn from their mistakes.”

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Giver, Day 2



Key Paragraph, p. 14

“Rules were very hard to change. Sometimes, if it was a very important rule – unlike the one governing the age for bicycles – it would have to go, eventually, to The Receiver for a decision. The Receiver was the most important Elder. Jonas had never even seen him that he knew of; someone in a position of such importance lived and worked alone. But the committee would never bother The Receiver with a question about bicycles; they would simply fret and argue about it themselves for years, until the citizens forgot that it had ever gone to them for study” (p. 14).

Writing Task

Our definition of Integrity states that *Integrity moves me to do difficult and new things, not just easy and accustomed things.*

Write a paragraph explaining the thesis statement “Those who never take risks never grow, and cannot have integrity.”

When answering the question above, consider the following:

- Use an example from the novel to emphasize this idea.
- Hint: how do the rules governing the community illustrate a lack of risk-taking and keep the society from growing and changing?
- You may also explain examples from your own experiences. When did you take a risk that allowed you to grow in a positive way? What was the risk? Explain why you took it.
- Be sure to explain and describe the outcomes. You may use the one above, or alter it to make it your own.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Giver, Day 3



Key Paragraph, p. 20

“Almost every citizen in the community had dark eyes. His parents did, and Lily did, and so did all of his group members and friends. But there were a few exceptions: Jonas himself, and a female Five who he had noticed had the different, lighter eyes. No one mentioned such things; it was not a rule, but was considered rude to call attention to things that were unsettling or different about individuals. Lily, he decided, would have to learn that soon, or she would be called in for chastisement because of her insensitive chatter” (p. 20).

Writing Task

“Integrity moves me to do difficult and new things, not just easy and accustomed things.”

Write a paragraph explaining the extent to which Jonas’s society values and is accepting of diversity. When explaining the statement above, consider the following:

- What does the society admire and appreciate about individuals?
- What kinds of things do they ignore or downplay about individuals?
- Overall, do you think diversity or uniformity is more important to this community? Why?
- Be sure to include great examples from the text in your body sentences.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Giver, Day 4



Key Paragraph, p. 31

“Well, they tried to make her life sound meaningful. And of course,’ she added primly, ‘all lives *are* meaningful; I don’t mean that they aren’t. But *Edna*. My goodness. She was a Birthmother, and then she worked in Food Production for years, until she came here. She never even had a family unit” (p. 31).

Writing Task

Larissa is explaining to Jonas they always tell about the old person’s life before they “release” them. Some of the lives are very boring and unimportant so they try to make the sound meaningful. Do you believe that anyone’s life is unimportant?

Our definition of Integrity states that “Integrity requires that they way I live my life is *whole entire, undivided, sound, coherent and principled*”

Do you have to do something big, important, or exciting to live with integrity?

Write a paragraph explaining this quote: “It is not as important to do great things as it is to do little things with great love”

- Use examples from your own life and the lives of your friends and relatives.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Giver, Day 5



Key Paragraph, p. 39

“Pedaling rapidly down the path, Jonas felt oddly proud to have joined those who took the pills. For a moment, though, he remembered the dream again. The dream had felt pleasurable. Though the feelings were confused, he thought that he had liked the feelings that his mother had called Stirrings. He remembered that upon waking, he had wanted to feel the Stirrings again” (39).

Writing Task

It is becoming apparent that Jonas’s community controls everything in people’s lives, even their emotions. Can a person grow and gain knowledge without feelings? Can a person become a person of integrity without feelings or emotions?

Write an informative paragraph in which you explain that without feelings and memories, knowledge is useless, and people without feelings and memories cannot have integrity. When answering the question above, consider the following:

- Why are memories an important part of who we are?
- Can we learn without memories?
- What memories are the people in Jonas’s community missing?
- Hint: think of their knowledge of animals, of the Old, of the Stirrings, of motherhood, etc.
- You may use examples from your own experience. How do your memories help you to be a person of integrity?
- Remember to use all that you’ve learned about writing persuasive paragraphs.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Giver, Day 6



Key Paragraph, p. 48

“No,” Asher admitted reluctantly. “But you can. It says so in the rules. If you don’t fit in, you can apply for Elsewhere and be released. My mother says that once, about ten years ago, someone applied and was gone the next day.” Then he chuckled. “She told me that because I was driving her crazy. She threatened to apply for Elsewhere.”

“She was joking.”

“I know. But it was true, what she said, that someone did that once. She said that it was really true. Here today and gone tomorrow. Never seen again. Not even a Ceremony of Release.”

Jonas shrugged. It didn’t worry him. How could someone not fit in? The community was so meticulously ordered, the choices so carefully made” (p. 48).

Writing Task

Jonas’s community is so careful in making sure everyone lives without much diversity or change. There are very specific rules at each stage in life. Can a person live a life of integrity with such constraints?

“Integrity moves me to do difficult and new things, not just easy and accustomed things.”

Write a paragraph or two explaining how it is possible or impossible to live a life of integrity while adhering to the rules of Jonas’ community.

- Does one need to have choices in life to gain integrity?
- Does one need to have choices to prove integrity?
- Can you learn without ever taking a misstep or making a mistake?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Giver, Day 7



Key Paragraph, p. 51

“Fiona, Eighteen, was on his left; on his other side sat Twenty, a male named Pierre whom Jonas didn’t like much. Pierre was very serious, not much fun, and a worrier and tattletale, too. ‘Have you checked the rules, Jonas?’ Pierre was always whispering solemnly. ‘I’m not sure that’s within the rules.’ Usually it was some foolish thing that no one cared about – opening his tunic if it was a day with a breeze; taking a brief try on a friend’s bicycle, just to experience the different feel of it” (p. 51).

Writing Task

Our definition of Integrity states that *Integrity requires that the way I live my life is whole, entire, undivided, sound, coherent, and principled.*

In Jonas’s society, any act that makes you different from others may be against the law. **Write a paragraph explaining that it takes great courage and integrity to be true to yourself.** When answering the question above, consider the following:

- Use examples from the text.
- Who in the novel thus far has courage and integrity? Who doesn’t?
- Why does it take courage to be yourself?
- Use examples from your own life, if you would like.

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Giver, Day 8



Key Paragraph, p. 62

“Jonas was identified as a possible Receiver many years ago. We have observed him meticulously. There were no dreams of uncertainty.

‘He has shown all the qualities that a Receiver must have.’ With her hand still firmly on his shoulder, the Chief Elder listed the qualities. ‘*Intelligence*,’ she said. ‘We are all aware that Jonas has been a top student throughout his school days.

‘*Integrity*,’ she said next. ‘Jonas has, like all of us, committed minor transgressions.’ She smiled at him. ‘We expect that. We hoped, also, that he would present himself promptly for chastisement, and he has always done so’ (p. 62).

Writing Task

Our definition of Integrity states:

Integrity requires that the way I live my life is whole, entire, undivided, sound, coherent, and principled. Integrity moves me to do difficult and new things, not just easy and accustomed things. **Write a paragraph in the form of a letter explaining our definition of Integrity to Jonas’s community.**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Giver, Day 9



Key Paragraph, p. 71

“He had never, within his memory, been tempted to lie. Asher did not lie. Lily did not lie. His parents did not lie. No one did. Unless...”

Now Jonas had a thought that he had never had before. This new thought was frightening. What if *others* – *adults* – had, upon becoming Twelves, received in *their* instructions the same terrifying sentence?

What if they had all been instructed: *You may lie?*” (p. 71.)

Writing Task

Jonas is terrified by some of his instructions. **Write a paragraph explaining how his reaction to his new rules shows his integrity.** When answering the question above, consider the following:

- What rule bothers Jonas the most?
- Why are the rules so different from what he is used to?
- What kind of life does this mean for Jonas, and how is he preparing himself to deal with his future?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Giver, Day 10



Key Paragraph, p. 77

The man sighed, seeming to put his thoughts in order. Then he spoke again. 'Simply stated,' he said, 'although it's not really simple at all, my job is to transmit to you all the memories I have within me. Memories of the past'" (p. 77).

Writing Task

In Jonas's world, people do not remember the world as it used to be. They have no memories of things like animals, puberty, or snow.

Write a paragraph explaining why is it important for the community to have one person who remembers all of these things? When answering the question above, consider the following:

- What might happen if *no one* remembered?
- Why doesn't *everyone* have these memories?
- Why does the old Receiver have so many books?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Giver, Day 11



Key Passage, p. 83-84

"He was free to enjoy the breathless glee that overwhelmed him: the speed, the clear cold air, the total silence, the feeling of balance and excitement and peace.

'But what happened to those things? Snow, and the rest of it?'

'Climate control. Snow made growing food difficult, limited the agricultural periods. And unpredictable weather made transportation almost impossible at times. It wasn't a practical thing, so it became obsolete when we went to Sameness'" (p. 83-84).

Writing Task

What did people in the community believe was the logical response to their environment? Do you believe they behaved logically? **Write a paragraph explaining why or why not.** When answering the question above, consider the following:

- Is it important for people to interact with their environment? Why or why not?
- What are the benefits of having fun in varied outdoor settings?
- Does this allow us to connect to others' lives?
- How does this help us to take risks?
- How do these activities help us to move toward our definition of Integrity?

Integrity moves me to do difficult and new things, not just easy and accustomed things

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Giver, Day 12



Key Paragraph, p. 95

"The Giver shrugged. 'Our people made that choice, the choice to go to Sameness. Before my time, before the previous time, back and back and back. We relinquished color when we relinquished sunshine and did away with differences.' He thought for a moment. 'We gained control of many things. But we had to let go of others.'

'We shouldn't have!' Jonas said fiercely.

The Giver looked startled at the certainty of Jonas's reaction. Then he smiled wryly. 'You've come very quickly to that conclusion,' he said. 'It took me many years. Maybe your wisdom will come much more quickly than mine' (p. 95).

Writing Task

It appears that Jonas Community has given up much to gain control of many things.

- Do you believe this has been a wise choice for this community?
- Do you agree with Jonas? Why or why not?

Write a paragraph explaining your why you agree or disagree with Jonas. Remember, "Integrity requires wholeness." Can a person be whole when they have no choices and when they have limited access to the world?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Giver, Day 13



Key Paragraph, p. 105

'Oh, your instructors are well trained. They know their scientific facts. Everyone is well trained for his job.

'It's just that... without memories it's all meaningless. They gave that burden to me. And to the previous Receiver. And the one before him'" (p. 105).

Writing Task

The Giver states, "It's just that.... without memories it is all meaningless. Write a paragraph or two explaining why the Giver says this to Jonas. Make sure you answer the following questions in your writing.

- What is he referring to?
- Why do you think he states this?
- What has led The Giver to believe this?
- Is Jonas beginning to believe this also?
- Without memories, can people be Whole?
- Who would The Giver say *does* have Integrity?
- Who would Jonas say has integrity?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Giver, Day 14



Key Passage, p. 113

“But why can’t *everyone* have the memories? I think it would seem a little easier if the memories were shared. You and I wouldn’t have to bear so much by ourselves, if everybody took a part.’

The Giver sighed. ‘You’re right,’ he said. ‘But then everyone would be burdened and pained. They don’t want that. And that’s the real reason The Receiver is so vital to them, and so honored. They selected me – and you – to lift that burden from themselves’” (p. 113).

Writing Task

Jonas sees the system of one person bearing all the pain as inherently unfair. Why is this so? Do you think it is wrong for a society to place the burden of pain on only one or two people?

Write an informative paragraph to explain why you believe this is fair or unfair.

- Who does this system benefit?
- Who does the system hurt?
- Are the needs of the many more important than the needs of the few?
- Can a society that behaves this way have integrity?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Giver, Day 15



Key Passage, p. 125-126

Jonas blurted out what he was feeling. 'I was thinking that... well, I can see that it wasn't a very practical way to live, with the Old right there in the same place, where maybe they wouldn't be well taken care of, the way they are now, and that we have a better-arranged way of doing things. But anyway, I was thinking, I mean feeling, actually, that it was kind of nice, then. And that I wish we could be that way, and that you could be my grandparent. The family in the memory seemed a little more –' He faltered, not able to find the word he wanted.

'A little more complete,' The Giver suggested" (p. 125-126).

Writing Task

In many societies, elders are respected for their knowledge and wisdom of life. In some societies it is very common for elders live with their families until they die. The usual family unit includes grandparents.

In the United States this is no longer the most common practice. Most of our elders go and live in rest homes when they can no longer care for themselves or live by themselves. What have we lost as a society by this practice of sending our elders away to an institution to live out their last few years of life?

Write a paragraph or two explaining the importance of family and what you believe could be gained by the practice of respecting and learning from our most elderly citizens. What could be gained by making sure elderly people live with their families during their last few years of life? Consider the following questions:

- What is a family? Why is family important?
- Are grandparents important? Why or why not?
- Do you think we treat older people with respect in our society? Why do we worship youth?
- How do strong families influence one another? How could an elder be helpful in influencing all members of a family?
- What is the difference between families in your community and families in Jonas's community?
- Do you think families are important in developing a sense of integrity?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Giver, Day 16



Key Paragraph, p. 135

“Jonas trudged to the bench beside the Storehouse and sat down, overwhelmed with feelings of loss. His childhood, his friendships, and his carefree sense of security – all of these things seemed to be slipping away. With his new, heightened feelings, he was overwhelmed by sadness at the way the others had laughed and shouted, playing at war. But he knew that they could not understand why, without the memories. He felt such love for Asher and for Fiona. But they could not feel it back, without the memories. And he could not give them those. Jonas knew with certainty that he could change nothing” (p. 135).

Writing Task

Jonas has come to a point where he feels like life has no purpose. After having “seen beyond,” he can’t share his experiences or himself with other members of his family. **Using a quote from the story, write a paragraph explaining how Jonas would define Integrity at this moment.**

- Would he say that his community has Integrity?
- Why or why not?
- What would Jonas say people must have in order to have Integrity?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Giver, Day 17



Key Paragraph, p. 143

“But it’s against the rules! The Receiver-in-training can’t apply for rel-
 ‘It’s in your rules, Jonas. But it wasn’t in hers. She asked for release, and they
 had to give it to her. I never saw her again” (p. 143).

Writing Task

Despite any faults it may have, the people in Jonas’s community strictly follow and enforce the rules. Even though Rosemary’s release had disastrous results for the community, the Chief Elder followed the rules and released Rosemary when she asked.

Write a paragraph that thoroughly explains whether **following the rules is always the right thing to do**. Consider the following:

- Why do homes, classrooms, schools, cities, counties, states, countries, etc have rules and laws?
- What is the purpose of law and rules?
- What can a society gain by following the rules?
- Is it ever acceptable to break the rules? Why?
- What would our community be like without rules?
- What would Jonas’s society be like without rules?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Giver, Day 18



Key Paragraph, p. 151

“You suggested, Jonas, that perhaps she wasn’t brave enough? I don’t know about bravery: what it is, what it means. I do know that I sat here numb with horror. Wretched with helplessness. And I listened as Rosemary told them that she would prefer to inject herself” (p. 151).

Writing Task

Write an informative paragraph explaining why **Rosemary had Integrity**? Think of the following as you answer:

- Was she brave?
- Did she do the right thing?
- Did Rosemary violate any laws of the community?
- Can a community whose laws allow such a thing to happen be a place of Integrity?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Giver, Day 19



Key Paragraph, p. 154

“The worst part of holding the memories is not the pain. It’s the loneliness of it. Memories need to be shared” (p. 154).

Writing Task

Do you agree with The Giver’s statement above? Write an informative paragraph, which explains why is it so important that we share memories?

Then, think of a memory you would not want to lose. **Write a paragraph describing that memory in detail.** Include the following:

- Why is that memory important to you?
- Why is it important that you not forget it?
- What can you, or other people, learn from that memory?
- What have you done to share that memory with others?
- How does this memory contribute to **your** integrity?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Giver, Day 20



Key Paragraphs, p. 165 & p. 171

“Jonas reached the opposite side of the river, stopped briefly, and looked back. The community where his entire life had been lived lay behind him now, sleeping. At dawn, the orderly, disciplined life he had always known would continue again, without him. The life where nothing was ever unexpected. Or inconvenient. Or unusual. The life without color, pain, or past” (p. 165).

“All of it was new to him. After a life of Sameness and predictability, he was awed by the surprises that lay beyond each curve of the road. He slowed the bike again and again to look with wonder at wildflowers, to enjoy the throaty warble of a new bird nearby, or merely to watch the way wind shifted the leaves in the trees. During his twelve years in the community, he had never felt such simple moments of exquisite happiness” (p. 171).

Writing Task

As Jonas enters a life that is more whole, he becomes happy. Write a paragraph explaining why **a person’s happiness is connected to or reliant upon a person’s Integrity?**

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Giver, Day 21



Key Paragraph, p. 178-179

“Downward, downward, faster and faster. Suddenly he was aware with certainty and joy that below, ahead, they were waiting for him; and that they were waiting, too, for the baby. For the first time, he heard something that he knew to be music. He heard people singing” (p. 178-179).

Writing Task

Write 2 or 3 paragraph explaining what you think happened to Jonas and Gabriel? What information from the book can you quote to support your answer? What would you have done?

Character Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

The Giver, Day 22



Key Paragraph, p. 9

"The man that I named The Giver passed along to the boy knowledge, history memories, color, pain, laughter, love, and truth. Every time you place a book in the hands of a child, you do the same thing.

It is very risky" (p. 9).

Writing Task

Final Writing Task

Write a five-paragraph essay explaining to your reader why the majority of people in Jonas's community lack integrity.

or

Write a five-paragraph essay explaining to your reader why you believe Jonas possess integrity.

In either case, you may assume that your reader is familiar with Jonas and his story. Be sure to include a strong thesis statement. Use at least three rhetorical devices in you arguments.