

# Gathering Blue



By

Lois Lowry

A Novel Study  
by Nat and Joel Reed

# Gathering Blue

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**About the author:** Nat Reed was a member of the teaching profession for more than 35 years. He was a full-time instructor at Trent University in the Teacher Education Program for nine years. For more information on his work and literature, visit [novelstudies.org](http://novelstudies.org).

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## Suggestions and Expectations

This curriculum unit can be used in a variety of ways. Each of the twenty three chapters of the novel study focuses on two or three chapters of *Gathering Blue* and is comprised of the following activities:

1. Before You Read
2. Vocabulary Building
3. Comprehension Questions
4. Language and Extension Activities

A portfolio cover (page 7) as well as a Checklist (page 6) are included so that students may keep track of their completed work.

**Every activity need not be completed by all students.**

### Links with the Common Core Standards (U.S.)

Many of the activities included in this curriculum unit are supported by the Common Core Standards. For instance the *Reading Standards for Literature, Grade 5*, makes reference to:

- a) determining the meaning of words and phrases... including figurative language;
- b) explaining how a series of chapters fits together to provide the overall structure;
- c) compare and contrast two characters;
- d) determine how characters ... respond to challenges;
- e) drawing inferences from the text;
- f) determining a theme of a story, **and many others.**

**Themes** which may be taught in conjunction with the novel include individual responsibility to redeem the societies in which they live; dealing with adversity, coming of age; courage and endurance; community; dealing with a physical disability.

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## List of Skills

### Vocabulary Development

1. Locating descriptive words/phrases
2. Listing synonyms/homophones
3. Identifying/creating *alliteration*
4. Use of capitals and punctuation
5. Identifying syllables
6. Identify *personification*.
7. Identify *anagrams*
8. Listing compound words
9. Identifying parts of speech
10. Identify/create *similes*
11. Identification of root words

### Setting Activities

1. Summarize the details of a setting

### Plot Activities

1. Complete a *time line* of events
2. Identify conflict in the story
3. Complete Five W's Chart
4. Identify *cliffhangers*
5. Identify the climax of the novel.
6. Complete a Story Pyramid

### Character Activities

1. Determine character traits
2. Identify the protagonist/antagonist
3. Relating personal experiences
4. Compare characters

### Creative and Critical Thinking

1. Research
2. Write a newspaper story
3. Participate in a talk show
4. Conduct an interview
5. Create a poem
6. Write about personal feelings
7. Write a book review
8. Complete a KWS Chart

### Art Activities

1. A Storyboard
2. Create a collage
3. Design a cover for the novel
4. Create a comic strip

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## Synopsis

The second book in Lois Lowry's *Giver Quartet*, which began with the bestselling and Newbery Medal-winning *The Giver*. Left orphaned and physically flawed in a civilization that shuns and discards the weak, Kira faces a frighteningly uncertain future. Her neighbors are hostile, and no one but a small boy offers to help. When she is summoned to judgment by The Council of Guardians, Kira prepares to fight for her life. But the Council, to her surprise, has plans for her. Blessed with a magical talent that keeps her alive, the young girl faces new responsibilities and a set of mysteries deep within the only world she's ever known. On her quest for truth, Kira discovers things that will change her life and world forever.

A compelling examination of a future society, *Gathering Blue* challenges readers to think about community, creativity, and the values that they have learned to accept. Once again Lois Lowry brings readers on a provocative journey that inspires contemplation long after the last page is turned. [Courtesy of the Publisher]

### Author Biography

Lois Lowry

Lois Lowry (born Lois Ann Hammersberg; March 20, 1937) is an American writer credited with more than thirty children's books and an autobiography. She's won two Newbery Medals, for *Number the Stars* in 1989 and *The Giver* in 1993. For her contribution as a children's writer, she was a finalist in 2000 for the biennial, international *Hans Christian Andersen Award*, the highest recognition available to creators of children's books. In 2007 she received the Margaret Edwards Award from the *American Library Association* for her contribution in writing for teens. As an author, Lowry is known for writing about difficult subject matters within her works for children.



She has explored such complex issues as racism, terminal illness, murder, and the Holocaust among other challenging topics. She has also explored the very controversial issues of questioning authority such as in *The Giver* quartet. Her work *The Giver* has been met with a diversity of reactions from schools in America, some of which have adopted her book as a part of the mandatory curriculum, while others have prohibited the book's inclusion in classroom studies. [Adapted from Wikipedia]



# Gathering Blue



*By Lois Lowry*

Name:

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## Chapters 1-2



### Before you read the chapters:

The **protagonist** in most novels features the main character or “good guy”. The main character of *Gathering Blue* is Kira, a courageous young girl living in a frightening futuristic society. Think back on some of your favorite characters from novels you have read or movies you’ve seen. Who would you say is the most intriguing character you have encountered in this way? What made you select this person?




### Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

diminish	diversion	ruefully	methodically
contemptuous	tentative	pliable	concede

1. Kira picked up one of the slender, \_\_\_\_\_ saplings from the pile.
2. We thought that the storm would begin to \_\_\_\_\_ after a few hours.
3. She had to work \_\_\_\_\_ through her options before making a decision.
4. “While you create a \_\_\_\_\_, I will enter the vault,” James suggested.
5. I will \_\_\_\_\_ the fact that the Bruins are a better team this year.
6. I think he is guilty because his responses were very \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Vandara gave Kira a \_\_\_\_\_ glance before stating her case.
8. After realizing his error, Marcel glanced \_\_\_\_\_ at the police officer and shrugged his shoulders.



# Questions



1. Describe the **setting** of the story at the beginning of Chapter One.


2. Describe how Kira's mother's death left Kira in a precarious situation.


3. What was there about Kira that gave her value in the eyes of her community.


4. What were two factors that saved Kira when she was born?


5. Why were the people of the Fen looked down upon by others?


6. What bad news did Kira receive at the end of Chapter One?


7. Describe your impression of Vandara. On what evidence did you base these observations?


8. Cite one piece of evidence from these chapters illustrating Kira's courage and how she is a fast-thinker in a tight situation.


9. What did Kira plan to offer the woodcutter in exchange for some sturdy lengths of wood? What did she need this wood for?


## Language Activities



### A. Your Favorite Genre Of Books

**Gathering Blue** might be classified as a science fiction novel for Young Readers. What genre of books do you enjoy the most? (i.e. mystery, humor, biography, romance, fantasy, historical fiction, science fiction, poetry, etc.) Why do you especially enjoy this type of book?




## B. Cliffhanger

Chapter 2 contains an important literary device called a **cliffhanger**. A cliffhanger usually occurs at the end of a chapter when the author leaves the reader in suspense. How is this true in Chapter 2? Why do you think the author ended the chapter this way?




**C.** A **simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from this section is: *My mother’s spirit has gone,” she acknowledged. “I watched it leave her body. It was like mist, it drifted away.”*



What is being compared in this example?

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Invent your own **similes** comparing the following items with something from your own imagination:

a) a wildflower


b) a forest fire


## D. A Quatrain Poem Celebrates Buried Treasures.

The **quatrain** is a popular form of rhymed verse. It is a poem of four lines, is usually light and can be humorous. The following quatrain is the first four lines of the famous poem, **The Future**, written by the renowned poet, Atrocious Halitosis.

*I can't say what the future holds,  
It's quite unclear to me.  
I only hope when it does come,  
It won't be while I pee.*



Various rhyming schemes make up a quatrain poem. As you can see, the above four lines have a rhyming scheme of **A - B - C - B**. Other rhyming schemes include: ABAB, AAAA, AABA, ABBA, ABBB, and AAAB.

Your task is to write your own quatrain poem. You may choose a rhyming scheme that fits with your own personal creation. The theme should have something to do with the topics established in the first two chapters of our novel.

### The Quatrain Poem

Now create your own Quatrain Poem. Your poem must follow the format of a quatrain poem described above (and must rhyme).

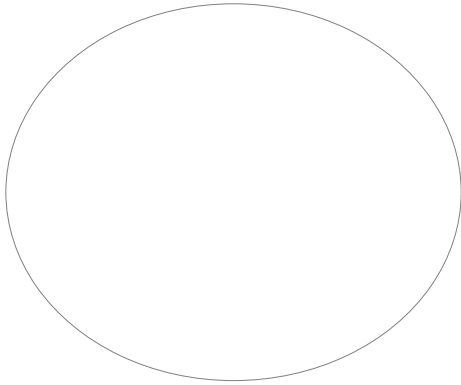
**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_


**E.** Next to each pair of words indicate whether each is an example of a Synonym (S), Antonym (A), or Homophone (H).

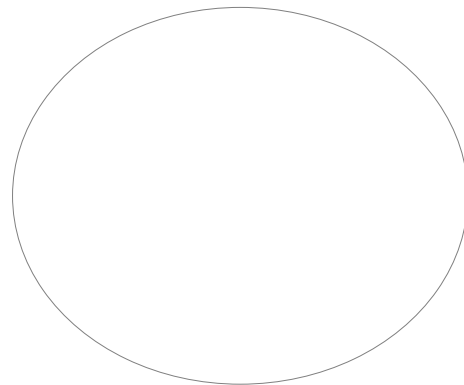
1	hesitate - pause		6	flour - flower	
2	wood - would		7	pretend - imagine	
3	harsh - gentle		8	methodically - imprecisely	
4	build - deconstruct		9	know - no	
5	respected - admired		10	rueful - mournful	

## F. 5 Ws and an H.

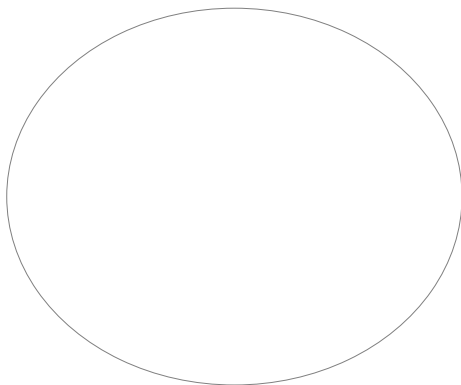
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



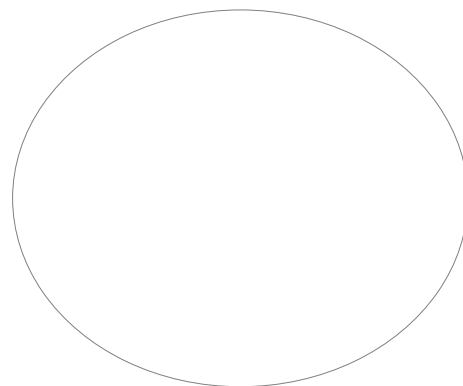
***WHO?***



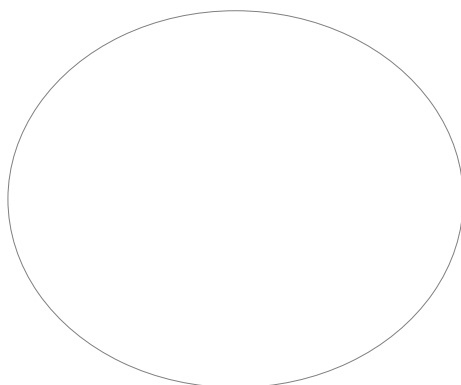
***WHAT?***



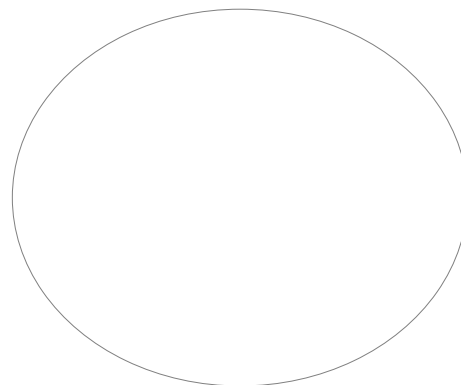
***WHEN?***



***WHERE?***



***WHY?***



***HOW?***

## Extension Activity



### Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of pictures that tell about an important event in a story. A storyboard can tell the story of only one scene – or the entire novel. Complete the storyboard below illustrating the events described in this section of our novel. You may wish to practice your drawings on a separate piece of paper.

1	2
3	4
5	6