

# Messenger



By

Lois Lowry

A Novel Study  
by Nat Reed

# Messenger

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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. Most sections of the novel study focuses on two chapters of *Messenger*. The unit 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 selfishness versus the collective good; the value of honesty and openness in a community; dealing with adversity; coming of age; courage, sacrifice and endurance.

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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 third book in Lois Lowry's Giver Quartet, which began with the bestselling and Newbery Medal-winning *The Giver*.

Trouble is brewing in Village. Once a utopian community that prided itself on welcoming strangers, Village will soon be cut off to all outsiders.

As one of the few able to traverse the forbidding Forest, Matty must deliver the message of Village's closing and try to convince Seer's daughter Kira to return with him before it's too late. But Forest is now hostile to Matty as well. Now he must risk everything to fight his way through it, armed only with an emerging power he cannot yet explain or understand. [Courtesy of the Publisher]

### Author Biography

#### Lois Lowry

**Lois Lowry** (born **Lois Ann Hammersberg**; Mar 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]





# Messenger



*By Lois Lowry*

Name:

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# Messenger

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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 *Messenger* is Matty, living in a once-Utopian society that has suddenly become very frightening and hostile. What character traits do you think Matty would benefit from in order to survive in such a hostile environment? What do you think would rank as the number one necessity for his survival?




## Vocabulary:

Choose a word from the list to complete each sentence.

haphazard	translucent	concoction	subtlety	variations
appropriate	boisterous	malevolent	convenient	passive

1. Matty could not understand his friend’s \_\_\_\_\_ of speech.
2. The frog was quite \_\_\_\_\_ in his hand, barely moving.
3. The \_\_\_\_\_ gem was so unusual that it attracted much attention.
4. “Do you think it is \_\_\_\_\_ to burp while I’m speaking?” the teacher asked.
5. He could hear \_\_\_\_\_ of sound that seemed to the boy to be all the same.
6. There was no doubt in anyone’s minds that the thief’s intentions were \_\_\_\_\_.
7. My younger brothers were so \_\_\_\_\_, we finally sent them out to play.
8. To Matty, it was sometimes a way of making things easier, more \_\_\_\_\_.
9. The \_\_\_\_\_ of herbs that the boys assembled was most intriguing.
10. Matty spread the bedcovers on his own bed with \_\_\_\_\_ indifference.



# Questions



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


2. Why is the name of the blind man ironic?


3. How would you describe Matty's personality from what we learn of him in these first two chapters?


4. What were two reasons why Matty had such a high regard for Mentor?


5. Forest was a very dangerous place for most people. Why didn't Matty's presence pose a threat to Forest?


6. What was Matty's job? How did this play into the name that Matty hoped to eventually be assigned?


7. What did Matty's strange encounter in Forest mean to him?


8. Describe what happened to Gatherer? Why was his death so traumatic to Matty?


9. What caused a rift in Matty's friendship with Ramon?


**For Those Who Have Read *Gathering Blue* / *The Giver***

1. What was Seer's name in *Gathering Blue*? How did he lose his sight?


2. Who is Leader? (Hint - he was a character in *The Giver*.)


# Language Activities



## A. Foreshadowing

Chapter 2 contains at least one example of an important literary device called **foreshadowing**. Foreshadowing is defined as *a warning or indication of a future event*. Near the end of Chapter 2, Leader studies Forest and something in this entity disturbed his consciousness and made him uneasy. What do you think this realization foreshadows in this novel?



<b>Prediction:</b>

## B. Cliffhanger

Chapter Two 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 Two? Why is this cliffhanger also very odd and mysterious?




**C. Personification** is giving human qualities to something that is not human. Here's an example taken from Chapter 2: *Behind them, Village, quiet and peaceful, continued its daily life.*

Describe how Village is personified in this example.


Create your own example of personification.


**D. A simile** is a comparison using the words “like” or “as”. An example from the novel is: *In the place called Beyond, Leader’s consciousness met Kira’s, and they curled around each other like wisps of smoke, in greeting.*



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 forest


b) a frog


## E. The Diamante Poem.

There are many forms of poetry available to the aspiring poet other than the rhyming poem. One of the forms of poetry that is the most fun to tackle is the **Diamante** poem.



### The Diamante Poem

The diamante poem has a distinct form and a distinct shape. Directions for creating one is as follows:

**Line 1** - Noun or subject – one word.

**Line 2** - Two adjectives that describe Line 1.

**Line 3** - Three *'ing* words that describe line 1 (i.e. *playing*).

**Line 4** - Four nouns – the first two are connected with Line 1, the last two are connected with Line 7.

**Line 5** - Three *'ing* words that describe Line 7.

**Line 6** - Two adjectives that describe Line 7.

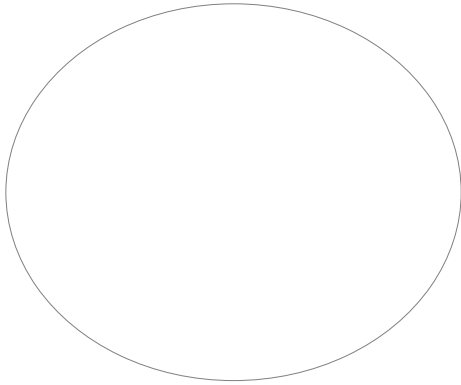
**Line 7** - One noun synonym for the subject.

Following the above instructions, try your hand at writing a diamante poem using an idea, event or character from the first two chapters as your inspiration.

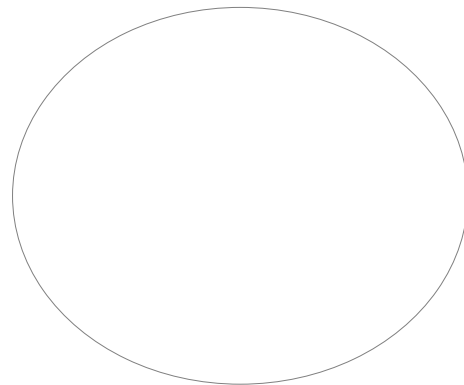
**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_


## F. 5 Ws and an H.

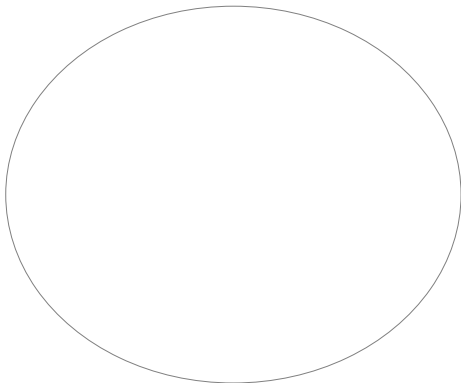
Choose an event from this section that you thought was really important and/or exciting. Using facts that you gleaned from reading about this event, fill in the balloons below, summarizing what you learned.



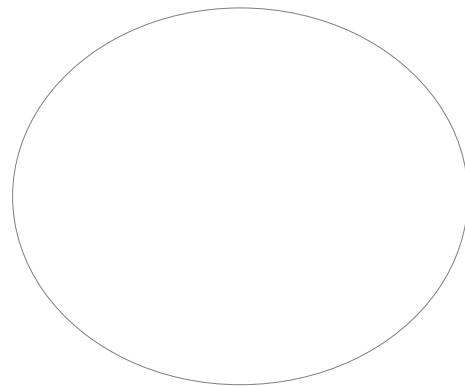
***WHO?***



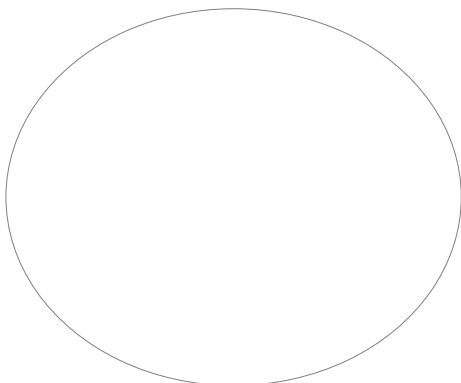
***WHAT?***



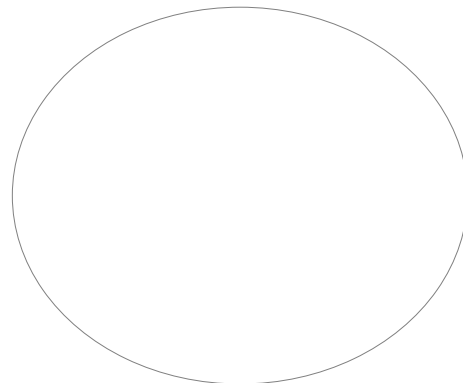
***WHEN?***



***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