



## Novel Guide for Gifted and Advanced Readers



This guide is appropriate for use with gifted and advanced readers. It addresses their affective and cognitive needs through questions that can be used for discussion. Depending on the length of the book, students should read the entire book before conducting the bibliotherapy lesson, the **Group Discussion** using the higher order questions and the **After Discussion** activities. Students should be given the **Before Discussion** activities to complete during their time while reading the book. If the book is exceptionally long, you may need to modify this lesson plan. See **Novel Guide: Notes for Implementing** for additional procedures and recommendations.

**Book Title:** *Gathering Blue*

**Author:** Lois Lowery

**Interest Level:** 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Lexile:** 680

**Length:** 215 pages

**Guide developed by:** Alicia Frye

### **Summary:**

Physically crippled and recently orphaned Kira finds herself fighting for her right to live within her dystopic society days after her mother's tragic death. When her talents are recognized, her life is transformed. However, she soon learns that through her talent she has the opportunity to alter the oppressive society in which she lives. With the help of her friends and a surprising revelation from her past, Kira is determined to make the world a better place for all.

### **Conceptual Connections:**

**Conceptual Lens:** Value of Life

**Other Key Concepts:** Gifts and Talents; Friendship, Art's Impact on the Human Condition

### **Essential Understandings:**

- Every individual life is of value.
- Friendship plays an important role in helping one achieve his/her full potential of his/her gifts and talents.
- Art is a powerful fulfillment of an intangible need in the human condition.

### **Essential Questions:**

- In what ways is every life of value?
- How does friendship enable a person to achieve full potential regarding gifts and talents?
- In what ways can a support system (or lack thereof) impact one's abilities to achieve?

## Affective Focus (Bibliotherapy)

### Introductory Activity/Hook

*Option #1:* Think of a piece of art that speaks to you. Describe what it is, what it looks like, etc. Write a response to that artwork explaining how it speaks to you and why you believe it is meaningful for you.

*Option #2:* What talents/hobbies/special abilities do you have? What obstacles must you overcome to reach your potential with those talents? Make a t-chart of your talents and what obstacles are in your way. Finally, choose one talent and write a response in which you explore the idea of what you would like to accomplish through that talent and how you might go about doing so.

### Menu of Bibliotherapy Questions

#### **Identification:**

- What tragic event has occurred to Kira at the beginning of the novel?
- What does Vandara want to do to Kira?
- Into what did the woman want to make Kira's cott?
- What physical handicap does Kira have? What special talent does Kira have?
- Who saves Kira from *the field*?
- What do Kira and Thomas find living in the locked room? Describe that individual's special talent.
- Who does Matt bring to Kira as a gift?
- What will Kira's purpose be in staying in the society?

#### **Catharsis:**

- How did Kira feel as a member within her society after her mother died?
- How did Kira feel about her title as *the accused* during the trial?
- How do Kira's feelings about her guardian saving her affect her attitude toward her work?
- How does using her talent, weaving, make Kira feel about her self-worth?
- How does Kira feel about protecting her friends?
- How does Kira's knowledge about her society change her feelings about her importance, and role, and ability within her society?

#### **Insight:**

- What talents and/or special abilities make you feel unique?
- How does it feel when you are working on that talent or ability?
- How do you feel when others support your work on your talent/ability?
- How do you feel when others do not support your work on your talent/ability?
- How might your actions towards others impact their development of their talents and abilities?
- How does art inspire people?
- How can you incorporate art into your life for both the purpose of personal inspiration and for societal contribution?

### Universalization/Follow up Activity

Keeping in mind your special abilities and talents, create an artistic piece. This piece can be a poem, short story, play, drawing, painting, sculpture, movie, dance, cartoon, etc. Additionally, write a one page reflection of how this piece is an expression of who you are, why it is of value, and how you hope to inspire others when they view your creation. Be prepared to present your artistic work and reflection with the class. If you feel uncomfortable with the presentation of your artistic work, speak with the teacher about possible alternate arrangements for presentation.

## Reading Comprehension: Independent Work and Group Discussion

To foster strong reading comprehension, literacy skills, and love of literature, students need to read critically, respond to what they read with text-based evidence, develop a robust vocabulary, and engage in high level discussion with peers. The following activities address these components.

**Before Group Discussion** Activities for students to complete independently

**A. Knowledge and Comprehension Questions** related to the novel. Students use sticky notes to locate answers in the text as they read. Teacher may use student's answers for a grade.

### Knowledge Questions

- What happened after Kira's mother died to Kira?
- Who wants to send Kira to *the field*?
- What does Vandara want to do with Kira's cott?
- Who listened to Kira's case?
- What was Kira's new role in the society after the hearing?
- Where did Kira live after the Council of Guardians heard her case?
- Who saved Kira's belongings from her cott?
- What will Kira's new role in the society be after the trial is over?
- What is Thomas's special skill?
- Who mentored Kira about how to make dyes and which plants made which color?
- Who is Jo?
- What is Jo's special skill?
- What happens on the day of the Gathering?
- Who does Matt bring back with him from the neighboring community?
- What color does woad mixed with soft rainwater make?
- Are there really beasts in *the field*?

### Comprehension Questions

- Can you write in your own words what verdict was reached concerning Kira's case before the Council of Guardians?
- What differences exist between Kira's community and the community that her father, Christopher, lives in?
- Why do Jamison and the Council of Elders see a need to place Kira separately from the rest of the village to live?
- Why does Kira spend time with Jo?
- Why is it important that Kira learn that there are no *beasts* in *the field* or the woods?
- Why does Jo decide to remain in her current community?

**B. Vocabulary Study:** Students will complete the following activities with vocabulary from the novel.

The activities may be used for a grade, but should also be included in the discussion.

- Students look up the word in the dictionary or online, noting the definition that best fits how the word is used in the passage. Also, determine possible synonyms and evaluate the author's use of the word in the passage.
- Students will complete a graphic organizer provided by the teacher.

***Vocabulary Words***

- Lingering (page 1)
- Remnant (page 15)
- Edifice (page 22)
- Meticulously (page 31)
- Seized (53)
- Impetuous (63)
- Intricately (71)
- Weary (81)
- Vibrant (90)
- Raucous (100)
- Lingered (114)
- Exuberantly (119)
- Inflection (122)
- Anticipating (130)
- Grimace (140)
- Afflicted (154)
- Dankness(158)
- Reassurance (167)
- Restoration (173)
- Festering (211)

**Group Discussion:** Teacher-facilitated small group discussion. Teacher may choose to provide students with a set of the questions prior to the discussion. Students should also be encouraged to create their own questions.

**Higher-Level Questions** (using Bloom's categories):

**1. Application**

- After Kira's mother dies, Kira must remain at her grave until her mother's spirit was gone. During that time, she knew that her cott (her home) could be looted. She chooses to remain with her mother. What you have done the same, why or why not?
- When Vandara accuses Kira of being a burden to their society, Kira chooses to allow Jamison, one of the council members to defend her. Would you have defended yourself, or would you have chosen to allow someone else to be your defender? Explain.
- What would be the most difficult part about living in Kira's society for you?

**2. Analysis**

- Kira looks forward to filling in the area of the robe that has not ever been a part of the story. Why do you believe this area is so important to her?
- What questions would you ask of Jamison if you were Kira after you learned that he was keeping Jo locked up?
- How would you keep yourself entertained and from being sad if you were in Jo's situation?

**3. Evaluation**

- Judge the value of each member of society's ability to contribute.
- What changes would you recommend for the society in which Kira currently lives?
- What does this story tell you about each person's talents?
- What does this story tell you about the value of life?
- What does this story tell us about how art plays a role in the human experience?
- What does this story tell us about the support of friends and family?

**4. Synthesis**

- Can you design a new model for how their community should function?
- Can you defend your position as to why each life has value (or does not)?
- What type of music would you imagine would be sung at The Gathering after Kira has helped to change her community?
- How would the story have been different if Kira's father had been in her life since she was young?
- What do you think Kira's next step will be since she has be more accurate understanding of her community at the end of the novel?

**After Group Discussion:** Activities for students to complete with a partner, in a small group, or individually. Activities may be used for a grade.

**A. Connections to the Curriculum:** Students will make connections to a curriculum area (Math, science, social studies, language arts, art, or careers) using one of the concepts from the story. The product should reflect creativity as well as critical thinking.

- **Language Arts** – Review the article entitled, “Utopia,” that details the history of Utopia in literature and attempts to create utopian societies in early American history. Students should review the initial inspirations to create utopian societies and why there will always be flaws when attempting to create such societies. Students will then attempt to create their own utopian societies designing their own governments, communities, educational systems, entertainment, etc. They will write their descriptions and create a flag, map, motto. They will prepare a presentation of their society, as well. Finally, students should write a reflection of what they believe is the most prevalent flaw that will occur within their society and why that flaw is unavoidable.
- **Social Studies** – Kira’s society operates in such as ways as to control its members by lying to them. Kira finds out the truth. Reenact a courtroom trial in which you appoint a bailiff, a jury, a judge, prosecuting lawyer, defending lawyer, and witnesses. Take on the persona of the characters in the book and put the society’s elders on trial for their lies. The judge will declare a ruling based upon the jury’s decision. Students will act out the trial during class, so be sure to prepare opening and closing remarks, witness accounts that are in accordance with evidence found in the text (the novel), and questions that will prove your case.
- **Science/Health** – Kira was born with a twisted leg. Students will design an aid for Kira to use to help her walk. The design should be made of items that a society could easily acquire. Draw or sketch the design and explain how it will be created. Students can even create a prototype of the walking aid from materials they find in nature if time permits.
- **Art** – Kira’s talent is to weave, Thomas’s talent is to carve, and Jo’s talent is to sing. Choose one of these talents to create a design for the section of the robe that is not yet detailed, or design the portion of the staff that is yet to be designed, or write the unwritten portion of the song for the singer of the society. You can draw these, and if you would like to attempt to actually weave or carve or sing the song, see the teacher to create a plan of action.
- **Career** – Kira has a useful skill in her ability to weave. However, her determination is also a powerful asset. At the end of the novel, she realizes the flaws of her society and wants to remain within her society. Design a job description and resume for Kira that emphasizes her experiences, skills, and abilities in such a way that might help her to gain a position in the society to help them reform their ways.
- **Language Arts/Creative Drama** – Students will work with a partner to write a scene between two characters from the novel: a fictional scene between Jamison and Kira after she learns about the lies of the society, Kira and Christopher when they first meet, a fictional scene between Annabella and the town in which she is informing the town of the truth about their society. Or, choose another scene which you would like to dramatize. Students should be prepared to present your scene to the class. Students may bring in others to help act out the scene when presenting.

**B. Creative Reading:** Using the following list of creative products, students will complete a project reflecting their personal connection with the novel (students may determine their own creative product with the approval of the teacher):

1. Create a puppet play based on a favorite scene in the story
2. Create a poem based on the novel, a character, or favorite scene
3. Illustrate a favorite scene(s) from the story
4. Create a story board of the plot of the story
5. Write a screen play based on the story
6. Create a new ending for the story
7. Create a map of the location(s) of the story
8. Create a mural representative of the story and characters
9. Extend the story into a sequel
10. Rewrite a portion of the story from another character's perspective
11. Rewrite the story in another time or culture
12. Create an online product: infographic, video, character blog, etc.
13. Write a song that one or more of the characters might sing
14. Create an interpretative dance for the story
15. Student idea for a creative product related to the story