



**MA State Standards addressed by the lesson (Include minimum of two state frameworks goals for this subject and grade level that this lesson aligns to):**

- 1) **Language Strands: 1, 2, 5, 6**
- 2) **Reading and Literature Strands: 8, 9, 11, 12**
- 3) **Composition Strands: 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25**
- 4) **Media Strand: 27 Media Production: Power Point**
- 5) **History and Social Sciences/Studies frameworks may also be met.**

**National Education for Sustainability Standards addressed by the lesson (Include minimum of two EfS standards that this lesson aligns to):**

1. **EfS Standard 1** – Students understand and are able to apply the basic concepts and principles of sustainability (i.e.: meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs).
2. **EfS Standard 2** – Students recognize the concept of sustainability as a dynamic condition characterized by the interdependency among ecological, economic, and social systems and how these interconnected systems affect individual and societal well-being. They develop an understanding of the human connection to and interdependence with the natural world.
- 3) **EfS Standard 3** – Students develop a multidisciplinary approach to learning the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to continuously improve the health and well-being of present and future generations, via both personal and collective decisions and actions. They are able to envision a world that is sustainable, along with the primary changes that would need to be made by individuals, local communities, and countries in order to achieve this.

**Summary of Unit:**

Project Utopia is a group project for use in conjunction with the novel, *The Giver* by Lois Lowry. Published in 1996, *The Giver* is a science fiction novel set in a futuristic society. At first this society appears to be a utopian society where they have eliminated pain, emotional depth, suffering, turmoil and hunger by converting so "Sameness," a plan which has helped eliminate the aforementioned troubles. They also seem to lack compassion and while appearing to be a self-sustaining society, their existence and how they survive is ambiguous. However, as the reader progresses one realizes that all is not perfect and in fact, appears more dystopian.

## Summary of Unit: Continued. Page 2

Since life within a utopian community is a key element to the understanding of the novel, this project provides a good opportunity for students to explore different kinds of communities and governments, and how an individual exists within such a structured community. It creates critical thinking and promotes connections to architectural and landscape design, urban planning and various forms of government. The teacher will meet English/Language Arts, History/Social Studies/Sciences and National Education for Sustainability K-12 Student Learning Standards and objectives by having students complete the project. This project is designed as an extension project and as a separate, final project it allows students to work collaboratively in groups. Lastly, final presentation in Power-Point meets Massachusetts Media Strand 27.

Within *The Giver*, the reader will recognize many ambiguities, such as the book's ending which allows the reader to have various interpretations. We can also notice that ambiguity exists within the realm of sustainability. For example the community's food source and supply. Likewise, other elements are left untouched, such as water resource management and waste removal and management. The book alludes to goods, such as food being transported to the community from an outside source. Within this lesson plan there are various lesson plans attainable.

**Proposal:** If we take away that outside source the community would have to be self-sustaining for food, and perhaps water and waste management.

- 1) How would this approach be taken and how would the community (and its system) be affected economically and socially?
- 2) How would its system's equilibrium be affected?
- 3) Describe how this community would meet their present needs without compromising the ability of future generations and their needs
- 4) Explain and describe using examples from the text (relevant quote: page and paragraph #) How would this community meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs?

**Mini lesson plans while reading:** (*Containing Essential questions*) chapter one to book's end.

- 1) **Genre:** *Science fiction* (discuss elements of science fiction: futuristic societies, development and concepts of utopia, time travel, nuclear holocaust, etc.)
- 2) **Setting:** *Develop a sense of time and place:* Futuristic society. Discussion question: ask students where and when this might take place. Another ambiguity is the story's setting which could easily be after a nuclear holocaust. Examples to provide: Cult movies such as, *Waterworld* (1986), *Metropolis* (1927), "*The Sixth Finger*," episode 5, *The Outer Limits*, (1963)

3) **Characters and their development:** *Jonas and his ability to make a difference*, his sister Lily, their parents, Gabriel, Fiona, Asher, Larissa, The Chief Elder. Rosemary and The Giver.

Question: Describe each character's personality and how they develop as characters. Align to theory that one person makes difference but many people can do what? (Especially regarding recycling)

I) EFS: 1.1 **Responsibility to Future Generations** - Students analyze and list their roles and responsibilities in their family, school, and community -- now and into the future. They demonstrate understanding of the cultural context of inter-generational responsibility (i.e. how some cultures consider and plan for seven generations into the future, etc)

4) **Themes, symbols and motifs:** such as memory, pain and pleasure, the individual and their rights in a Democratic society vs. Utopian/controlled. Topics from book: *Release, the Sled, the "new child," sustenance for the community: Food, Air, Water)*

*Project Utopia: Lesson Plans continued: page 3*

5) **Vocabulary and terms:** *Utopia/Dystopia and their connections to science fiction and the arts:*  
Sustainability terms: Carrying capacity, cradle to cradle, Ecological economics and footprint, Ecosystems services, green building design and construction, Greenhouse gas, Fossil fuel, Natural capital, Organic farming, Overshoot, Source, Tragedy of the Commons.

*Example for further research into Utopian concepts in architectural and landscape design:*

19<sup>th</sup> century Romanticism (Influenced by the Industrial Revolution) and its concepts of an idyllic landscape, theorized that nature in its natural state could cure man's ills and benefit society. One of these theories indicated that public parks and gardens promoted a personal interaction with all social strata and allowed for a diverse society to interact and learn from each other at the public level. In these created, idyllic environments the "outside world" and its troubles did not exist.

Topics for further research: Andrew Jackson Downing, Frederick Law Olmstead and landscape architectural theories which espoused that nature could help society and cure man's ills. Also, refer to the writings and essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau.

6) **Governmental formats and their development:** Democracy and its roots to ancient Greece, Communism and Socialism, Fascism and its connections to World War II, Social theorists such as Karl Marx/ Friedrich Engels and other formats. What format of government is present in *The Giver*? One theory of Communism was that it could sustain its own society...did it succeed?

II) Apply EFS 2.1: **Systems** - Students describe the ecological, economic, **political, and social systems** in their community and can identify leverage points in the system to improve their community (Government?)

• **Interdependency** - Students explain how natural and built communities are part of larger systems (e.g., farms as part of the regional watershed and food systems for cities, a mine as part of the regional economy) and the interrelationships that exist among those systems.

7) **Community and its system:** Define and discuss the Community that exists in *The Giver*. How does it differ than the society in which you exist? How do the goods and services which we consume in our present society get delivered to us? How do you think they are delivered to the citizens in *The Giver*? Goods and services can be considered as health care, food, water, and waste management. Most importantly, how do they sustain themselves and continue to survive?

III) Apply EFS 2.2: Definitions: Natural resources, biodiversity, carrying capacity, etc.

### 8) Discussion: *Water..H2O..*

Where does your water come from other than a plastic bottle, a wall-attached water fountain in our eighty year old building or, your tap at home? Where is it piped in and from? Where do you think the water supply could be from The Giver? How could water be collected, “farmed” and perhaps be recycled? Can and is a water source be sustainable to a community?

Examples for consideration: *Colonial and urban development:*

In Colonial Boston the ground water within town limits became so polluted from fecal contamination due to outhouses, that Boston was forced to pipe its water from western Massachusetts in 1834. If not for this it would not have sustained its community. Likewise, early 19<sup>th</sup> century urban planning concepts encouraged the use of sewerage systems for the removal of waste water on city streets to avoid the collection of stagnant water which could lead to disease and ground water contamination. In other words, what you put into the soil will accumulate. How would you provide water resource management to your idyllic, utopian community? Does your choice of government involve itself in water resource management or not, and why?

Project Utopia: Lesson plans continued, page 4

9) **Waste Management:** What is waste? In our daily lives how much waste do we create? In The Giver, what examples of waste exist? We all recycle...what is recycling and how do daily waste objects, such as milk, water, soda and yogurt containers, and our obsolete electronic equipment get recycled? How would these objects and items become recycled within your closed, self sustaining utopian community? What would or should be your government’s involvement in waste management?

10) **Health Care.** Most important: How would you address this in a Utopian community? Good health is equated with nutritious organic foods, exercise and uncontaminated water. In a utopian society good health only exists, how would you prevent ill health from food and water contamination?

CONSTANTS: Your Community must meet these requirements:

Population: As required: two children per couple and presently there are 5000 citizens, This year population will grow by 500 people. What if population growth continues at this rate each year?

Community size in acreage 30, 000 acres

Town center: Includes hospital, school and another “services” type of building= one acre only.

Sustainable figures:

- 1) Four acres of land is needed to sustain each person.
- 2) One cow per person and only one cow per acre allowed.
- 3) Only one acre allowed per person for farming of vegetables and fruit.
- 4) Two acres for sustainability: One to be used for housing and/or additional farming. The other to be used for forest? waste,? or grassland?

Other requirements: Your community should include the following:

- 1) Community's name.
- 2) Size of the community as mentioned above.
- 3) Education and religion.
- 4) Government type and structure.
- 5) Location, physical description and address the concept of "a sense of time and place."
- 6) Laws and punishments
- 7) Delivery of goods and services such as water, electricity, food and health care.
- 8) No use of fossil fuels.
- 9) 100% recycling.

Assignments.

- 1) Discuss the concept of a utopian community.
- 2) Students should spend some time researching different types of governments (past, present, and future).
- 3) Have students discuss different types of communities. Then have them decide on the type of community they would like to create.
- 4) Each group prepares a written report describing its community. Questions raised throughout mini-lessons should be used to develop this report.
- 5) Each group to design a poster illustrating their community in a blueprint format.
- 6) Each group to give a presentation to the class.

PRODUCTS:

- 1) A five paragraph essay describing the community and addressing essential questions introduced in mini-lessons.
- 2) Community "blueprint."
- 3) Reading response notebook (optional)

*Project Utopia: Page 5*

RUBRIC:

- A) Since this is a reading extension the best method for a grading rubric is a combination of tools:
- 1) Understanding reading content: Multiple choice questions based on chapters and vocabulary.
  - 2) Reading notebook checks
  - 3) Community Blueprint: graded by the following: (100-98=A+; 97-92=A; 91-90=A-;89-88=B+;87-82=B; 81-80=B-; 79-78=C+; 77-72=C; 71-70=C-...etc)
- I) Report, blueprint and Presentation: Use and understanding of sustainability vocabulary and concepts such as government format, Utopia, Sustainability for the community.
- II) Presentation Skills: Since this is a format of public speaking I would suggest the Grade Seven BLS Declamation rubric.
- III) Artistic and Creative quality and/or Media presentation such as Power-Point: (100-98=A+; etc. as above) Four categories: Excellent, Good, Needs work, lacks effort.

Specific Objectives:

- 1) Students will be introduced to the initial concepts of sustainability.
- 2) Students will be introduced and come to understand how important sustainability is to a society
- 3) Students will be introduced to various formats of governments.

Specific Goals:

- 1) Students will understand the importance of sustainability
- 2) Students will present their concept of a self-sustaining, utopian community whereby they describe and explain the community's format of government and its benefits derived from a utopian society.
- 3) Students will understand through class discussion and lectures the importance of government's role in sustainability (ex: Clean Air Act, Government's role in environmental sustainability.)

**OUTCOMES (What key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result of this lesson/unit?)**

**Students will know/understand:**

- 1) Concepts of sustainability, ecological footprint, governmental formats, citizens role in community, concept of input/output.

**Students will be able to:**

1. Students will work cooperatively in a small group.
2. Students will develop critical thinking skills to solve a problem.
3. Students will develop research skills by using internet and other information sources such as reference books.
4. Students will write a description of their model utopian community, produce a blue-print model of their community with reference key and present their project to the class. Power-Point or hard copy model is acceptable.

**Project Utopia: page 6**

**Stage 3- Learning Plan: Learning activities ( what will students do and what will you the teacher do to prepare the will students do and what will you, the teacher do, to prepare the students to achieve the desired outcomes?:**

- 1) See above lesson ideas for suggestions for mini lessons.
- 2) Students will read the book on their own according to a given schedule
- 3) Assessments in the form of multiple choice reading checks based on chapters.
- 4) Each class will be given a lecture in class based on suggestions for mini lessons. Some topics such as governmental formats, vocabulary can be given fro homework as simple research topics, typed and turned in the following day as homework credit.

**5) Suggestion:**

Students will keep a reading journal by chapter using Readers/Writers Workshop whereby they will respond to **daily readings in the form of summarization, opinion, raise questions and take notes on mini lesson lectures. Grading and assessment of notebook is best done in the format of a participation grade**

**( 100= Each chapter defined and extra effort shown: questions raised and connections made to sustainability concepts and vocabulary; 85= Each chapter defined and basic effort. Some connections made to sustainability; 70= Effort shown in most chapters, basic connections made; Below 69=Student not making effort struggling with concepts.**