

Eighth Grade Summer Reading Questions

***Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card**

In the year of 2070, forty years have passed since aliens invaded the earth, and the world is in search of soldiers that can regain power of the world when the "Buggers" return. As the future of the world, young children must pass a test to gain admission to a Battle school orbiting Earth, where they are trained to be soldiers.

A six-year-old boy named Ender, is one of the ones drafted. Upon his arrival, he makes new enemies with many of the other recruits. For him to be successful one day against the "Buggers", he must focus on his studies to become the commander that he is intended to be.

Ender's intelligence enables him to be at the top of his class as he becomes quite successful in the competitive games that the recruits encounter in the Battle Room. The Battle Room is an area in which the child soldiers engage in simulated wars. These war games are easy for Ender; yet, his problems are a dangerous older boy who is determined to kill him, teachers that push him too hard, and the struggle within himself to be a decent human being, unlike the "Buggers" that he sees himself turning into.

Guided Reading Questions:

1. Explain the statement, "Sometimes lies were more dependable than the truth." Are there times when telling lies might be more appropriate? Give your reasons for or against.
2. The young recruits are seen as "heroes" and homesickness is not acceptable. Are heroes supposed to have the same feelings as other people or be beyond them? Is it appropriate for leaders to show emotions?
3. What is the purpose of the "Giants" game? How should Ender evaluate his success at this game? Is he a murderer?
4. How does Ender react to conflicts? What are his reactions? How would you react to the same events? Is what you would do different from what you would like to do?
5. Explain the meaning of the nightmare that Ender experiences toward the end of the novel.

Book reviews and fan pages:

- <http://www.angelfire.com/or/PeterWiggin/noframes.html>
- <http://www.angelfire.com/nh/kc/>
- <http://explorers.whyte.com/sf/ender.htm>

About the author:

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orson_Scott_Card

Plans for a film:

- http://www.frescopictures.com/movies/ender/endersgame_update.html

The Giver by Lois Lowry

The Giver is a science fiction story about a 12-year-old boy who must choose between a world of sameness or one filled with both the intense joys and pains of life. Jonas lives in a "perfect" world, devoid of trouble or conflict. When Jonas begins training for his life assignment as the Receiver of Memory, he meets his teacher, a man called The Giver. As The Giver transfers to Jonas the memories of the world, Jonas begins to realize that his seemingly perfect world has many flaws. Jonas must decide where his loyalties lie when the life of a baby, whom Jonas has become attached to, is threatened.

Guiding Reading Questions:

1. Does Jonas feel comforted when his parents explain the Ceremony of Twelves? Why or why not?
2. What are Jonas's feelings when the Chief Elder skips him when she is giving out the Assignments?
3. Why is precision of language so important to the community?
4. What happens to the previous Receiver and how does this affect the current Receiver's ability to apply for Release?
5. What does Jonas hear at the end of the book and why is it important?

The author's homepage:

- <http://www.loislowry.com/>

Listen to a message from the author:

- <http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/guides/give.html>

About the book:

- TeenReads (review/reading guide): <http://www.teenreads.com/reviews/0440237688.asp>
- Recent press coverage: <http://www.post-gazette.com/ae/20040218lowry0218fnp3.asp>