

The Giver

Read the following passage and answer the question that follows.

"When the committee began to consider Asher's Assignment," she went on, "there were some possibilities that were immediately discarded. Some that would clearly, not have been right for Asher.

"For example," she said, smiling, "we did not consider for an instant designating Asher an Instructor of Threes."

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The audience howled with laughter. Asher laughed, too, looking sheepish but pleased at the special attention. The Instructors of Threes were in charge of the acquisition of correct language.

"In fact," the Chief Elder continued, chuckling a little herself, "we even gave a little thought to some retroactive chastisement for the one who had been Asher's Instructor of Threes so long ago. At the meeting where Asher was discussed, we retold many of the stories that we all remembered from his days of language acquisition.

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"Especially," she said, chuckling, "the difference between snack and smack. Remember, Asher?"

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Asher nodded ruefully, and the audience laughed aloud. Jonas did, too. He remembered, though he had been only a Three at the time himself.

The punishment used for small children was a regulated system of smacks with the discipline wand: a thin, flexible weapon that stung painfully when it was wielded. The Childcare specialists were trained very carefully in the discipline methods: a quick smack across the hands for a bit of minor misbehavior; three sharper smacks on the bare legs for a second offense.

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Poor Asher, who always talked too fast and mixed up words, even as a toddler. As a Three, eager for his juice and crackers at snacktime, he one day said "smack"

in-stead of "snack" as he stood waiting in line for the morning treat. 25

Jonas remembered it clearly. He could still see little Asher, wiggling with impatience in the line. He remembered the cheerful voice call out, "I want my smack!"

The other Threes, including Jonas, had laughed nervously. "Snack!" they corrected.

"You meant snack, Asher!" But the mistake had been made. And precision of language was one of the most important tasks of small children. Asher had asked for a smack. 30

The discipline wand, in the hand of the Childcare worker, whistled as it came down across Asher's hands. Asher whimpered, cringed, and corrected himself instantly.

"Snack," he whispered.

But the next morning he had done it again. And again the following week. He couldn't seem to stop, though for each lapse the discipline wand came again, escalating to a series of painful lashes that left marks on Asher's legs. Eventually, for a period of time, Asher stopped talking altogether, when he was a Three. 35

"For a while," the Chief Elder said, relating the story, we had a silent Asher! But he learned." 40

She turned to him with a smile. "When he began to talk again, it was with greater precision. And now his lapses are very few. His corrections and apologies are very prompt. And his good humor is unfailing." The audience murmured in agreement.

Asher's cheerful disposition was well-known throughout the community.



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**Question: What are your feelings about how children are raised in the Community?
Why? Use TWO PEALs and explain with relevant evidence from the passage.**

POINT	
EVIDENCE + ANALYSIS	
LINK	

POINT	
EVIDENCE + ANALYSIS	
LINK	

Suggested Answer:

Point: I feel concerned and worried for children who are raised in Jonas's community because of the harsh methods of discipline that are employed.

Evidence + Analysis: "The punishment used for small children was a regulated system of smacks with the discipline wand: a thin, flexible weapon that stung painfully when it was wielded." The words "small children" remind the reader that the kids are very young, three to be specific in this context. The words "regulated system" and "smacks" tells us that kids were hit according to a set of rules, which implies that there is no leeway or special understanding for kids who are that young. The word "weapon" conjures up an image of something that is meant to hurt someone badly, inflicting bodily harm. Meanwhile the words "stung painfully" show us that the wand hurt the children quite badly.

Link: Hence, I feel bothered and apprehensive upon reading about the ways in which children are ruthlessly disciplined in the Community.

Point: I feel outraged and disturbed at the way children with speech difficulties such as Asher do not get special care or therapy, but are punished into submission instead.

Evidence + Analysis: Jonas recalls Asher's "cheerful voice call out, "I want my smack!" Although Asher has mispronounced the word, he has clearly not done so on purpose as evidenced by the word "cheerful" which shows us that he was in good spirits and certainly not looking to get beaten. Despite this obvious innocent mistake, the Childcare specialists determine that "Asher had asked for a smack" even though they knew he had mispronounced "snack" I find this to be cruel and even ironic, that as childcare "specialist<s>" the adults could not see that he needed speech therapy instead. The words "he couldn't seem to stop" confirm that Asher clearly needed extra help with his speech as even with being hit, he could not help but continue to mispronounce the words. I feel outraged to read of "a series of painful lashes that left marks on Asher's legs." as the "marks" are indicative of very harsh discipline for such a young child who clearly needs help with his speech. Finally, the words "Asher stopped talking altogether" makes me feel distressed for him, as he was clearly so traumatised by the punishment that he couldn't even speak.

Link: Hence, I feel furious and perturbed upon reading about the ways in which children with special needs are mercilessly punished instead of helped in the Community.