

Student Essay on Irony

Irony by Lois Lowry

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Contents

[Student Essay on Irony.....1](#)

[Contents.....2](#)

[Essay.....3](#)



Essay

Of the many types of irony shown in *The Giver*, dramatic irony is the most apparent. Dramatic irony occurs when the audience, or in this case, the reader, knows something that a character of the story does not know. In *The Giver*, "precision of speech" is used as means of reducing conflict in the community. The characters of the story understand this as training them to be polite and clear about the meanings of what they say. The idea of "precision of speech" also exposes a deceitful underside to the community, however, such as in its use of euphemisms like the word "release." In substituting a vague, pleasant sounding word for a practice such as execution, the community demonstrates an actual inability to face accurate speech. This may not seem like irony, but the fact remains that the community, especially Jonas, was unable to face the true meaning of "release" until he saw it with his own eyes (page 148-151). No one in the community except Jonas and the Giver remember a time in which the term "death" actually meant something. Therefore, the community can practice execution without feeling horror at their actions. Yet the readers of this book understand the depth of death and murder, as does Jonas and the Giver (page 150), and though it does not fit the exact definition of dramatic irony, it runs pretty close.