Precision of Language in *The Giver*
Example Passages

**Chapter 7, pages 55-56**
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" instead of "snack" as he stood waiting in line for the morning treat.

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.


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.

**Chapter 9, pages 71-72:**
He had been trained since earliest childhood, since his earliest learning of language, never to lie. It was an integral part of the learning of precise speech. Once, when he had been a Four, he had said, just prior to the midday meal at school, "I'm starving."

Immediately he had been taken aside for a brief private lesson in language precision. He was not starving, it was pointed out. He was hungry. No one in the community was starving, had ever been starving, would ever be starving. To say starving was to speak a lie. An unintentioned lie, of course. But the reason for precision of language was to ensure that unintentional lies were never uttered. Did he understand that? they asked him. And he had.