

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

The Hunger Games

by Suzanne Collins

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The Hunger Games

Notes

Suzanne Collins began her career writing for children's television, working on several programs throughout the 1990s for such production companies as Nickelodeon, PBS, and the WB Television Network. During this time, she met the children's book author and illustrator, James Proimos, who encouraged her to try writing children's books. Inspired, Collins began writing her first book for young adults, a fantasy novel titled *Gregor the Overlander*, which was published by Scholastic in 2003. That book became the first of a bestselling five-part series called *The Underland Chronicles*, the final volume of which was published in 2007.

Following the success of *The Underland Chronicles*, Collins began writing *The Hunger Games*, the first in what would soon become a popular trilogy involving the fiery sixteen-year-old protagonist, Katniss Everdeen. Set in a bleak, post-apocalyptic future, the novel tells the story of Katniss's struggle to survive the Hunger Games, a gladiator-style reality show that pits twenty-four teenage boys and girls against each other in a battle to the death. Combining elements of science fiction, romance, reality television, and Greek and Roman mythology, Collins creates a suspenseful, fast-paced story of survival under the most adverse conditions, expertly weaving in such universal motifs as: love and friendship, loyalty and betrayal, oppression and rebellion, honor, and sacrifice.

All references come from the Scholastic, Inc., edition of *The Hunger Games*, by Suzanne Collins, copyright 2008.

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Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. identify the form of narration used in the novel and provide an opinion on why Collins may have chosen this particular type of narration to tell the story.
2. describe Katniss's life in District 12 and explain how the title of the novel relates not only to the Hunger Games themselves, but also to Katniss's daily struggle for survival in the Seam.
3. discuss the tyrannical nature of the government of Panem and describe the various tactics that the Capitol uses to maintain its power, focusing in particular on the Hunger Games.
4. provide examples of the divisions among the social classes of District 12, as well as the class differences between the people living in the Capitol and those living in the outlying districts.
5. identify several of the many references to ancient Rome throughout the novel, pointing out how the Capitol is similar to ancient Rome and how the Hunger Games are analogous to the gladiator games that were fought there.
6. explain the symbolic significance of Katniss's covering Rue's dead body with wildflowers and give reasons for why the Capitol would view this gesture as an act of rebellion.
7. trace the evolution of the star-crossed lovers scenario between Katniss and Peeta, explaining how the ploy proves crucial to the pair's survival in the Games yet also causes confusion and emotional pain for both of them.
8. compare and contrast the following tributes, describing each one's strategy for survival in the Games and pointing out the special skill or talent that each one brings to the contest:
 - Katniss
 - Peeta
 - Rue
 - Thresh
 - Foxface
 - Cato
9. define dramatic irony and explain how Collins presents it with regard to Katniss's inability to grasp the truth about Peeta's feelings for her.

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Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. What type of narration is used to tell the story? Why do you think Collins chose to utilize this form of narration? How might the story have been different if it had been told from a different perspective?
2. Describe Katniss's life in District 12. What is her daily routine like? Who are the most important people in her life? In what ways does her life drastically change when she is taken to the Capitol to participate in the Games? How might the title of the novel refer to both the Games themselves and to Katniss's daily struggle for survival in the Seam?
3. Discuss how Collins establishes from the first chapter that the government of Panem is oppressive. Why are people fearful of the Capitol? What rights do we have in our society that the people in the districts of Panem lack? How does Collins present the imbalance of wealth and power between the Capitol and the outlying districts? Describe the various tactics that the Capitol uses to maintain its power.
4. Briefly summarize the history of Panem. How did the nation originate? What occurred during the Dark Days? What happened to District 13? Explain what the Treaty of Treason is. How do the Hunger Games relate to this treaty?
5. Explain how the reaping system works. Which class of people suffers the most because of the way the system functions, and why?
6. Why has Katniss always felt that she has owed Peeta? Why is Peeta forever connected with the concept of hope in Katniss's mind?
7. Discuss the character of Haymitch. What has happened to him as a result of his being a contestant in the Hunger Games? What are his duties and responsibilities as Katniss and Peeta's mentor? In what ways does he prove himself to be a valuable teacher and a great asset to Katniss and Peeta during the Games, despite Katniss's initial doubts about him?
8. In what ways is the Capitol similar to ancient Rome? How are the Hunger Games similar to the ancient Roman gladiator games?
9. Compare and contrast life in the Capitol with life in the outlying districts. What things are abundantly available in the Capitol but are inaccessible in the districts? Explain how the people in the Capitol differ from those in the districts in terms of behavior, speech, dress, standards of beauty, and the way they view the Games.

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Part I: “The Tributes”

Chapter 1

Vocabulary

apothecary – a place where medicines are sold; a pharmacy
claustrophobic – cramped, confined, closed in
deterrent – something that prevents or discourages
indifferent – uncaring; not interested
iridescent – shimmering, gleaming
maniacally – in a crazy or overexcited manner
obliterated – completely destroyed, wiped out
paraffin – wax used to make candles
paunchy – having a large belly
pelt – the hide and fur of an animal
poaching – illegally hunting and taking fish or game
preposterous – ridiculous; outrageous
reaping – harvesting; gathering
repentance – remorse for one’s sins
sustenance – food, nourishment
torturous – painful, agonizing
unintelligible – impossible to understand or make sense of
vermin – bugs or other pests that carry disease
verve – energy; enthusiasm

1. Who is the narrator of the story? What form of narration is used?

2. Describe Katniss’s family members. How does she feel toward each of them? What happened to her father?

Part II: “The Games”**Chapter 10**

Vocabulary

aghast – shocked; horrified
assent – agreement, approval
barren – empty, bare
breached – broken through
catacombs – a system of underground tunnels and chambers
concealment – the state of being hidden or covered up
delectable – delicious, tasty
din – noise, racket
eludes – escapes; avoids
entourages – groups of people who accompany and assist an important person
frigid – freezing
ruminating – thinking, pondering
silhouette – a dark profile or outline
tawny – yellowish-brown in color

1. Katniss is so furious with Peeta that she violently shoves him, causing him to crash into a large urn that shatters and cuts his hands. Why is she angry with him?

2. According to Haymitch, how will Peeta’s confession of love help both Katniss and Peeta in the Games? How does the public now view the couple? What famous Shakespearean couple is the author alluding to here?

3. Do you think Peeta’s declaration of love for Katniss is sincere, or is it just a ploy to get sponsorship?

Part III: “The Victor”**Chapter 19**

Vocabulary

alleviate – to ease or relieve
ambush – a surprise attack
assailants – attackers
caliber – the quality or level of
demeanor – behavior; attitude
dissipate – to dissolve; to disappear
evade – to avoid or escape
fester – rotten, decaying
incapacitated – disabled; helpless
levity – playfulness, merriment
loathe – to hate
pariahs – outcasts
peruse – to examine carefully
revolting – disgusting, sickening
ruse – a trick or hoax
scrupulously – thoroughly
sheepishly – in a guilty or awkward manner
unprecedented – ground-breaking; never done before

1. According to Katniss, what is the likely reason for the Gamemakers’ decision to change the rules? What realization does she now come to regarding Peeta?

2. Describe the condition that Peeta is in when Katniss finds him. What are his injuries? How has he managed to stay hidden from the other tributes for so long?

3. How is Katniss able to help Peeta? What does she do for his injuries?
