

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

Mockingjay

by Suzanne Collins

written by Douglas Lucas

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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 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.

The Hunger Games was published in 2008. *Catching Fire*, the second book in the series, was published in 2009, followed by *Mockingjay* in 2010.

All references come from the Scholastic Press edition of *Mockingjay*, by Suzanne Collins, copyright 2010.

Objectives

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

1. describe how Katniss approaches the role of being the embodiment of the Mockingjay.
2. identify why Katniss distrusts both the Capitol and the rebels, focusing on the tendency of each side to deceive individuals and use them without their consent.
3. compare and contrast Katniss's feelings toward Peeta and Gale and examine why she chooses the more hopeful man over the angrier one.
4. describe Peeta's strategy for restoring his sanity, with emphasis on his "Real or not real?" game.
5. compare and contrast the different leadership of President Snow, President Coin, and Katniss.
6. identify how Katniss's being a hunter influences her perspective on her experience.
7. identify how Prim's being a healer influences her perspective on her experience.
8. compare and contrast settings in the novel to show how environment can contribute to meaning.
9. assess the pressures that force Katniss to lie and the motivations that lead her to tell the truth.
10. identify and describe the following characters, explaining their function in the plot and the ways they support the novel's themes and concepts:
 - Peeta
 - Gale
 - Prim
 - Finnick
 - Haymitch
 - Plutarch
 - Boggs
 - President Snow
 - President Coin
11. discuss how the rebels, far from being invincible, suffer ongoing traumatization as a result of their revolutionary efforts.
12. analyze dialogue to show how word choice reveals emotion, characterization, and motivation.
13. discuss the fascination and the consequences advanced weapons hold for Plutarch and Gale.

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. District 13, President Coin, and Haymitch deceived Katniss to rescue her from the Quarter Quell and offer her the role of the Mockingjay. Throughout the novel, Katniss remains angry about their deception, yet she deceives her audience about the real circumstances of the propos and her supposed pregnancy. She deceives the Star Squad and TV crew about the lack of authorization for the flight through the Capitol. When does Katniss succeed by telling her listeners the truth? When does telling the truth make their lives worse? Does Peeta, the man Katniss ultimately chooses, tend to tell her the truth or lie to her?
2. So that the Mockingjay will better inspire the rebels, President Coin approves of many deceptions for the propos. President Snow deceives Capitol citizens to achieve and maintain his political power. Katniss lies to the Star Squad and TV crew so they will trust her leadership. Are leaders required to lie or mislead their followers in order to be effective? Describe pressures that push these three leaders to lie. What might have happened had they chosen to tell the truth?
3. Katniss is a hunter, which influences her perspective on the world. Identify examples of her hunter orientation influencing her, her choices, feelings, observations, or dialogue.
4. Prim is a healer, which leads her to see the world differently than her sister, a hunter, does. Identify examples of Prim's perspective as a healer. How does it affect her actions?
5. Give an example of Gale's anger and an example of Peeta's kindness and hope. Discuss how this difference in their characters leads Katniss to choose Peeta over Gale.
6. A metaphor compares two things that are essentially different, such as the metaphor describing Katniss as fire in Chapter 7. Find some other metaphors in the novel, and invent a metaphor to describe Katniss and a metaphor to describe another character of your choice.
7. Describe Gale's influence on the special weapons of District 13. How does a bomb similar to those of his design kill Prim? Answer Katniss's question: Are there lines that must not be crossed even in war? Why or why not?
8. Katniss decides to shoot President Coin instead of President Snow. Discuss why she reaches this decision. What might she think is more valuable than allegiance to a group in the war?

Chapter 1

VOCABULARY

billow – to rise or puff up
carrion – dead flesh
concussion – injury to the brain or spinal cord due to a collision or shaking
edible – fit to be eaten as food
embodiment – the state of expressing or personifying an idea
embryos – animals in the early stages of development in the womb
epidemic – a temporary, widespread disease
genetic – pertaining to characteristics handed down by reproduction
incineration – a burning or reduction to ashes
lacerated – the result of a rough tearing
obliterated – completely destroyed
orchestrate – to arrange
reservations – exceptions
retribution – punishment
scavengers – animals that feed on dead matter

1. Why was District 12 destroyed? Whom does Katniss hold responsible for what happened?

2. What role do the leaders of District 13 want Katniss to take on, and why?

3. Why did District 13 rescue the survivors of the firebombing, according to Dalton? How does Katniss feel about their treatment in the hands of District 13?

4. Why does Katniss distrust the District 13 leaders? How does her distrust show during her visit to District 12?

Chapter 5

VOCABULARY

aerodynamics – the study of motion in the air
convalescence – a period of gradual return to health
preliminary – coming before the main part
replication – a copy
retinal – pertaining to the retina part of the eye
tentative – uncertain; experimental
tresses – lengthy hair curls
vermin – disgusting animals

1. How is a beautiful meadow existing within Special Defense ironic?

2. Describe the special bow Beetee gives Katniss. How is it made specifically for her?

3. For the first propo, the propos team prepares Katniss's makeup and costume and adjusts lighting and smoke for the stage. With a monitor, they show Katniss the Mockingjay they have created out of her. Describe this Mockingjay's appearance. What does it suggest to the audience? How does Katniss respond to the image?

Chapter 10

VOCABULARY

congregate – to assemble
discernible – able to be noticed
evacuation – a removal
imminent – might occur at any moment
quarantine – isolation to prevent disease from spreading
residual – remaining
retaliation – the act of fighting back

1. What is District 13 training Prim to become? How does this inspire Katniss?

2. How do the bunker protocol instructions reflect District 13's military lifestyle?

3. Describe the bunker where District 13 citizens go for protection against the bombs.

4. Plutarch refers to the beating the Capitol gave Peeta as a "setback." What does he mean? Why does the choice of the word "setback" anger Katniss?

5. How does the District 13 retreat to the bunker differ from the two drills Katniss has already experienced?

Chapter 15

VOCABULARY

articulate – to utter clearly or explain clearly
inkling – a hint
magnificence – the quality of being noble and superb
muddled – confused
reconciliation – the settling of a dispute
rubble – broken pieces

1. How does the rebels' attack on the Nut remind Katniss of the District 12 mining accident?

2. Katniss tells the Nut survivor that the Capitol is to blame for the bombing. Explain her reasoning for why the Capitol is at fault.

3. Explain one of the arguments given for or against Gale's plan to kill everyone in the Nut.

Chapter 20

VOCABULARY

barbs – spikes or prongs

geyser – a hot spring that sometimes sends up fountain-like water

homicidal – murderous

noxious – poisonous or damaging

tourniquet – a device or item for constricting blood flow to help stop bleeding

unsustainable – cannot continue

1. How is Katniss's world like a painted window before the explosion that kills Boggs?

2. What does Boggs do with the Holo before dying? Why does Katniss think he does this?

3. What are Boggs's last words? What does Katniss think they mean?

4. Why do Jackson and Katniss argue over the Holo?

Chapter 25

VOCABULARY

concede – to admit
deteriorated – became worse
loathsome – repulsive, causing disgust
sumptuous – splendid, luxurious

- 1. President Snow tells Katniss that someone bombed the children and medics. Who was it? Why does he say it was done?

- 2. Where are the other survivors of the Star Squad and camera crew now—Cressida, Pollux, Gale, and Peeta?

- 3. What does President Coin tell Katniss while she is recovering? How does Katniss respond?
