

# Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins

## Book Information

Suzanne Collins, The Hunger Games  
Quiz Number: 123740  
Scholastic Press, 2008  
ISBN 978-0-439-02348-1; LCCN  
374 Pages  
Book Level: 5.3  
Interest Level: MG+

In a future North America, where rulers of Panem maintain control through an annual survival competition, 16-year-old Katniss's skills are tested when she voluntarily takes her sister's place. The plot contains graphic descriptions of violence. Book #1

**Award:** ALA Notable/Best Books; Booklist Editors' Choice; Golden Duck Award/Nominee; Horn Book Fanfare; Kirkus Editors Choice; Publishers Weekly Best Book; SLJ Best Book; VOYA Award/Honor

**Topics:** Adventure, Survival; Family Life, Sisters; Family Life, TV Viewing; Recommended Reading, Amelia Bloomer Project; Recommended Reading, Junior Library Guild Selection; Recommended Reading, Junior Library Guild-2008 Fall Jr./Sr. High; Recommended Reading, YALSA Best Books for YA; Recommended Reading, YALSA Quick Picks for Reluctant YA; Recommended Reading, YALSA Teens' Top Ten; Science Fiction, Future; Series, Hunger Games; What Kids Are Reading, 2012, 100 Most Read Fiction, ATOS Book Levels 4.0-5.9; What Kids Are Reading, 2012, Grade 6: 40 Most Read Books Overall; What Kids Are Reading, 2012, Grade 7: 40 Most Read Books Overall; What Kids Are Reading, 2012, Grade 8: 40 Most Read Books Overall; What Kids Are Reading, 2012, Grades 9-12: 40 Most Read Books Overall

## Main Characters

Caesar Flickerman the host of the tribute-interview show

Cato the very violent and aggressive male tribute from District 2 who wants to kill Katniss in his own way

Cinna Katniss's stylist for the games

Claudius Templesmith the legendary Hunger Games announcer

Effie Trinket Katniss and Peeta's escort for the games

Foxface the female tribute from District 5 whom Katniss nicknames for her slyness

Gale Hawthorne Katniss's hunting partner and friend

Haymitch Abernathy a former Hunger Games winner for District 12 and mentor and coach to Katniss and Peeta

Katniss Everdeen a 16-year-old girl who hunts and provides for her family after her father's death and volunteers to take her sister's place as a tribute

Madge Undersee the mayor's daughter who gives Katniss a gold mockingjay pin as she leaves for the games

Peeta Mellark the baker's son and the male tribute from District 12 who is in love with Katniss

Prim Everdeen Katniss's 12-year-old sister who is initially chosen for the games at her first reaping

Rue the small female tribute from District 11 who reminds Katniss of her sister

Thresh the boy tribute from District 11 who spares Katniss when he learns of her alliance with Rue

## Vocabulary

**debut** the introduction of someone or something to the public; a person's first formal appearance in public; a first performance

**entrails** the organs and intestines inside the torso cavity of a person or animal; guts or bowels; internal organs; viscera

**essentially** by one's very nature; at a basic level; at the bottom or heart of the matter; for the most part; mainly; primarily

**incompetent** not adequate in strength, power, or qualifications; not qualified for a task; showing a lack of skill or an inability to do something well; unable to meet requirements; incapable; unfit

**initially** at the beginning or start; at first

# Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins

**mediocre** of average or ordinary quality or ability; second-rate; common; neither extraordinary nor excellent; not exceptional; not first-rate

**prestigious** having an illustrious reputation; exerting influence by reason of high status; indicating or representing honor or high status; respected; esteemed; honored

**replenish** to fill something that has been diminished, used, or emptied; to refill; to stock again

**replicate** to make an exact or accurate copy of something; to produce a duplicate; to do something again in exactly the same way as the first time

**tourniquet** a bandage that can be tightened to apply pressure and thus stop the flow of blood from an artery; a strip of material tied around a limb to stop bleeding

## Synopsis

The story takes place in a future dystopian world in the nation of Panem, located in North America. Panem is composed of twelve districts and a wealthy city, the Capitol. A thirteenth district was destroyed after a rebellion, and as punishment for the rebellion, the citizens of the twelve districts must participate in games each year by sending tributes, one boy and one girl, to fight to their deaths in games televised from an open-air arena in the Capitol.

Katniss volunteers to take her sister's place as District 12's tribute after Prim's name is drawn in the "Reaping." Katniss and Peeta, the chosen male tribute, are taken to the Capitol for the games. Nearly half the tributes die in the first day of the games as they fight over weapons and supplies, but Katniss's hunting skills serve her well. For a short time, she becomes allies with Rue, who reminds her of her sister, but Rue is killed by another tribute. To defy the Capitol, Katniss decorates Rue's body with flowers.

Halfway through the games, a rule change is announced that will allow two tributes from the same district to win the games together. With this change, Katniss begins to search for Peeta. She finds him

hiding and badly wounded. She helps him become well, aided by gifts from sponsors. When Katniss and Peeta are the last two tributes living, the rule change is reversed, requiring one of them to become the victor. As Katniss and Peeta prepare to eat poisonous berries, which would kill both of them, the Gamemakers again reverse the rules, and the two win the Hunger Games. The leaders, however, are very unhappy with Katniss's public defiance of their rules at the end of the game, and she becomes a political target as she and Peeta return home as heroes of the people.

## Open-Ended Questions

Use these open-ended questions as the basis for class discussions, student presentations, or extended writing assignments.

### Literary Analysis

What is the significance of the mockingjay pin?

*The Capitol used an engineered bird mutation called a jabberjay to listen and report back citizens' conversations. When rebels used the birds to feed lies to the Capitol, the creatures were abandoned and left to die. Instead, they mated with mockingbirds, creating the mockingjay, which produces beautiful music that is loved by both Katniss's father and Rue. The mockingjay therefore represents the failure of the Capitol to control the citizens and secondly symbolizes the citizens' defiance. Katniss, who embodies the same two symbols as the mockingjay, receives a mockingjay pin as her district token to take to the Games, and it is featured on her costume.*

# Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins

---

## **Constructing Meaning**

The entertainment value of the Hunger Games is important to the Gamemakers as they manipulate the environment and the rules to keep the games interesting and exciting. Compare the Hunger Games to entertaining competitions televised today. How are the competitions alike and how are they different?

*Students may choose to talk about a sporting event, reality programming, or other competitions. Of course, the major difference between these and the Hunger Games is the age of the competitors in the Hunger Games and the rule that victors win by killing the opposition. Students might consider how such competitions both unite and divide people and why they are or are not entertaining.*

## **Teachable Skills**

### **Understanding Hist/Cultural Factors**

Understanding Historical & Cultural Factors.

**Comparing and Contrasting** Compare & Contrast.

**Drawing Conclusions** Drawing Conclusions.

**Responding to Literature** Responding to Literature.