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Teachers' Notes

The Hunger Games is a novel that offers both challenges and opportunities for the classroom. With engaging characters, gripping plot, powerful themes and moral dilemmas, it offers a great deal for the KS3 classroom. It also presents some challenges, including its length and its popularity as a private reader.

In this publication we've tried to address *The Hunger Games* not just as a book but as a global phenomenon and to take into account the fact that most students will already know something about it and some will already have read the whole trilogy and seen the films.

The publication is split into sections: Before Reading; During Reading; Ongoing Activities; After Reading. In each section there are activities on the multi-modal aspects of the book as well as wide range of reading tasks to encourage both personal and critical response.

All page numbers refer to the Scholastic edition 2009. A DVD of the novel, also called *The Hunger Games*, is widely available and includes some useful extras.

Teachers' Notes on Before Reading Activities

1. Word Games

Read the word list, below, at a slow but steady pace and leave a few minutes thinking time between each reading. Reassure students that they will hear the list four or five times and that they will only have to respond to one or two phrases, so they should not worry about trying to react to (or even understand) every word or phrase.

Word list:

- Bright banners
- Skin and bones
- Powerless
- Scary white grin
- Peace and prosperity
- Dark days
- Buzzards on rooftops
- Delicacies
- Ladies first
- Burning desert
- Frozen wasteland
- Cracked mirror

3. More Than Just a Book

This PowerPoint presentation, is designed to allow students to discuss what they already know about the book, and to highlight and raise questions about the global interest in *the Hunger Games* trilogy. It also shows the stages of its very rapid progress from first novel, to trilogy, into film, video games and merchandising. As with *Harry Potter* and the *Twilight* novels there is now:

- an increasing blurring of boundaries between novel, film and other cross-media texts.
- a significant profile-raising effect provided by the film franchise
- a newer, 'viral' impact of additional material created by fans.

Once the film rights to a novel have been bought, the production company effectively 'owns' it (for this reason the original title is often called 'the property') and, depending on the contract, the license to any merchandising developed from it. Often the licenses to merchandising are sold in advance, and in some cases, actually help to fund the production of the movie.

In this case, Lionsgate has licensed a wide range of merchandising, including video games, domestic and clothing products and so on, all of which bear the official franchised logos; however, the massive popularity of the original books has prompted a vast range of 'unofficial' merchandise, and even more significantly, fan-made products – a direct result of marketing and promotion through social networks.

Using the PowerPoint

The PowerPoint largely speaks for itself, but the following may help you maximise its use:

- Some slides have additional optional notes for the teacher to use to draw out responses from the class. You can find these by clicking on the Slideshow menu at the top, and going to Presenter Tools. This will allow you to screen the PowerPoint in slide show mode, but with the notes below. A small window allows you to see the next slide about to come up.
- Several slides are animated, and reveal images and text automatically to give you the chance to pose questions or ask for responses.
- The first slides focus on the books only. You could finish the presentation after the 'Hunger Games Cookbook' slide, and return to the rest after reading.

Small screengrabs of the PowerPoint slides are included on pages 11 to 15, with space for students to write notes.

5. Mix and Match Myth

For this activity each pair will need a set of the options cards on page 19 and the story of Theseus, with gaps to fill, on page 18.

Students could also do some independent research on Roman Gladiators as another influence on the novel.

Teachers' Notes on During Reading Activities

Chapter 1

The Opening

Unlike many young adult novels, *The Hunger Games* starts very slowly, and requires concentration in inferring the back-story and history of the world of Panem.

The Hunger Games DVD contains a range of bonus extras on a separate disk, one of which is a short propaganda film 'created' by the Gamemakers and the Capitol, narrated by President Snow (Donald Sutherland). This usefully summarises very simply the historical and political context of the narrative, and offers a visual representation of the oppression of life in Panem, and might be a good way in for readers who have not yet fully engaged with the opening pages.

Chapter 4

Conscience Corridor – After Reading Chapter 4

You could repeat this activity at two or three other points in the novel, for example: after reading Chapter 8; after reading Chapter 10; after reading Chapter 12; after reading Chapter 14; after reading Chapter 20; when you have finished reading the book. Afterwards you could discuss Katniss's changing feelings and how Suzanne Collins builds the tension. You could take this further by doing the After Reading activity 'What About Love?' on page 46.

After Reading Part 1

How is Katniss presented in Part 1? Character Carousel

For this activity you will need to set up six 'stations' around the room for groups of 4-6. Each station will need a sheet of A3 paper, some Post-It notes and a copy of one of the extracts, as listed below. You could photocopy the relevant extract, or leave a copy of the text at each station with the extract marked with Post-It notes. Giving students a marked copy of the text has the advantage of letting students check the context of the extract.

Give the groups two minutes to look at the extract at the first station. Then ask one of the questions, below, and give them another two minutes to look at the same extract in the light of the question. Repeat until each group has visited at least three different stations and answered all three questions.

Questions

1. Katniss is a female hero, but she appeals to boys as well as girls. Why?
2. How realistic do you think Katniss is? Explain why.
3. What methods has Collins used to present Katniss here? For example, by showing what she says or does, by describing her, or through the way others react to her?

Extracts for Character Carousel Activity, page 28

A. Story opening Chapter 1, page 3

From: *Sitting at Prim's knees, guarding her, is the world's ugliest cat...*

To: *He has stopped hissing at me.*

B. After Gale talks about running away Chapter 1, page 11

From: *'I never want to have kids,' I say.*

To: *And Gale is devoted to his family. We can't leave, so why bother talking about it?*

C. On being made to look beautiful Chapter 5, page 76

From: *'Excellent! You look almost like a human being now!' says Flavius, and they all laugh.*

To: *'Of course you don't, you poor darling!' says Octavia, clasping her hands together in distress for me.*

D. After Peeta thanks Katniss for keeping hold of his hand as they rode in the opening ceremony. Chapter 5, page 88

From: *... And then he gives me a smile that seems so genuinely sweet with just the right amount of shyness that unexpected warmth rushes through me.*

To: *But because two can play at this game, I stand on tiptoe and kiss his cheek. Right on his bruise.*

E. Peeta discusses Katniss with Haymitch. Chapter 7, page 111

From: *'People will help you in the arena. They'll be tripping over each other to sponsor you.'*

To: *When we were dying of starvation, no-one helped me. No-one except Peeta.*

F. Katniss is showing her skills to the Gamemakers, who are too busy enjoying their feast. Chapter 7, page 124

From: *Suddenly I am furious, that with my life on the line, they don't even have the decency to pay attention to me.*

To: *'Thank you for your consideration,' I say. Then I give a slight bow and walk towards the exit without being dismissed.*

Teachers' Notes on Ongoing Activities

Post-It Note Critic

Some suggestions for moments to pause and discuss personal responses are given below.

- The end of Chapter 1: after the Reaping.
- The start of Chapter 4: Katniss tries to sort out her feelings about Peeta.
- Chapter 5, page 86: Katniss has a flicker of hope.
- Chapter 6: Katniss remembers the story of the Avox girl
- End of Chapter 7: Katniss in front of the Gamemakers
- Chapter 10, page 164: discussing Peeta's revelation
- Chapter 12 page 197: what is Peeta up to?
- Chapter 13 page 219: the Careers find Katniss. Page 235 Peeta helps Katniss.
- Chapter 18 page 283: Katniss sings to Rue. Page 294: Katniss reflects on the death of the boy from District 1. End of the chapter: the rule change.
- Chapter 19 page 310: Peeta in a bad way.
- End of Chapter 20: Katniss lies to Peeta
- Chapter 21 page 349: Thresh
- Chapter 22 page 367: Katniss plays up the romance
- Chapter 25 page 408: Cato and Peeta. End of chapter: the berries.
- End of Chapter 26: out of the arena
- End of the novel.

Watching the Film

The Lionsgate adaptation of *The Hunger Games* is a relatively faithful adaptation of the novel, not least because Suzanne Collins herself co-wrote the screenplay. Collins herself says:

I feel like the book and the film are individual yet complementary pieces that enhance one another. The film opens up the world beyond Katniss' point of view, allowing the audience access to the happenings of places like the Hunger Games control room and President Snow's rose garden, thereby adding a new dimension to the story.

It is important not to use the film exclusively as a route through the novel, or as a substitute for reading, although alternating short extracts of reading with viewing brings the original to life and can re-engage student whose attention flags in the middle section of the book. This process can also explore key moments in the narrative, and illustrate the different ways in which meaning, point of view and ideas are created in translating a 450-page novel into a 142-minute movie.

The Bonus Features on the DVD include an interesting sequence of interviews discussing the editorial decisions behind the adaptation process. These could be used to unpick the different 'languages' of prose vs. the moving image, and to raise issues of the author's craft vs. the collaborative processes of film production. This will produce a much more interesting and worthwhile discussion than asking 'which is better, the book or the film?'

A number of narrative changes are particularly useful to explore, and could be suggested as part of 'Watching the Film' on page 36. For example:

- The way Katniss acquires the Mockingjay brooch
- Scenes which are not seen through Katniss' perspective – for example the behind-the-scenes view of the Gamemaker's studio, and the control room (a Bonus extra on the DVD explains how and why this was constructed)
- A 'new' scene in a rose garden between President Snow and Seneca; another showing Panem audiences watching the games publicly.
- Resequencing of some incidents, and withholding of information – for example Peeta's gift of bread is revealed in flashback very late in the film

Teachers' Notes on After Reading Activities

Whole School Read

If you have the DVD of the film, in the Extras section you will find some people talking about having *The Hunger Games* as a whole school read.

Creative Writing – Fan-Fiction

The task suggested here focuses on conventional writing. However some students may be inspired by the huge range of parodies available on YouTube. Links for online materials are given in the 'Further Resources' section of this publication.

- A music video pastiche of Lana del Rey's *Video Games* called *Hunger Games*
- An animated 'How *The Hunger Games* should have ended' alternative ending
- 'Feel the Hunger', a *The Muppets* parody trailer included in their forthcoming movie
- A *Saturday Night Live* sketch in which an actress plays a Hunger Games reporter sabotaging the tributes' fight for survival.

Before Reading

1. Word Games

Your teacher will read aloud some words and phrases from the opening chapter of *The Hunger Games* (see Teachers' Notes). You will hear the words four or five times and you should listen carefully, without writing them down.

- Working individually, respond to one or two of the words and phrases that have stayed in your mind. You could choose to ask questions, write a few sentences, sketch a quick picture, or make a prediction.
- Share your ideas with a small group. In your group, discuss what kind of atmosphere is created by some of these words and phrases.
- When you begin reading the novel, read the list again and then look out for the way these words and phrases are used in the first chapter.

2. Brainstorming the Title

- In a pair, one of you should take the word 'hunger' and the other the word 'games'.
- Separately, brainstorm as many associations as you can with the word you have chosen. Try to come up with at least five.
- Now get together with your partner and share what you came up with on your brainstorms. Discuss what associations you have with the two words both separately and together. What do they make you think of apart from the novel, film and so on?
- As a class discuss why you think the book might have this title and whether it is one that makes you want to read the book.

3. More than Just a Book..?

What Do You Already Know?

The chances are you'll have read, seen or heard *something* about *The Hunger Games*.

- As a class, do a quick survey round to see who knows what, and whether any of your class is an expert.

A Global Phenomenon

The Hunger Games is no longer 'just' a book. Your teacher will show you a PowerPoint presentation which will give you a sense of the way it has become a worldwide phenomenon.

- After you have watched the presentation, discuss with your class why you think this novel has been so hugely popular all over the world.

Thumbnail versions of the PowerPoint slides are included on pages 11 to 15 as a reference.

4. Readers and Critics

- Read the comments readers and critics have made about *The Hunger Games*, below.
- With a partner, pick out anything that intrigues you and makes you want to read the book.
- Now pick out anything that helps you to make a prediction about the book. Be ready to feed back to the class, explaining your prediction and what helped you to make it.
- When you have read the book you could come back to this activity and comment on whether you agree or disagree with what the person has said. If you have already read the book before studying it in class, do this now, if possible with a partner who has also read it.

A. Reading *The Hunger Games* can lead to interesting discussions about our own world and how reality shows, threats of war, authoritarian governments and obsession with fashion trends influence us daily. Due to the darkness of the story, it is best suited for teens and adults rather than tweens.

Jean Hatfield (About.Com Children's Book Reviews)

B. Ever since Harry Potter, I have spent my time trying to find books with characters I love as though they were my own friends, and with a plot so real that I felt it could actually be happening. Most books disappoint me in this area and I've had to settle for a lot of mediocrity. But not this time. *The Hunger Games* drew me so far into its world I didn't want to leave!

'Roses' (on Amazon.co.uk)

C. In *The Hunger Games*, the characters don't fall straightforwardly into one team or the other. There are no vampires vs. werewolves here, just Katniss on one side and the rest of the world on the other, although you wouldn't fancy the rest of the world's chances.

The Telegraph

D. If you are looking for something to grip your kids after an orgy of Xbox, *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins is it... Plunge in because this is rip-roaring, bare-knuckle adventure of the best kind, and destined to be an even bigger hit than Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight*.... It would be giving away too much to describe all the twists this absorbing and morally challenging novel throws up, but it is a real humdinger that adults, too, would love. In the renewed debate about why boys aren't reading, *The Hunger Games* would be the perfect antidote – if only schools had the wit to choose it for a class reader.

The Times

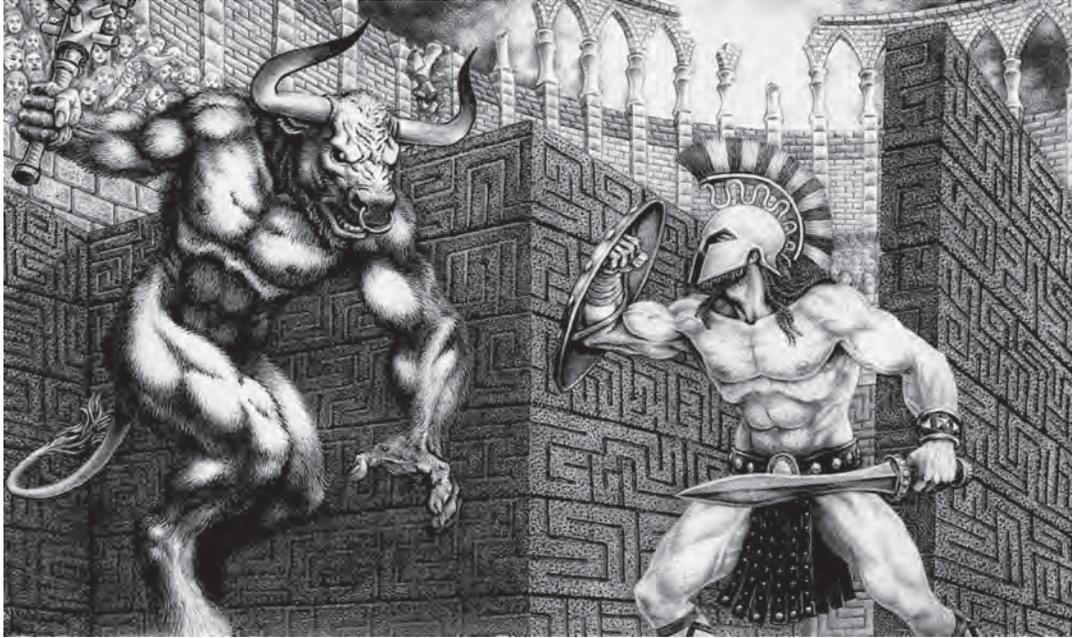
E. *The Hunger Games* is as close to a perfect adventure novel as I've ever read. I could not put it down.

Rick Riordan, author of the 'Percy Jackson' series

F. Great premise and page-turner. Smart, self-reliant, compassionate heroine. Love, lust and survival in a post-revolutionary world. Grim, very grim, but in the service of a tale about living in a system of oppression and relentless, heartless revenge. I did like this book.

Leslie Moon on the 'Good Reads' website

5. Mix and Match Myth – Theseus and the Minotaur



The Ancient Greek myth of Theseus and the Minotaur is one of the stories Suzanne Collins says gave her ideas for the plot of *The Hunger Games*.

This is a very old story and so there are many different versions of it. You and a partner are now going to take the basic ingredients and mix and match from some of the different versions to make your own telling of this story.

You will need a set of the options cards on page 18 for each pair and the story of Theseus, with gaps to fill, on page 19.

- With a partner, read the story with gaps on page 18.
- Pause at each gap and look at the options cards for that stage. Choose one option at each stage and lay the card in the gap.
- Read the story you have created aloud together. Are you happy with your choices? Make any changes you think would improve the story, including any ideas of your own you would like to add.
- Share some of your stories as a class and discuss the effect some of your different choices had. For example, did one option make the story more exciting for the reader? Or make one of the characters seem like a nicer person?
- You could come back to this activity when you have finished reading the book to think about which version of the myth Suzanne Collins has used, which elements she has kept, and what she has changed.

Pronouncing the names of the characters

- Aegeus, King of Athens: say ‘aygeeus’
- Theseus, Prince of Athens: say ‘theeseus’
- Minos, King of Crete: say ‘my-noss’
- Ariadne, Princess of Crete: say ‘ariadne’
- Minotaur: say ‘minotor’

After Reading Part 1

How is Katniss Presented in Part 1? Character Carousel

You are going to look at how Suzanne Collins presents Katniss in Book 1. For this activity there will be six 'stations' around the room each with a sheet of A3 paper, some Post-It notes and a copy of one of the extracts, below. Working with a small group, you will visit at least three different stations, getting two minutes to look at the extract and then another two minutes to consider a question put to you by your teacher.

1. At Each Station

- Read the extract together. How does Suzanne Collins present the character of Katniss here? Spend two minutes annotating the extract with ideas on Post-Its.
- Your teacher will now give you a question to consider. Discuss it with your group and then add to your annotations.
- Move to a new station and read the points that have already been made before repeating the two instructions above.

2. Returning to Your First Station

- With your group, return to the first station you visited. Look at all the points that have been made on the extract. Discuss the questions below.
 - What do you find interesting?
 - Any points, which make you, think differently?
 - Any points you would reject?
 - Anything else to add?
- Working as a group, rank order the remaining points.
- As a class, take it in turns to read out your extract and share some of the best points from your station.
- Use what you have learned in this activity to write three or more paragraphs on your own answering the question 'How does Suzanne Collins present the character of Katniss in Part I?'

Chapter 18

After Reading Chapter 18

Rue is dead – and Katniss has made her first direct kill of another tribute. This is a really important moment in the narrative, but also a very brutal one.

In this role-play you will be considering how this moment could be portrayed onscreen in a television adaptation of *The Hunger Games*. The series will be screened to family audiences at 6.30pm on a Sunday evening, meaning it will be shown before the watershed. (The ‘watershed’ means that before 9.00pm or after 6.00am, material unsuitable for children should not be shown).

Before you start, divide the class into two halves: A and B. Within these halves, get into pairs. Follow the instructions for your half of the class, either A (scriptwriters) or B (advisory panel).

‘A’ Pairs – Scriptwriters

Imagine you are the scriptwriting team working on a TV adaptation of the novel. Remember it will be screened to family audiences at 6.30pm on a Sunday evening. You will be working on the events in the novel from the beginning of Chapter 18 as far as ‘We don’t have to worry about her now. Good and safe.’ on page 288.

You want to be faithful to the novel, but this is a very violent and sad episode that might upset some members of your audience, and you know parents and critics will make complaints if you get it wrong.

- Make a list of the events in this chapter that you will need to show on screen.
- For each event, consider any issues you will need to be careful of. To do this, try the ‘Yes but...’ game. For each event on your list, add a ‘Yes but . . .’ in the right hand column. For example:

What we need to show	Yes but . . .
Katniss kills the boy from District 1	We don’t want younger viewers to see too much blood – shoot it in wide-angle?
Katniss grieves for the loss of Rue	We can’t show her being too sad – she needs to stay strong!

A Quest

A 'quest' is a search for something, usually a long and difficult search and the name given to a type of story in which the main character is involved in a journey full of struggles and tests, with a possible reward at the end of it. The idea of a hero taking a difficult journey in search of something forms the basis of many, many stories across the world, both new and old. The myth of Theseus and the Minotaur, one of the inspirations for *The Hunger Games* (see pages 17-19) is a quest.

Is *The Hunger Games* a Quest?

- Look at the chart on page 49, which sets out some typical features of a quest story. With a partner, think about ways in which *The Hunger Games* is a typical quest, and ways in which it might be different. Fill in the chart to help with your discussion.
- Share your findings as a class and discuss the question 'How far is the structure of *The Hunger Games* a typical quest?'

Your Own Writing

- Think of an idea for a story of your own which follows the structure of a quest. You could stick very closely to the typical structure, or bring in some of your own ideas.

Writer Phoebe Durand gives some advice for creating a story with a quest structure on the website <http://voices.yahoo.com>. She suggests writers ask themselves the questions below.

- Try asking yourself these questions to help you to develop your plot.
 - What is the goal of the quest?
 - How will the characters and readers determine the success or failure of the quest?
 - Why does the main character care about the quest?
 - What is the theme of the quest – the 'wisdom' the characters come to see?
 - Why do the hero's companions continue through the quest with them?
 - How does the quest change the characters, and how is that change displayed?
- Turn your ideas into a short story.

Features of a quest	<i>The Hunger Games</i>	
	Typical of a quest	Different from a typical quest
The story starts with the hero, usually a strong, brave man, in their 'ordinary world'/normal life. Female hero.	At the start of the novel, we see Katniss at home with Prim and her mother and hunting in the forest with Gale.	Although we see Katniss in her everyday life, it is also an unusual day, the day of the Reaping.
A problem forces the hero to set off on a journey with a specific goal.		
The goal is a reward or prize, often a magical object. This can be something new, or it can be something that was stolen away from the hero or from someone who threatens to kill the hero if it is not returned.		
Others may start out on the quest, but only the hero succeeds.		
The hero enters the 'extraordinary world', a land of adventures, tests and magical rewards.		
In the extraordinary world, the hero meets allies: friends; helpers; mentors.		
The hero also meets enemies, often a particular villain who is the opposite of the hero and tries to prevent them from achieving their goal.		