

The Hunger Games



AN EMC STUDY GUIDE

Acknowledgements

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The Hunger Games – an EMC Study Guide on EMCdownload

This EMCdownload version of *The Hunger Games – an EMC Study Guide* includes the following:

1. This PDF of the full publication, including colour screenshots from the opening scene of the film adaptation.
2. A screen-friendly PDF, with all the student activities, in a form suitable for showing to a whole-class via data projector, allowing you to reduce photocopying costs. References to the relevant page numbers in the print publication are included in the contents list. This PDF also includes A4 versions of the screenshots from the film adaptation.
3. PowerPoint – 'More Than Just a Book ...?'
4. Folder of screengrabs from the film adaptation (jpegs) for use in programs such as Picture Power 3, PowerPoint, iMovie and so on.

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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 film.

The publication is split into five sections: Before Reading; During Reading; Ongoing Activities; After Reading and Further Resources. 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 film adaptation of the novel, also called *The Hunger Games*, is widely available and includes some useful extras, which add context and opportunities for discussion of the writing of both novel and screenplay.

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 included on the CD, 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 of this photocopiable pack, 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 (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

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’s 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 whether the book or the film is better.

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’s 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, listen to the list being read again. 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 anyone in 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 popular all over the world.

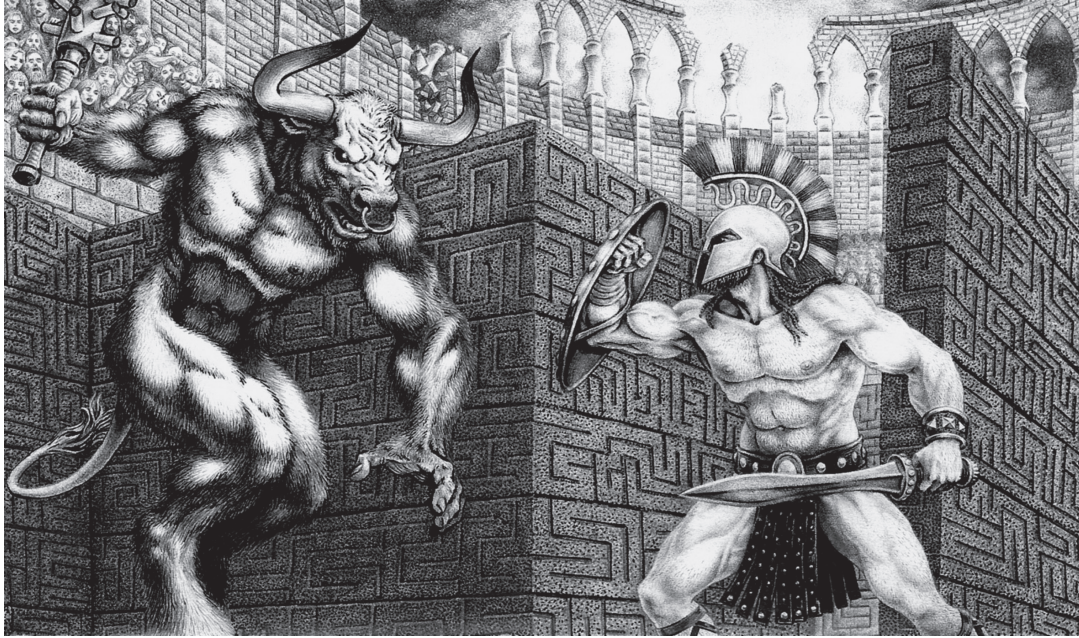
Thumbnail versions of the PowerPoint slides are included on pages 11 to 15 as a reference.

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, you could do this now, if possible with a partner who has also read it.)

A.	<p>‘Reading <i>The Hunger Games</i> 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.’</p> <p><i>Jean Hatfield (About.Com Children’s Book Reviews)</i></p>
B.	<p>‘Ever since <i>Harry Potter</i>, 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. <i>The Hunger Games</i> drew me so far into its world I didn’t want to leave!’</p> <p><i>‘Roses’ (on Amazon.co.uk)</i></p>
C.	<p>‘In <i>The Hunger Games</i>, 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.’</p> <p><i>The Telegraph</i></p>
D.	<p>‘If you are looking for something to grip your kids after an orgy of Xbox, <i>The Hunger Games</i> 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 <i>Twilight</i>.... 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, <i>The Hunger Games</i> would be the perfect antidote – if only schools had the wit to choose it for a class reader.’</p> <p><i>The Times</i></p>
E.	<p>‘<i>The Hunger Games</i> is as close to a perfect adventure novel as I’ve ever read. I could not put it down.’</p> <p><i>Rick Riordan, author of the ‘Percy Jackson’ series</i></p>
F.	<p>‘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.’</p> <p><i>Leslie Moon on the ‘Good Reads’ website</i></p>

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 19 for each pair and the story of Theseus, with gaps to fill, on page 18.

- 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.
- Together, read aloud the story you have created. 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'

Your Version of Theseus and the Minotaur

Mix and Match Myth

Stage 1

Athens regularly sends some of its people to Crete to feed the minotaur. The minotaur is a ferocious beast, half-man, half-bull, which the King of Crete keeps in a labyrinth (a kind of maze).

Stage 2

The sacrifice demanded by King Minos is...

Stage 3

Theseus, Prince of Athens, volunteers to be one of those sacrificed, so that he can enter the labyrinth and kill the beast. His father reluctantly agrees.

When the sacrifices arrive in Crete, they are allowed one night of luxury in Minos' palace, before being locked in the labyrinth with the minotaur. Ariadne meets Theseus and...

Stage 4

To help Theseus, Ariadne gives him a ball of string to help him find his way out of the maze, and a sword to fight the beast. Theseus enters the maze alone and finds his way to the minotaur, using the string as instructed by Ariadne. When he finds the minotaur...

Stage 5

Together, Theseus and Ariadne escape in his boat, before Minos can find them.

Options Cards for Mix and Match Myth

Stage 1

Option 1
Minos sent his son, Androgeus, on a mission to kill a dangerous bull for the people of Athens, but the bull gored his son to death. Ever since then he has demanded sacrifices to the minotaur as payment for the death of his son, and Aegeus is not powerful enough to say no.
Option 2
The more powerful Crete was constantly attacking Athens. To put a stop to this Aegeus made a deal with Minos. Athens would send sacrifices to feed the minotaur in return for Minos leaving Athens in peace.

Stage 2

Option 1
seven women and seven men, every year.
Option 2
seven boys and seven girls, every nine years.

Stage 3

Option 1
...she falls in love with him at first sight and decides to help him defeat the minotaur.
Option 2
Theseus promises to marry her, if she will help him defeat the minotaur.

Stage 4

Option 1
...they have a terrible battle. Theseus kills the monster with the sword given to him by Ariadne.
Option 2
...the monster is sleeping. Theseus kills the monster with his bare hands.

Stage 5

Option 1
Theseus is not in love with Ariadne, so he leaves her, sleeping, on an island where she dies.
Option 2
On the way to Athens, Ariadne feels seasick. Theseus leaves her to rest on an island. A storm blows his boat away and by the time he finds his way back to the island, she is dead.