1. Discuss the differences between the Games in the first volume and the second—the training sessions, the interviews, the set-up of the arena, the strategies that Katniss and Peeta use. How is each of them changed by the time they spend in the arena? How does the experience of being in the Games prepare thetributes for fighting in the rebellion?

2. What are the forces that contribute to the rebellion in Catching Fire? Were they already starting to happen in The Hunger Games? What clues can you find in the first two books that the rebellion is underway? Did you as a reader believe in the existence of District 13 before experiencing it in Mockingjay? Do you think Katniss, Peeta, and Gale believed in it?

3. Why are all citizens of Panem required to watch The Hunger Games on television? How does this affect the people? Why haven’t they rebelled earlier against the brutality of the Games? What is the importance of the propos that are created for the rebellion in Mockingjay and the way they are used? Discuss the effect of television and reality TV in your own life.

4. Compare the society in Panem (the government, its tight control on the population, and the forces for the rebellion) to others that you have studied or encountered in books or films. Consider historical and contemporary nations as well as fictional worlds. What does Panem have in common with these cultures, and how does it differ? What can we learn about our own world from studying and reading about historical and fictional societies?

5. Research the symptoms and treatment of PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder). How is this condition portrayed in The Hunger Games trilogy? Discuss the many ways it can appear in real life. How does Katniss counteract her symptoms? How does each of the tributes that have been in the arena cope with these symptoms?

6. Discuss the concept of Panem et Circenses that Plutarch explains to Katniss. What is the effect of easy food and entertainment on the citizens of the Capitol? How does this society compare to that of the Roman Empire? Why do the districts in Panem have no concept of history before “The Dark Days”?

7. Discuss the symbolism of fire throughout the series. How does Katniss change from the synthetic “girl on fire” created by Cinna for the opening ceremonies to the girl whose spirit “catches fire” for the rebellion to the girl who nearly dies by fire in the overthrow of the Capitol?

8. The poet Wilfred Owen wrote in the early 20th century, “My subject is War, and the pity of War. The Poetry is in the pity… All a poet can do today is warn. That is why the true Poets must be truthful.” Discuss this quote in relation to Suzanne Collins’s writing about the war between the Capitol and the rebels. What warning must the people of Panem heed if their new government is to succeed? What warning must we heed about our own society and government?
HISTORICAL AND LITERARY CONNECTIONS

The Hunger Games trilogy provides many interesting analogies to historical events and literary classics through the ages.

Greek Legend
Suzanne Collins was inspired by the Greek legend of King Minos of Crete who demanded that seven Athenian boys and seven Athenian girls be sacrificed periodically in the Labyrinth of the Minotaur—until the hero Theseus volunteered to go in place of one of the youths and was able to slay the monster. The story can be studied in Edith Hamilton’s Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes. A fictionalized version is Mary Renault’s The King Must Die.

The Roman Empire
Study of the Roman Empire will yield many connections to The Hunger Games trilogy—the autocratic rule of the Capitol, the political machinations of President Snow, training of youth for a fight to the death to amuse the Capitol’s citizens, and the politics of the rebellion. Even the name of the country, Panem, comes from the Roman phrase, “panem et circenses”—the bread and circuses which the Romans provided to control the population by keeping them contented and entertained. Classic novels such as Howard Fast’s Spartacus and Robert Graves’s I, Claudius and Claudius the God will enhance those connections.

Joan of Arc
Joan of Arc is an historical figure brought to mind by Katniss and the way she is manipulated for political and tactical reasons. Compare Joan’s peasant upbringing, determination, and sheer grit in the face of her enemies in the 15th century to the role Katniss takes on for the rebellion in Mockingjay.

Shakespeare
There are a number of themes in Shakespeare’s plays that can be compared with The Hunger Games trilogy. Read Julius Caesar for the Roman connection and the theme of the downfall of the powerful. Compare Snow’s hold on the presidency to the tragic results of ambition and thirst for power in Macbeth. The star-crossed lover theme can be compared to Romeo and Juliet, and the effort involved in bringing down a despotical ruler plays out in Richard the III. For another view of Richard III, see Josephine Tey’s compelling mystery The Daughter of Time (Touchstone, 1995), exploring the idea that history is written by the victors in any conflict.

War Poetry and Music
Wilfred Owen, a young man who fought and died in the trenches of Europe in World War I, wrote poignant poetry about the futility of war. His poems were used as text for Benjamin Britten’s War Requiem, written for the re-consecration of Coventry Cathedral, an historic building destroyed in the Battle of Britain during World War II. Find out more at http://www.its.caltech.edu/~tan/Britten/britwar.html

Modern Literary Connections
In John Steinbeck’s The Grapes of Wrath, set during the Dust Bowl years in the United States, ordinary people struggle to stay alive in the Great Depression. Steinbeck vividly depicts the conflicts between poor farmers, bankers, and property owners.

The futuristic novels Brave New World, Nineteen Eighty-Four, and Fahrenheit 451 all reflect the rigid control and stratified society that we see in The Hunger Games trilogy, while Lord of the Flies explores how vicious young people can become when forced to survive in a wilderness setting. Research the cultures in their own lives and times that led Aldous Huxley, George Orwell, Ray Bradbury, and William Golding to create these bleak novels.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING**

**FICTION**

*Fallen Angels*, by Walter Dean Myers (Scholastic Press/Scholastic, 1988)

The actual arena of a war zone in Vietnam (*Fallen Angels*) and Iraq (*Sunrise Over Fallujah*) provide a setting in which present-day soldiers must remain constantly alert to stay alive, while making difficult decisions about who are potential allies and who are their true enemies.

*Sunrise Over Fallujah*, by Walter Dean Myers (Scholastic Press/Scholastic, 2008)

*Feed*, by M. T. Anderson (Candlewick, 2004)

In this futuristic society, a “feed” is embedded in the brain of every person to keep up a steady stream of information, entertainment, communication, and ultimately, control. Survival in this world depends on how well your individual “feed” is functioning and how well you fit in with the popular culture.

*GemX*, by Nicky Singer (Holiday House, 2008)

A future society is divided into the “Enhanced” and the “Natural Born,” both manipulated by a heartless ruler. But love reaches across the society’s barriers, bringing hope to a few.

*Graceling*, by Kristin Cashore (Harcourt, 2008)

Lady Katsa, graced with the ability to win every fight, defies her tyrannical uncle, and through her own feelings of compassion and her growing friendship with a foreign prince, finds her own way in the world.


In his fourth year at Hogwarts School, Harry's name is mysteriously chosen in a lottery to compete in the Triwizard Tournament that pits champions from several schools against each other in a contest of magical skills, reasoning powers, wit, and endurance. See also *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (Arthur A. Levine Books/Scholastic, 2007) for the human costs in a terrible confrontation between the forces of good and evil.

*Private Peaceful*, by Michael Morpurgo (Scholastic Press/Scholastic, 2003)

Discipline in the British army during World War I was harsh and swift, as can be seen in this story of one brave and thoughtful soldier and his brother.

*Uglies*, by Scott Westerfeld (Simon Pulse, 2005)


*Unwind*, by Neal Shusterman (Simon & Schuster, 2007)

Connor, Risa, and Lev are literally running for their lives in a future world where troubled teens may be chosen by a parent for “unwinding,” in which their body parts are harvested for use by other people.

The motives of the crusaders are not all pure and noble. The first two volumes in this trilogy—*The Seeing Stone* (2001) and *At the Crossing Places* (2002)—lay the groundwork for Arthur's adventures and growing maturity.

*King of the Middle March*, by Kevin Crossley-Holland (Arthur A. Levine Books/Scholastic, 2004)

A young man embarks on the Fourth Crusade in the early 13th century, but soon becomes aware that the motives
**NONFICTION**

*Beyond the Myth: The Story of Joan of Arc*, by Polly Schoyer Brooks (Sandpiper, 1999)
Historical account of a young girl who became the symbol of a rebellion, then later became the target of jealousy, court intrigue, and superstition.

*Black Potatoes*, by Susan Campbell Bartoletti (Houghton Mifflin, 2005)
Hunger and starvation during the potato famine of 1845–50 affected the lives of millions in Ireland, while the stratiﬁed society of Irish peasants and English overlords contributed to the brutality of the situation.

*Hitler Youth*, by Susan Campbell Bartoletti (Scholastic Nonfiction/Scholastic, 2005) and *They Called Themselves the K.K.K.: The Birth of an American Terrorist Group*, by Susan Campbell Bartoletti (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010)
Both of these books describe the chilling ways in which hate groups can manipulate ordinary citizens.

An exploration of the biological and psychological reasons people risk their lives and why some are better at it than others.

*The End of Ancient Rome (Turning Points in World History)*, by Don Nardo (Greenhaven, 2001)
This carefully chosen collection of essays helps older students analyze and understand the complex society of the later Roman Empire.

*In an Instant: A Family’s Journey of Love and Healing*, by Lee and Bob Woodruff (Random House, 2007)
This memoir depicts the struggles of an award-winning TV journalist and his family during his recovery from a brain injury after being hit by a roadside bomb while reporting from Iraq.

*The Life and Death of Adolf Hitler*, by James Cross Giblin (Clarion, 2002)
An in-depth biography attempts to explain the complex man who caused untold suffering and the deaths of millions of men, women, and children in the mid-20th century. See also Giblin’s *Good Brother, Bad Brother* (Clarion, 2005) about the family of the man who assassinated Abraham Lincoln.

A Nobel-prize winner discusses the theory behind decisions people make in competitive situations and the strategies that can change the outcome of their actions.

*Stop Teaching Our Kids to Kill: A Call to Action Against TV, Movie and Video Game Violence*, by Lt. Col. Dave Grossman and Gloria DeGaetano (Crown, 1999)
This book presents an argument, based on research, against the inﬂuences that incite violent actions in youth today.

*Truce: The Day the Soldiers Stopped Fighting*, by Jim Murphy (Scholastic Nonfiction/Scholastic, 2009)
Tells of the amazing and poignant truce during brutal trench warfare in World War I when troops on both sides set aside their combat to celebrate Christmas.

*The Worst Hard Time*, by Timothy Egan (Houghton Mifflin, 2005)
Egan relates a chilling chronicle of starvation and hardship during the Dust Bowl years of the 1930s in the American Midwest, when economic issues and environmental disasters combined to change the lives of an entire population.
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Suzanne Collins has had a successful and prolific career writing for children’s television. She has worked on the staffs of several Nickelodeon shows, including the Emmy-nominated hit Clarissa Explains It All and The Mystery Files of Shelby Woo. Collins, who was named among Time magazine’s 100 Most Influential People in 2010, made her mark in children’s literature with the New York Times bestselling five-book series for middle-grade readers, The Underland Chronicles, which has received numerous accolades both in the United States and abroad.

In the award-winning The Hunger Games trilogy, Collins continues to explore the effects of war and violence on those coming of age. The final book in the trilogy, Mockingjay, debuted at No. 1 on all national bestseller lists during its first week on sale. In a starred review, Publishers Weekly said it “accomplishes a rare feat, the last installment being the best yet, a beautifully orchestrated and intelligent novel that succeeds on every level.”

Collins lives in Connecticut with her family.

CRITICAL ACCLAIM FOR THE HUNGER GAMES

“I was so obsessed with this book.”—Stephenie Meyer, author of the Twilight Saga

“I couldn’t stop reading...addictive.”—Stephen King, Entertainment Weekly

“Brilliantly plotted and perfectly paced.”—The New York Times Book Review

Books are available from your local bookstore or usual supplier or from:
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www.scholastic.com/th hungergames

Discussion Guide prepared by Connie Rockman, Youth Literature Consultant, adjunct professor of children’s and young adult literature, and Editor of the 8th, 9th, and 10th books in the H.W. Wilson Junior Authors and Illustrators series.