

Discussion Questions for *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins

(Some questions taken or adapted from http://www2.scholastic.com/content/collateral_resources/pdf/h/HungerGamesTrilogyDiscussionGuide.pdf and <http://www.cincinnati.library.org/samepage/2010/questions.aspx>)

Discussion Questions

1. Violence as entertainment plays a large part in *The Hunger Games*, and the novel itself is both violent and entertaining. What shocked you most about the book? What important points do you think the author makes about violence and its effects on society? violence in the media? violence and children?
2. Is Katniss a strong main character? Do you like her? Why or why not?
3. Katniss says about Peeta, “I feel like I owe him something, and I hate owing people”? How does her early encounter with Peeta and the bread affect their relationship after they are chosen as tributes?
4. When Peeta declares his love for Katniss in the interview, does he really mean it or did Haymitch create the “star-crossed lovers” story?
5. Katniss feels ashamed when Peeta tells her, “I want to die as myself...I don’t want them to change me in there. Turn me into some kind of monster that I’m not.” (p. 141) She had been worrying about survival, not principles. Do Katniss and Peeta become monstrous during the games? How do they reach the point of making their stand at the end of the games, when they stake their survival on a principle?
6. Why does Peeta join with the Career Tributes in the beginning of the Games? Why do they accept him when they start hunting as a group? Why do groups form in the beginning when they know only one of them will be able to survive?
7. What makes Katniss and Rue trust each other to become partners? Is Katniss and Rue’s partnership formed for different reasons than the other groups’?
8. What do you think is the cruelest part of the Hunger Games? Can you see parallels between these Games and the society that condones them, and other related events and cultures in the history of the world?
9. In 1848, Karl Marx wrote in *The Communist Manifesto*, “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.” Does this apply to the society and government of Panem?

10. Reality TV has been a part of the entertainment world since the early days of television (with shows such as *Candid Camera* and the *Miss America Pageant*), but in the 21st century there has been a tremendous growth of competitive shows and survival shows. Discuss this phenomenon with respect to *The Hunger Games*. What other aspects of our popular culture do you see reflected in this story?
11. The adults in this book seem to be very flawed. Why do you think Collins portrays them this way? Katniss's mother is one of the most important—do you think Katniss is too hard on her? What about other adults Katniss encounters?
12. In a book about moral choices, God and religion never appear. Do you think they should have? What do you think are the book's most religious elements?
13. There are so many issues to discuss in *The Hunger Games*! Which if any of these was most important to you: totalitarianism; reality TV; celebrity culture; violence in society and media; class and poverty; childhood and the effects of poverty, war, or hunger; competition; heroism and the hero's quest; moral choice; coming of age; the value of human life. Have you had a chance to discuss how the book affected you most strongly?
14. Were there any passages or scenes that you remember well or particularly liked?
15. Would you recommend this novel to a friend? Do you want to read the sequels?
16. Are there any questions you would like to ask?