

# "the hunger games" trilogy by suzanne collins essay sample

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The trilogy of *The Hunger Games* written by Suzanne Collins, focuses on a country that is being controlled by an oppressive government and the people who are fighting against it for their freedom. Although the odds are against the rebels, they continue to combat tyranny at the risk of their own lives. The story takes place in the not too distant future in a country called Panem, which represents the United States. The Capitol, which is the center of the national government, is a brutal and very advanced metropolis, exercises political and physical control over the entire nation of Panem. One of the methods used by the government is the annual lethal "Hunger Games." The main character, Katniss Everdeen is the female tribute or participant representing District 12 in the government sponsored to-the-death competition called the Hunger Games. Each of Panem's twelve districts chooses one female and one male between the ages of ten and seventy to participate in the competition, but in the end, only one will survive. The Capitol uses various systems to manipulate the districts to keep the people under control and living in uncomfortable conditions which become increasingly severe over time.

The Capitol is the ruling government of Panem in the novel, *The Hunger Games*. This government focuses on controlling its citizen population by confiscating goods from each district. The government takes food, transportation, protection, private property, energy, and most importantly, communication between each district. Without these six essentials the districts are at the mercy of the Capitol. In order for the people to get these necessities each district must look to the Capitol for help, which is the ultimate goal of the government. One of the Capitol's policies is that when a

district produces the required amount of goods or services for the government the district is rewarded with a small percentage of that production and a food allotment. In *The Hunger Games*, Katniss Everdeen says, " District 12 - where you can starve to death in safety," (*The Hunger Games*, 6). Katniss' attitude is justified because District 12 is the poorest District: it cannot produce enough coal to meet the Capitol's requirements, and therefore, does not receive its food allotment. During one of Katniss' appearances at a Capitol function, she sees what the people are doing with their precious food, and she despises them, " And here in the Capitol they're vomiting for the pleasure of filling their bellies again and again. Not from some illness of body or mind, not from spoiled food.

It's what everyone does at a party. Expected. Part of the fun," (*Catching Fire*, 88). This illustrates that the Capitol does not care that people are starving in the districts. The people are being starved deliberately. Transportation for each district is highly limited; walking is the main form of transportation within the districts. All districts, except District 6, have access to the government owned train, but it is very expensive to use. There is only one way citizens can use the train at no cost, and that is if they are chosen as tributes for the Hunger Games. In District 12, Katniss Everdeen volunteered as tribute in place of her sister. Her family is not wealthy so she got to ride the train to the Capitol for the first time, " Of course, I've never been on a train, as travel between districts is forbidden except for officially sanctioned duties," (*The Hunger Games*, 41). The Capitol controls the district's transportation in order to stifle communication among the districts. If the

people are allowed to communicate freely they would be able to plot the overthrow of the government.

Districts 6 and 13 specialize in transportation. Not much else is known about District 6 other than its production is transportation mostly for the Capitol. In the first book of The Hunger Games trilogy, readers are told that during the Dark Days the Capitol destroyed District 13, which is known as the Graphite and Nuclear District. The Dark Days refers to the uprising of the thirteen districts of Panem against the ruling Capitol, which resulted in twelve districts being defeated, and District 13 being obliterated. District 13 is believed to be uninhabited, with the ruins still smoldering from the toxic bombs. However, at the end of *Catching Fire*, Katniss learns that District 13 is being used as a base for the new rebellion. In *Mockingjay*, it is revealed that District 13 was never destroyed, but that they moved underground due to a non-aggression pact with the Capitol. District 13 is developing and manufacturing new types of weaponry based upon what have been captured during the fight with the Capitol. The districts are not allowed to interact with one another. Their main form of interaction is through the Hunger Games; therefore, the people who are able to organize any sort of revolution are the victors.

Victors are tributes who have won by surviving the previous Hunger Games; they receive income and housing from the Capitol for life. The victors have the ability to execute their plan by using the Games themselves to broadcast the rebellion. In *Catching Fire*, the tributes all join hands on camera showing unity between the districts. This action was the spark that brought the

districts and citizens into a War against the Capitol. Another instance of communication among the districts is brought about in the third book of the trilogy, *Mockingjay*. The rebels use mass media propaganda during the annual Hunger Games to get their message to all of the districts. Their propaganda videos, more commonly known as *propos*, are the advertisements, messages, interviews, and film footage produced by the rebel side. Beetee is a male tribute from District 3 and a survivor of the 75th Hunger Games. Beetee, an expert with electronics, is in charge of getting the *propos* to air in the Capitol by hacking its broadcasting system, which he did many times. The first *propo* that successfully broke the Capitol's systems was the clip of Katniss standing in front of the hospital after it was bombed.

The Capitol reacted in anger by attacking one of the rebels, "The camera knocked down to record the white tiled floor. The scuffle of boots. The impact of the blow that's inseparable from Peeta's cry of pain. And his blood as it splatters the tiles," (*Mockingjay*, 134). This violent reaction by the Capitol was a warning to the districts, but it only made the districts more determined to rebel. Government's punishments for citizens who break the rules of the Capitol are extreme and painful. The government devises three methods of pain: physical, emotional and political. The physical pain involves the body. For example, if a citizen is a traitor through speech, the person is turned into an *Avox* by having his or her tongue removed. Darius is one of the youngest *Peacekeepers* in District 12.

He was turned into an *Avox* for interfering with a public whipping. Some *Peacekeepers* hold public floggings to scare the local community into

submission by setting an example. Romulus Thread, the Head Peacekeeper of District 12, whipped Gale Hawthorne for a crime known as poaching. In *Catching Fire*, during Katniss and Peeta's Victory Tour of District 11, an elderly man was executed for saluting Katniss, which the Peacekeepers considered an act of defiance against the Capitol's rule. The government uses execution as its ultimate form of punishment and control.

Emotional punishment is when the government uses people-against-people as a form of emotional punishment. In the third and final book, *Mockingjay*, Peeta is held captive by President Snow and is used to "break" Katniss and the rebellion. During one of Katniss' emotional breakdowns, she talks with her sister, Prim, about what they think the Capitol is doing with Peeta, "So, what do you think they'll do to him?" I ask. Prim sounds about a thousand years old when she speaks. "Whatever it takes to break you," (*Mockingjay*, 151). Another tribute who has suffered through the Capitol's torture is Finnick Odair, a male victor from District 4. In *Mockingjay*, Finnick is deeply distressed and unable to focus on anything but saving Annie Cresta, his wife who has been kidnapped and is being tortured in the Capitol. Katniss realizes that Finnick's problems over the last few years are due to the Capitol's emotional torture, "As I whisper my discovery of Snow's plan to break me, it dawns on me. This strategy is very old news to Finnick. It's what broke him," (*Mockingjay*, 155). Katniss knows that she is not alone in this pain that President Snow is causing.

Two main political methods the Capitol uses to control the citizens of Panem are peacekeepers and Nuclear weapons. The Peacekeepers are a force of

military police controlled by the Capitol whose task is to maintain order and dominance throughout Panem using cruelty and brutality. The Peacekeepers are very strict in larger districts such as District 11, but in districts such as District 12, they bend the rules to satisfy their needs. Peacekeepers use harsher rules in the bigger districts for the larger population. Punishments for lesser crimes differ between districts and are determined by the districts' Peacekeepers. In *Catching Fire* it is noted that most Peacekeepers from District 12 think that forty lashings for illegally hunting is more than enough, while in District 11 Peacekeepers think that forty is hardly enough. In *The Hunger Games*, Katniss' ally, Rue, describes how a simple-minded boy was shot dead by the Peacekeepers for keeping a pair of night-vision glasses that he used for play. The ultimate punishment throughout *The Hunger Games* trilogy is the numerous bombings within the nation of Panem. District 12 was bombed and its citizens were killed because of the results of the 75th Hunger Games. The Capitol was obviously displeased with the rebel's actions and retaliated.

*The Hunger Games* trilogy is a young-adult science-fiction thriller series written by Suzanne Collins. Katniss Everdeen, the story's narrator, tells the tale of a dominating Capitol and the mistreated twelve districts of Panem. The Capitol is the ruling government of Panem. The Capitol is a tyrannical dictatorship that holds total political and economical dominance over Panem, enforcing its rule through an army of Peacekeepers, capital punishment, propaganda, and the Hunger Games.