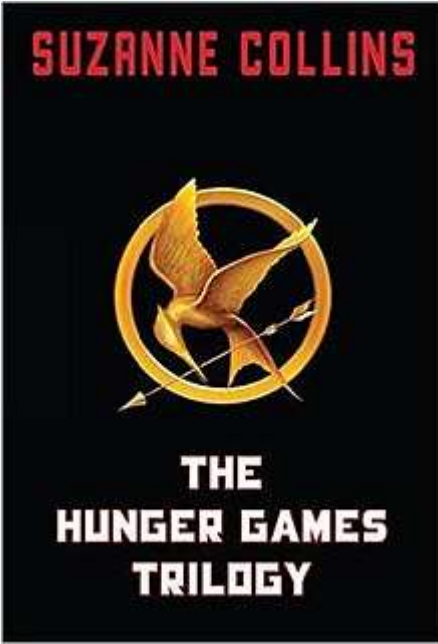


The Hunger Games

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<i>The Hunger Games</i>	
	
A complete set of <i>The Hunger Games</i> trilogy	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>The Hunger Games</i> (2008)• <i>Catching Fire</i> (2009)• <i>Mockingjay</i> (2010)	
Author	Suzanne Collins
Country	United States
Language	English
Genre	Dystopian, science fiction, drama, action
Publisher	Scholastic
Published	2008–2010
Media type	Print (hardcover and paperback), audiobook, e-book
No. of books	3

The Hunger Games is a trilogy of young adult dystopian novels written by American novelist Suzanne Collins. The series is set in *The Hunger Games* universe, and follows young Katniss Everdeen.

The novels in the trilogy are titled *The Hunger Games* (2008), *Catching Fire* (2009), and *Mockingjay* (2010). The novels have all been developed into films starring Jennifer Lawrence, with the film adaptation of *Mockingjay* split into two parts. The first two books in the series were both *New York Times* best sellers, and *Mockingjay* topped all US bestseller lists upon its release.^{[1][2]} By the time the film adaptation of *The Hunger Games* was released in 2012, the publisher had reported over 26 million *Hunger Games* trilogy books in print, including movie tie-in books.^[3]

The Hunger Games universe is a dystopia set in Panem, a country consisting of the wealthy Capitol and 12 districts in varying states of poverty. Every year, children from the districts are selected to participate in a compulsory televised battle royale death match called The Hunger Games.

The novels were all well received. In August 2012, the series ranked second, exceeded only by the *Harry Potter* series in NPR's poll of the top 100 teen novels, which asked voters to choose their favorite young adult books.^[4] On August 17, 2012, Amazon announced *The Hunger Games* trilogy as its top seller, surpassing the record previously held by the *Harry Potter* series.^[5] As of 2014, the trilogy has sold more than 65 million copies in the U.S. alone (more than 28 million copies of *The Hunger Games*, more than 19 million copies of *Catching Fire*, and more than 18 million copies of *Mockingjay*). *The Hunger Games* trilogy has been sold into 56 territories in 51 languages to date.^[6]



Contents

- 1Setting
 - 1.1Structure
 - 1.2Origins
- 2Trilogy
 - 2.1*The Hunger Games*
 - 2.2*Catching Fire*
 - 2.3*Mockingjay*
- 3Popular culture
 - 3.1Critical reception
 - 3.2Adaptations
 - 3.3Culture
- 4References
- 5External links

Setting

Main article: Fictional universe of The Hunger Games

The Hunger Games trilogy takes place in an unspecified future time, in the dystopian, post-apocalyptic nation of Panem, located in North America.^[7] The country consists of a wealthy Capitol city, located in the Rocky Mountains,^[8] surrounded by twelve (originally thirteen) poorer districts ruled by the Capitol. The Capitol is lavishly rich and technologically advanced, but the districts are in varying states of poverty. The trilogy's narrator and protagonist Katniss Everdeen, lives in District 12, the poorest region of Panem, located in Appalachia,^[8] where people regularly die of starvation. As punishment for a past rebellion against the Capitol (called the "Dark Days"), in which District 13 was supposedly destroyed, one boy and one girl from each of the twelve remaining districts, between the ages of 12 and 18, are selected by lottery to compete in an annual pageant called the Hunger Games. The Games are a televised event in which the participants, called "tributes", are forced to fight to the death in a dangerous public arena. The winning tribute and his/her home district are then rewarded with food, supplies, and riches. The purposes of the Hunger Games are to provide entertainment for the Capitol and to remind the districts of the Capitol's power and lack of remorse, forgetfulness, and forgiveness for the failed rebellion of the current competitors' ancestors.

Structure

Each book in *The Hunger Games* trilogy has three sections of nine chapters each. Collins has said this format comes from her playwriting background, which taught her to write in a three-act structure; her previous series, *The Underland Chronicles*, was written in the same way. She sees each group of nine chapters as a separate part of the story, and comments still call those divisions "act breaks".^[9]

Origins

Collins says she drew inspiration for the series from both classical and contemporary sources. Her main classical source of inspiration is the Greek myth of Theseus and the Minotaur, in which, as a punishment for past crimes, Minos forces Athens to sacrifice seven youths and seven maidens to the Minotaur, which kills them in a vast labyrinth. Collins says that even as a child, she was stunned by the idea since "it was just so cruel" to force Athens to sacrifice its own children.

Collins also cites as a classical inspiration the Roman gladiator games. She feels three key elements create a good game: an all powerful and ruthless government, people forced to fight to the death, and the game's role as a source of popular entertainment.^[10]

A contemporary source of inspiration was Collins' recent fascination with reality television programs. She says they are like *The Hunger Games* because the Games are not just entertainment but also a reminder to the districts of their rebellion. On a tired night, Collins says that while she was channel-surfing the television, she saw people competing for some prize and then saw footage of the Iraq War. She described how the two combined in an "unsettling way" to create her first ideas for the series.^[11]

Trilogy

The Hunger Games

Main article: The Hunger Games (novel)

The Hunger Games is the first book in the series and was released on September 14, 2008.

The Hunger Games follows 16-year-old Katniss Everdeen, a girl from District 12 who volunteers for the 74th Hunger Games in place of her younger sister Primrose Everdeen. Also selected from District 12 is Peeta Mellark. They are mentored by their district's only living victor, Haymitch Abernathy, who won 24 years earlier and has since led a solitary life of alcoholism.

Peeta confesses his longtime secret love for Katniss in a televised interview prior to the Games. This revelation stuns Katniss, who harbors feelings for Gale Hawthorne, her friend and hunting partner. Haymitch advises her to feign feelings for Peeta in order to gain wealthy sponsors who can provide crucial supplies to the "star-crossed lovers" during the Games.

In the arena, Katniss allies with Rue, a young tribute from District 11 who reminds Katniss of her kid sister. When Rue is killed, Katniss places flowers around her body as an act of defiance toward the Capitol. Then the remaining tributes are alerted to a rule change that allows tributes from the same district to win as a team. Katniss finds a seriously wounded Peeta and nurses him back to health. When all of the other tributes are dead, the rule change is abruptly revoked. With neither willing to kill the other, Katniss comes up with a solution: a double suicide by eating poisonous berries. This forces the authorities to concede just in time to save their lives. During and after the Games, Katniss develops genuine feelings for Peeta and struggles to reconcile them with what she feels for Gale.

Haymitch warns her that the danger is far from over. The authorities are furious at being made fools of, and the only way to try to allay their anger is to pretend that her actions were because of her love for Peeta. On the journey home, Peeta is dismayed to learn of the deception.

Catching Fire

Main article: Catching Fire

Catching Fire is the second installment in the series, released on September 1, 2009.

In *Catching Fire*, which begins six months after the conclusion of *The Hunger Games*, Katniss learns that her defiance in the previous novel has started a chain reaction that has inspired rebellion in the districts. President Snow threatens to harm Katniss' family and friends if she does not help to defuse the unrest in the districts and marry Peeta. Meanwhile, Peeta has become aware of Katniss' disingenuous love for him, but he has also been informed of Snow's threats, so he promises to help keep up the act to spare the citizens of District 12. Katniss and Peeta tour the districts as victors and plan a public wedding. While they follow Snow's orders and keep up the ruse, Katniss inadvertently fuels the rebellion, and the mockingjay pin she wears becomes its symbol. District by district, the citizens of Panem begin to stage uprisings against the Capitol. Snow announces a special 75th edition of the Hunger Games—known as the Quarter Quell—in which Katniss and Peeta are forced to compete with other past victors, effectively canceling the wedding. At Haymitch's urging, the pair teams up with several other tributes, and manages to destroy the arena and escape the Games. Katniss is rescued by the rebel forces from District 13, and Gale informs her that the Capitol has destroyed District 12, and captured both Peeta and their District 7 ally, Johanna Mason. Katniss ultimately learns—to her surprise—that she had inadvertently been an integral part of the rebellion all along; her rescue had been jointly planned by Haymitch, Plutarch Heavensbee, and Finnick Odair, among others. After some hesitation Katniss joins the rebels.

Mockingjay

Main article: Mockingjay

Mockingjay, the third and final book in *The Hunger Games* series, was released on August 24, 2010.

Most of the districts have rebelled against the Capitol, led by District 13 and its President Alma Coin. The Capitol lied about the district being destroyed in the Dark Days. After a Mexican standoff with the Capitol, the District 13 residents took to living underground and rebuilding their strength. The District 12 survivors find shelter with them. Katniss, after seeing first-hand the destruction wrought on her district, agrees to become the "Mockingjay", the symbol of the rebellion. She sets conditions, however. Peeta, Johanna Mason, Annie Cresta, and Enobaria, fellow Games victors captured by the Capitol, are to be granted immunity. Katniss also demands the privilege of killing Snow, but Coin only agrees to flip for the honor.

For her sake, a rescue mission is mounted that succeeds in rescuing Peeta, Johanna and Annie. However, Peeta has been brainwashed to kill Katniss, and he tries to choke her to death upon their reunion. He undergoes experimental treatment to try to cure him.

After she recovers, Katniss and a team known as the Star Squad, composed of Gale, Peeta, Finnick, a camera crew, and various other soldiers, are assigned to film propaganda in relatively quiet combat zones. Katniss, however, decides to go to the Capitol to kill Snow, pretending that Coin gave her that mission. Most of the squad are killed along the way, including recently married Finnick. As Katniss approaches Snow's mansion, she sees a group of Capitol children surrounding it as human shields. Suddenly a hovercraft drops silver parachutes on the children, who reach for them, hoping they bear food. Some of the parachutes explode, creating carnage. The advancing rebels send in medics, including Prim. Then the rest of the parachutes blow up, killing Prim, just as she spots her sister.

Later, Katniss, also injured, awakens from a coma to learn that the rebels have won, and Snow is awaiting execution at her hands. When she meets Snow by chance, he claims that it was Coin who secretly ordered the bombings in order to strip away the support of his remaining followers. Coin then asks the surviving victors to vote on a final Hunger Games, involving the children of high-ranking Capitol officials (including Snow's granddaughter). Katniss and Haymitch cast the deciding votes in favor of the scheme. However, at what is supposed to be Snow's execution, Katniss instead kills Coin with her bow. Snow laughs, then dies.

Katniss is tried, but the jury believes she was mentally unfit, and she is sent home to District 12. Both Katniss' mother and Gale take jobs in other districts. Peeta regains his sanity. Katniss settles down with him, and after many years of persuasion by him, she finally agrees to have children. They have a girl and then a boy.

Popular culture

Critical reception

All three books have been favorably received. Praise has focused on the addictive quality, especially of the first book,^[12] and the action.^[13] John Green of *The New York Times* compared *The Hunger Games* with Scott Westerfeld's *The Uglies* series.^[14] *Catching Fire* was praised for improving upon the first book.^[15] *Mockingjay* was praised for its portrayal of violence,^[16] world building, and romantic intrigue.^[17]

The series received criticism regarding its reality TV "death game" theme being derivative of works such as *Battle Royale*, *The Running Man*, *The Long Walk*,^[12] and *Series 7: The Contenders*.^[18] The series was also criticized for the romantic plotline: Rollie Welch of Ohio's *The Plain Dealer* criticized the characters'

lack of resolute behavior,^[19] and Jennifer Reese of *Entertainment Weekly* stated that there was little distinction between Peeta and Gale and the series lacked the "erotic energy" seen in the *Twilight* series.^[20]

J.C. Maçek III of *PopMatters* stated "While the film saga does capture the action of *The Hunger Games*, the novels are most assuredly the heart of the story. They are nothing less than 'The Writer's Cut' of the films themselves."^[21]

The last book, *Mockingjay*, was criticized by Dan Shade of *SF Site*, who felt that Katniss is a weaker character than her comrades and less resolute in her journey to the Capitol, and that with respect to her vendetta against President Snow, her actions in the finale are inconsistent with her established character.^[22]

Adaptations

Film adaptations

Main article: The Hunger Games (film series)

Lionsgate Entertainment acquired worldwide distribution rights to a film adaptation of *The Hunger Games*, produced by Nina Jacobson's Color Force production company.^[23] Collins adapted the novel for film herself,^[23] along with director Gary Ross.^[24] The cast included Jennifer Lawrence as Katniss, Josh Hutcherson as Peeta, and Liam Hemsworth as Gale.^{[25][26][27]} The first film began production in Spring 2011,^[28] and was released in March 2012.^{[29][30]} For *Catching Fire*, Ross was replaced as director by Francis Lawrence,^{[31][32][33]} the film was released in November 2013. Lawrence then directed *Mockingjay*, parts 1 and 2,^[34] released in November 2014 and November 2015.

Culture

Influence in Thailand

A gesture (a raised up hand with three middle fingers pressed together) used in *The Hunger Games* trilogy to express unity with people striving to survive, was used in 2014 by anti-government protestors in Thailand, at least seven of whom were arrested for it.^[35]

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