Suzanne Collins’ *The Hunger Games* is a post-apocalyptic tale that takes place in a barely recognizable North America. Told in the voice of 16-year-old Katniss Everdeen, a citizen of the desperately poor District 12, the reader learns of the government’s method of keeping the deprived population under control. Every year the Capitol demands that each of the 12 districts select, through the means of an unfair lottery system, a boy and a girl to become tributes in the nationally televised “Hunger Games.” Here, with much fanfare, the 24 young participants must fight to the death until only one remains. Full of social commentary, the content of this cautionary tale is an ideal tool for teaching economic content and initiating meaningful classroom discussion.

**Book Title**  
Scholastic Press.  
New York, NY  
Ages 10-15  
Recommended for grades 5-10. The lesson, with extension activities, will require one 45-60 minute class period.

**Book Summary**  
*The Hunger Games*, the first book in a trilogy by Suzanne Collins, takes place in the future on the North American continent in a nation named Panem. Here we find 16 year old Katniss Everdeen struggling to keep her family from starving. The annual “Hunger Games” competition, mandated by a tyrannical government, is about to commence. This horrific gladiator-like reality show sends two young people (called tributes) from each of the 12 districts into an arena to fight to the death. The lone survivor returns to their district a victor, bringing a year of extra rations for the citizens and fame for themselves. Through an unexpected set of circumstances Katniss, along with District 12’s male tribute Peeta Mellark, find themselves in the decadent Capitol preparing to participate in a ritual that is viewed as joyful entertainment for the wealthy citizens and unenviable retribution to those living in poverty.
### NCSS Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Culture</td>
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<td>II. Time, Continuity, &amp; Change</td>
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<td>IV. Individual Development &amp; Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Power, Authority, &amp; Governance</td>
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<tr>
<td>VII. Production, Distribution, &amp; Consumption</td>
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<tr>
<td>VIII. Science, Technology, &amp; Society</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Materials

- Prepared Economic Round Table cards (Cut questions and answers sheet in sections to be pasted front to back on index cards)
- Copy of Economic Round Table *Questions and Answers* for teacher use
- Visual of Economic Vocabulary for review, Figure 1.
- Assessment Activity Sheet
- Optional: Multiple copies of *The Hunger Games* for interested students to read

### Objectives

1. Students will participate in a prepared question and answer activity focusing on economic concepts in *The Hunger Games* trilogy by Suzanne Collins.
2. Students will review the economic concepts: barter, choice, capital resources, entrepreneur, goods, human resources, income, profit, scarcity, and services.

### Procedures

**Preparation of Materials:**

Prepare Economic Round Table cards ahead of class. (Activity Cards found in Figures 1-4.) Index cards, scissors, colored paper, and glue are needed. Each card should have a question and an answer. Cards are created using the connecting strips. The answer for the question should not be on the same card. For example the first card should have the question: “Katniss Everdeen, an archer, and Gale Hawthorne, a trapper, worked hard to provide extra food for their families. What kind of resources were they?” on one side and the answer to another card’s question, “An economic system in which the decisions about the use of productive resources and allocation of goods, is made by a central authority is called a Command Economy “on the other side. Note: It is helpful if the question and answer side of the cards are different colors.
### Exploration/Introduction:

1. Introduce the lesson by telling the students “Today we will be doing an activity based on some of the economic concepts found in *The Hunger Games Trilogy* by Suzanne Collins. You do not have to have read the books to play the game, but you do need to be a good listener. This lesson focuses on the economic concepts that take place in the story.”

2. Display the Economic Concepts Visual Figure 1 and review its contents with the students.

### Development

1. Distribute the prepared cards to the students. Students may work individually or in pairs.

2. Instruct the student with the card labeled “1st Question Asked” to read this card to the class. (Keep a copy of the answer grid at hand to help with the progression of the game.) The student reads, “Katniss Everdeen, an archer, and Gale Hawthorne, a trapper, worked hard to provide extra food for their families. What kind of resources were they?” The student with “Katniss and Gale were human resources. They are examples of human effort directed toward producing goods and services” answers the question. Then the answering student asks the question written on the other side of the card. This continues until the student who asked the first question answers the last one.
Expansion

1. Conclude the lesson by asking the students if they think it was the right thing for a nation’s government to support a “reality show” that condoned the death of the contestants. Ask them if there is anything comparable to *The Hunger Games* on television today. Be prepared for some interesting and revealing conversation!

2. Encourage students to make their own set of Round Table Cards. They may wish to focus on other themes found in the book such as government, ethics, environmental issues or the geography of Panem.

Assessment

An assessment activity sheet may be found in the Appendix. Answers:

Suggested Extension Activity

Challenge students to write an acrostic poem. In this type of poem the letters of each line are lined up vertically to form the featured word. The poem should feature the ethical, economic, and ecological themes found in *The Hunger Games*. Some possible topics include: Katniss, Gale, Peeta, Cinna, Haymitch, the Seam, the Hub, Panem, Cornucopia, Arena, Poverty, Scarcity, and Propaganda.

Example:

- Cruel and self-serving
- Arena of death
- Populated by the coldhearted
- Indifferent to others
- Tyrannical government
- Onlookers of tragedy
- Land of wealth, beauty, and ruthlessness

Additional References and Web links

Note: Web links are found in Web-Based References

Loh, M. (n.d.) *The Hunger Games* by suzanne collins:
Booktalk and discussion questions.


ECONOMIC CONCEPTS

- **Barter** - the exchange of goods and services without the use of money.

- **Choice** – selecting something over another thing

- **Capital Resources** – things used in the production of other goods. Examples include buildings, equipment, vehicles, and tools

- **Command Economy** - an economic system in which the allocation of resources is determined by a central authority rather than market forces.

- **Entrepreneur** - the person who organizes, operates, and assumes the risk for a business venture

- **Goods** – Material things that provide for wants. Examples include shoes, cookies, and books

- **Human Resources** – the quality and quantity of human effort directed toward producing goods and services

- **Income** – Payment in the form of wages, investments, or interest

- **Scarcity** – the condition of limited resources. Because resources are limited, people must make choices

- **Services** – actions that provide wants. Examples include a taxi ride, hair cut or music concert

Figure 1: Economic Concepts
## Economic Round Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Front of Card</th>
<th>Back of Card</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1st Question asked:</strong> Katniss Everdeen, an archer, and Gale Hawthorne, a trapper, worked hard to provide extra food for their families. What kind of productive resource do they represent?</td>
<td><strong>Answer:</strong> An economic system, in which the decisions about the use of productive resources and allocation of goods is made by a central authority, is called a <strong>Command Economy</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question:</strong> Why were Katniss and Gale the only two citizens of District 12 willing to risk the danger of hunting and gathering food outside the electric fence that surrounded the area?</td>
<td><strong>Answer:</strong> Katniss and Gale are <strong>human resources</strong>. They are examples of human effort directed toward producing goods and services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question:</strong> Greasy Sae sold soup from a large kettle in the Hob, an illegal market that was operated in an abandoned warehouse. She owned her own shop. She is an example of what kind of business person?</td>
<td><strong>Answer:</strong> Katniss and Gale made the <strong>choice</strong> to risk safety in order to find food. Other people were afraid that they would be punished by the Peacekeepers if they left the fenced area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question:</strong> The citizens that took advantage of the goods and services that were being offered for sale at the Hob would often exchange things instead of paying money for them. What is this called?</td>
<td><strong>Answer:</strong> A person like Greasy Sae who organizes, operates, and assumes the risk for a business venture is called an <strong>entrepreneur</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question:</strong> What was the</td>
<td><strong>Answer:</strong> The exchange of goods and services without</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question</strong>: Peeta Mellark’s father was a merchant. He owned a bakery and sold bread and cakes. Did he provide a <strong>good or service</strong> to the community?</td>
<td><strong>Answer</strong>: The family’s <strong>income</strong>, the money it would get from <strong>wages</strong>, did not provide for their needs because Katniss’s father had been killed in a mining disaster.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question</strong>: Katniss’s mother worked as a doctor in the Seam, the slum-like section of District 12. What was she providing to the community?</td>
<td><strong>Answer</strong>: Peeta’s father provided <strong>goods</strong>, tangible things, to sell to people who could afford to buy them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question</strong>: Why was Katniss amazed at the delicious meals that were served to her and Peeta while they were in the Capitol preparing for the games?</td>
<td><strong>Answer</strong>: Katniss’s mother was providing a much needed <strong>service</strong> to the sick and injured.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question</strong>: Cinna was the designer in charge of making Katniss’s Hunger Games costumes. He needed scissors, sewing needles, and rulers to help him with their creation. What kind of productive resources are these?</td>
<td><strong>Answer</strong>: Katniss was amazed by the amount and variety of the foods available to her and the other tributes because there was not enough food to satisfy the needs of the citizens in her home district. This is an example of <strong>scarcity</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question</strong>: The government of Panem made all the decisions concerning what goods and services each</td>
<td><strong>Answer</strong>: Scissors, sewing needles, and rulers are examples of <strong>capital resources</strong>; tools used in the production of other goods.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
District was responsible for producing as well as who was to receive these products. This is an example of which type of economic system?

**Figure 2: Economic Round Table Cards**

### Economic Round Table

#### Answer Grid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st Question asked: Katniss Everdeen, an archer, and Gale Hawthorne, a trapper, worked hard to provide extra food for their families. What kind of productive resource do they represent?</th>
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<td><strong>Question</strong>: Greasy Sae sold soup from a large kettle in the Hob, an illegal market that was operated in an abandoned warehouse. She owned her own shop. She is an example of what kind of business person?</td>
<td><strong>Answer</strong>: A person like Greasy Sae who organizes, operates, and assumes the risk for a business venture is called an entrepreneur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question</strong>: The citizens that took advantage of the goods and services that were being offered for sale at the Hob would often exchange things instead of paying money for them. What is this called?</td>
<td><strong>Answer</strong>: The exchange of goods and services without the use of money is called bartering or trading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question</strong>: What was the reason the Everdeen family’s income did not provide needed goods and services?</td>
<td><strong>Answer</strong>: The family’s income, the money it would get from wages, did not provide for their needs because Katniss’s father had been killed in a mining disaster.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question</strong>: Peeta Mellark’s father was a merchant. He owned a bakery and sold bread and cakes. Did he provide a good or service to</td>
<td><strong>Answer</strong>: Peeta’s father provided goods, tangible things, to sell to people who could afford to buy them.</td>
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<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>Why was Katniss amazed at the delicious meals that were served to her and Peeta while they were in the Capitol preparing for the games?</td>
<td>Katniss was amazed by the amount and variety of the foods available to her and the other tributes because there was not enough food to satisfy the needs of the citizens in her home district. This is an example of scarcity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinna was the designer in charge of making Katniss’s Hunger Games costumes. He needed scissors, sewing needles, and rulers to help him with their creation. What kind of productive resources are these?</td>
<td>Scissors, sewing needles, and rulers are capital resources; tools used in the production of other goods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The government of Panem made all the decisions concerning what goods and services each District was responsible for producing as well as who was to receive these products. This is an example of which type of economic system?</td>
<td>An economic system in which the decisions about the use of productive resources and allocation of goods, is made by a central authority is called a Command Economy.</td>
</tr>
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Figure 3: Economic Round Table Answer Grid
The Hunger Games

Economic Round Table

Assessment Activity:

Directions: Fill in the blank using the choices in the word box:

1. An example of this would be a barber or dog walker: ______________________

2. In this system the allocation of resources is determined by a central authority: ______________________

3. An example of these things includes bread, boots, and books: ______________________

4. These are tools of production such as hammers, trucks, and computers: ______________________

5. The exchange of goods and services without the use of money: ______________________

6. What you are making when you select something over another thing: ______________________

7. The person who assumes the risk of a business venture: ______________________

8. The condition of limited resources: ______________________

9. Payment in the form of wages: ______________________

10. Human effort directed toward the production of goods and services: ______________________
Extra Credit: Use five or more of the concepts in the Word Box and write either a either a short book synopsis or a movie review based on the book *The Hunger Games*. You may use the back of this paper.

Figure 4: Assessment Activity

Author Bio

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