The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins

Why do the Hunger Games happen?

This extract from Chapter 1 explains just why the Hunger Games happen each year.

Read it carefully. Underline any words you don’t understand and look them up in a dictionary. It is important that you know the reasons for the events in this story.

‘Just as the town clock strikes two, the mayor steps up to the podium and begins to read. It’s the same story every year. He tells of the history of Panem, the country that rose up out of the ashes of a place that was once called North America. He lists the disasters, the droughts, the storms, the fires, the encroaching seas that swallowed up so much of the land, the brutal war for what little sustenance remained. The result was Panem, a shining Capitol ringed by thirteen districts, which brought peace and prosperity to its citizens. Then came the Dark Days, the uprising of the districts against the Capitol. Twelve were defeated, the thirteenth obliterated. The Treaty of Treason gave us the new laws to guarantee peace and, as our yearly reminder that the Dark Days must never be repeated, it gave us the Hunger Games.

The rules of the Hunger Games are simple. In punishment for the uprising, each of the twelve districts must provide one girl and one boy, called tributes, to participate. The twenty-four tributes will be imprisoned in a vast outdoor arena that could hold anything from a burning desert to a frozen wasteland. Over a period of several weeks, the competitors must fight-to-the-death. The last tribute standing wins.’

- What kind of society is Panem? There are a number of words you could choose from the extract that explain this.
- Why do the Hunger Games happen?
- Who will fight in the Hunger Games?
- When do the Hunger Games happen?
- Where will the Hunger Games be staged?
- How do you think the people who live in the Districts feel about the Hunger Games?
- How would you feel if you were called up to be a tribute?