**INFO SHEET #5: MARXIST APPROACH**

**Competency**

**MELC:** ***EN10WC-IIIg-14.*** Compose an independent critique of a chosen selection.

**Objectives**

After the end of the lessons, the learners are expected to be able to:

1. define Marxist approach in critiquing a literary piece;
2. identify the questions to ask using Marxist approach;
3. write a critique of literary piece using Marxist approach.

**Key Information**

When you read a typical piece of literature, you’re not just reading a story, but you’re getting a glimpse into a **different culture and society**. So, what is that **society look like**? Is it like yours? Do the **rich** and **powerful** have all the control? Or is it more egalitarian? And what even inspired the author to create this society in the first place? There are all sorts of questions asked in **Marxist Criticism,** which **reviews a work of literature in terms of the society it presents**. Remember that **Marxist** thought **gets its name from Karl Marx**, the *German philosopher* who wrote “*The Communist Manifesto*.” In it, **Marx** and *co-author* **Friedrich Engels** argue that all **history is about struggle between the haves and have-nots.** They predicted that one day, the proletariat, or the have-nots, will throw off the oppression of the bourgeoisie, or those with means and power.

**Marxist Criticism**- based on the political, social and economic ideas of Karl Marx (1818-1883)

* is the uncovering of relationships of *domination* and *exploitation*.
* focuses on how social life is structured by class oppositions thar are determined by laboring relationships. In other words, **Marxist criticism** seeks to show how the economically powerful exploit and dominate the economically disadvantaged.

**Questions asked by a Marxist Criticism:**

* What kinds of power (social, economic, sexual, physical, etc.) are evident in the text? What is the social order? What role does class play in the work? What is the author’s analysis of class relations?
* Who has power in the text? How do they maintain and/or gain power?
* How do characters overcome oppression? What does the work say about oppression; or are social conflicts ignored or blamed elsewhere?
* What ideologies (values, beliefs, social roles) are evident in the text? Do characters recognize the oppressive social order/ideologies?
* In what ways does the work serve as propaganda for the status quo (keep society the same); or does it try to undermine it?
* Does the work propose some form of utopian version as a solution to the problems encountered in the work?

*Source:* [*Microsoft Word - LitCrit.1.docx (weebly.com)*](https://oreillylpci.weebly.com/uploads/8/7/8/9/8789260/litcrit.1.pdf)

**Suggested selection to be analyzed using Marxist Approach: “THE HUNGER GAMES”**

**Directions: Read the article or watch about the movie, “The Hunger Games.” If you do not have access to the internet, you may use the summary of the story / movie below. Critic the story by using Marxist Approach.**

**“The Hunger Games”**

*By: Suzanne Collins*

**“The Hunger Games”** is set in our world, but in a post-apocalyptic time. In a dystopian future, the totalitarian nation of Panem is divided into 12 districts and the Capitol. The Capitol is the cruel Government of these twelve districts, which was once North America. Each year two young representatives from each district are selected by lottery to participate in The Hunger Games. Part entertainment, part brutal retribution for a past rebellion, the televised games are broadcast throughout Panem. The 24 participants are forced to eliminate their competitors while the citizens of Panem are required to watch.

Our main character is Katniss Everdeen, who volunteers in the place of her younger sister Primrose for District Twelve. The male “tribute” for the district is Peeta Mellark, the son of a baker, who is in love with Katniss. She and her male counterpart, Peeta, are pitted against bigger, stronger representatives, some of whom have trained for this their whole lives. During the Games, Katniss uses his love to her advantage, so that the wealthy audience can send her food and medicine.

All the citizens from districts four to twelve hate the Capitol because of the oppression, poverty and violence that they suffer. Katniss angers the Capitol during the Games when her new friend Rue from District Eleven is killed, and she shows compassion by laying flowers on her body. Furthermore, at the end of the Games, only Peeta and Katniss remain, so each refuses to kill the other. Instead, they agree to eat poisoned berries together so that there is no winner for the Capitol. In response, rather than being humiliated in front of the districts, the Capitol allow the couple to win together. The other districts watching the Games have now witnessed an act of rebellion, and they want more. Thus, a second revolution is about to be born…

**Sources:** Collins, Suzanne. (2012). The Hunger Games Plot Summary. Retrieved from <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1392170/plotsummary>

Murray, Ciara. (24 April 2012). The Hunger Games Trilogy - Plot Summary. Retrieved from https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/magazine/books/hunger-games-trilogy-plot-summary



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