



The Hunger

Teacher's Guide

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Pre-Reading Activities

Look at the cover. What do you think the story will be about? Think of the title and then read the blurb on the back of the book. What do you think "the hunger" refers to? Have you ever experienced a hunger? What were the circumstances? Is a hunger always about food? What other things can it be about?

Reading comprehension

pages 1 to 15. Read the first scene with Paula in gym class. What do we know about Paula? Have you ever had an embarrassing experience like this? What kind of relationship does Paula have with her father? How do you think this relationship affects how she feels about her body image?

pages 15 to 30. Both Paula and Erik have conflict with class mates. Compare and contrast the situations. Mr. Romaniuk has a different way of relating to Erik than he does with Paula. How would you feel about your father if you were Erik? How would you feel about your father if you were Paula? Compare Emily Romaniuk's relationship with food to Paula's relationship with food. How are the two related? Paula's grandmother is Armenian, yet her last name is MacDonald. How did that happen?

pages 31 to 80. Paula spends quite a bit of time researching her history project. Try doing the same search she did. Do you come up with similar things? The author juxtaposed Paula's history project researching with Erik's playing of *Civilization II*. Why do you think the author did that? Compare the images that Paula finds on the Internet with what's happening to her own body.

pages 80 to 95. Describe Paula's relationship with the nurses, the social worker, her grandmother. Who do you think has Paula's best interest in mind? Why?

pages 96 to 100. Paula is experiencing a "near death experience" in this section. Have you ever talked to someone who had a near death experience? How was it the same as Paula's? How was it different?

pages 100 to 111. What is the importance of April 24, 1915 in Armenian history? Compare Marta's family situation with Paula's. Compare how Paula feels about her brother Erik with how Marta feels about her brother Onnig. Describe Marta's relationship with her sister Mariam. Which girl is stronger?

pages 112 to 122. Why are the Armenians being marched into the desert? What would you do if you were Marta?

pages 123 to 141. On page 126, Marta meets an Armenian working for the Turks. Do you think she is right to be angry with him? What would you have done in his situation? What do you think of Saad? Compare him to the Armenian soldier from page 126.

pages 141 to 156. What is the role of women in this home? Do you think the husband or his wives have better lives?

pages 157 to end. In the chapter titled Home, Marta becomes Paula. How does this scene compare to when Paula had become Marta? What does Paula learn from stepping into the shoes of Marta? Do you think Paula is cured of her eating disorder? Why? Why not?

General questions

What is the significance of the gold coin? Why do you think the author named the novel *The Hunger*? Compare and contrast how this title relates to Paula and to Marta. Which girl is luckier? Discuss the significance of mirrors in this novel.

Character study

Write a character study of the following people: Paula, Erik, Gramma Pauline, Marta, Kevork. Compare/contrast Paula/Marta. Compare/contrast Marta/Mariam. Which character in the novel is most like you? Why?

Self and Society

What have you learned about Armenian history by reading *The Hunger*? What have you learned about Turkish history? Do library research to find one traditional Armenian dish. Is there a similar Turkish dish? Compare/contrast Armenian/Turkish costume, customs, religion, family life, and so on.

Vocabulary

The following words are used in *The Hunger*. Define 5 of them. Use those five in context in separate sentences.

awkward	orphanage	haremlik
nemesis	sickle	salemlik
ethnic	albino	chador
emaciated	gendarme	hamam
bulimia	Vartabed	pattens
massacre	deportee	missionary
exterminate	dinghy	cardiac arrest
genocide	Mairig	obsession