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Teach Sloan was an Appalachian coal miner who worked very hard to earn a living for his family. In this image we see him with his son. [Image online](#), via Earl Palmer Appalachian Photograph and Artifact Collection, Ms89-025 - Special Collections, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va. Copyright, Virginia Tech, all rights reserved. Image provided here as fair use for educational purposes and to acquaint new viewers with the Earl Palmer Collection.

People have known about coal since ancient times. Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, [wrote about it](#) in one of his books - [Meteorology](#) - during the 4th Century B.C.

By the 13th century, people in Europe were [commonly using this natural resource](#).

By the 14th century, Hopi Indians had discovered its value. Archaeologists believe these Native Americans were among the first people to use coal in North America.

Living in an area later known as Arizona, the Hopi used coal for cooking, heating and baking their clay pots. (In the fictional world of Panem, however, the [Hopi's territory](#) - located south of [Panem's District 4](#) - was obliterated by an apocalyptic event.)

Explorers found coal at [Cape Breton Island](#), in Canada, during 1672. By the following year, another explorer - Louis Joliet - [noted it on a map](#) for an area later known as Illinois.

Coal-mining became an industry during [America's Industrial Revolution](#). More and more coal was needed to fuel the steam engines (and the locomotives, like the [famous John Bull](#)) which drove industrial production and output.

The [North American region of Appalachia](#) - including Kentucky, Pennsylvania and West Virginia - produced much of the coal which fueled the U.S. Industrial Revolution. In the fictional country of Panem, all (or parts) of those states are included in District 12.

Katniss Everdeen and her family live in the poorest area of District 12, called the "Seam." Does that name have anything to do with the district's most-significant natural resource?

During the early years of mining, people saw [a coal layer](#) - among other geological layers - on the sides of various hills. As they began to remove the coal from that layer - called a "seam" - miners of coal could follow the seams deeper and deeper into the ground.

In the [Everdeens' neighborhood](#), where coal-mining is the predominant occupation, miners crowd [the streets](#) every morning. On their way to work, these worn-out men keep following seams of coal, into the depths of the earth, despite bad working conditions. Throughout this part of the district, everything is covered with coal dust.

What is it like to mine a seam of coal? Let's take a look at these videos:

- Men working mostly with picks and shovels spent long days doing their best to [dig-out the coal](#).
- With modern equipment, however, miners can [get the coal out of the seams](#) and into waiting railroad cars with astonishing speed.

- Part of the reason for the increased speed is a piece of equipment called the "continuous miner." It literally devours the coal inside the seams of a mine.

Even with modern equipment, coal mining is still a very dangerous job. Miners breathe-in the coal dust, causing them to get sick. Because they descend deep into the mines, they are always at risk of mine explosions and collapses.

One such mine explosion killed the much-loved father of Katniss and Prim Everdeen.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/PANEM-THE-SEAM-Hunger-Games>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/PANEM-THE-SEAM-Hunger-Games>

Questions 2 Ponder

When Is Mining Coal a Metaphor for Living?

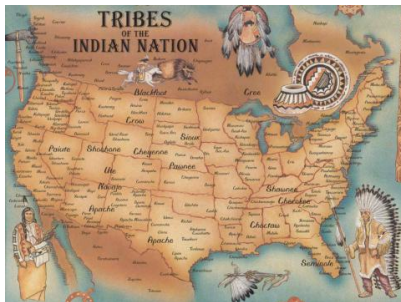
Mining coal seams can be dangerous. Miners have to shore-up where coal is removed or the weight of the mountain will cause the seam to collapse. Do you think this type of mining is like a metaphor for living life? Why, or why not?

Even with modern equipment, coal mining is still a very dangerous job. Miners breathe-in the coal dust, causing them to get sick. Because they descend deep into the mines, they are always at risk of mine explosions and collapses. Do you think miners, who take on such health-and-safety risks, should receive extra wages? Why, or why not?

Katniss Everdeen and her family live in the poorest area of District 12, called the "Seam." Does that name have anything to do with the district's most-significant natural resource? Explain your answer.

If the "Seam" has nothing to do with coal mining, what else does it relate-to?

Media Stream

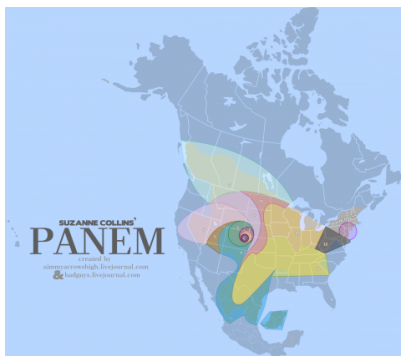


Native Americans - Hopi Territory

Map depicting the location of First Peoples (in Canada) and Native Americans (in the U.S.), online via [AANativeArts](#). Copyright, AANativeArts, all rights reserved. Image provided here as fair use for educational purposes.

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Panem - Map of District Locations

Map approximating the location of Panem's 13 Districts by V. Arrow. LICENSE granted, by V. Arrow, to [use this image](#) PROVIDED that specific credit for the image is given.

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Coal Layer - Side of Hill

Photo of coal seam, on the side of a Scottish hill between Newark Castle and Elie, by Shandchem, online courtesy Flickr.

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District 12 - Everdeen Neighborhood

Photo of Henry River Mill Village by Marion Fraile, online via Flickr. Copyright, Marion Fraile, all rights reserved. Image provided here as fair use for educational purposes.

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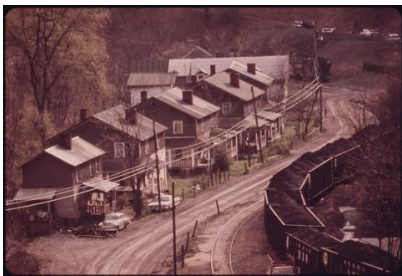


District 12 - A Street in the Seam

Photo taken in Hildebran, North Carolina by Rocknrun, online via Flickr. Copyright, Rocknrun, all rights reserved. Image provided here as fair use for educational purposes.

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Mining Town - Red Ash

Photo of the coal town of Red Ash, Virginia, online courtesy U.S. National Archives. NARA image # 556332.

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PANEM - THE SEAM

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District 12 - Coal Mining in the Seam

Excerpt from the television series "How Do They Do It?" - Season 5, Episode 5 - entitled "Overnight Parcel Delivery, Coal Mining." First aired in the U.S., on the Science Channel, 7 March 2008.

This episode is narrated by Chris Broyles.

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Mining Coal with the Continuous Miner

60 Minutes clip, narrated by Bob Simon, depicting a continuous miner at work.

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