I saw the Hunger Games book at a Book Fair at a school where I was doing consulting. I picked it up and read the book jacket description and was hooked.

I think this is what I read . . .

In the ruins of a place once known as North America lies the nation of Panem, a shining Capital surrounded by twelve outlying districts. The Capital is harsh and cruel and keeps the other districts in line by forcing them to participate in the annual Hunger Games, a fight-to-the death on live TV. One boy and one girl between the ages of twelve and sixteen are selected by lottery to play. The winner brings riches and favor to his or her district. But that is nothing compared to what the Capital wins: one more year of fearful compliance with its rules.

Sixteen-year-old Katniss Everdeen, who lives alone with her mother and younger sister, regards it as a death sentence when she is forced to represent her impoverished district in the Games. But Katniss has been close to dead before – and survival, for her, is second nature. Without really meaning to, she becomes a contender. But if she is to win, she will have to start making choices that weigh survival against humanity and life against love.

I read the book in just a few days and then was terribly upset for it to end because I felt like someone had just turned off the television in the middle of my show! I wasn't ready to let Katniss and Peeta and Gale and the rest of the characters go when then book ended. In the paperback version that I just finished rereading the last page says End of Book One. I wonder if the hardback I first purchased said that. I honestly can't remember, but I know I was hooked and so glad that there was going to be another book. I didn't even know yet that there were actually three books.

I enjoyed Suzanne Collins writing because did such a great job of describing things. I could see District 12 through Katniss's eyes and I could see the grungy people that lived in the Seam and that traded at the Hob.  I could imagine the looming fence that Gale and Katniss crossed to find food for their families.  Then, after the reaping, I was able to picture the Capital and all its gaudy residents.  I think the best part of Suzanne Collins's writing is that she can do description and action both well.  Her action scenes of the fights in the arena are breathtaking.  I felt like I was right there with the tributes.

Another reason I enjoyed it because it had elements of other dystopian literature I had enjoyed like 1984 by George Orwell and Brave New World by Aldous Huxley. Some of those elements include:

* fictional societies that are incredibly imperfect
* intense measures of social control
* concerned with problems of the political and cultural context that produces them
* reflect the fears and anxieties of the cultural context from which they emerge

I would recommend that you read this book and then go see the movie when it comes out on March 23, 2012.