**Transgenic Organisms in The Hunger Games**

(Topic 9: Transgenic Organisms, Activity 1)

**Introduction**: Transgenic organisms are plants and animals that have been genetically engineered or altered in some way. Some common examples are corn that has been made stronger/more resilient and growth hormones in milk. Many people have a negative opinion of genetically modified organisms (mainly foods), but are they really all bad? Are there benefits to society or the environment? Many people have positive opinions of GMOs. But are they all good? Believe it or not, this is a topic that divides families, friends, and strangers on playgrounds (literally, I’ve seen it happen). There are also transgenic organisms in pop culture. The jabberjay in The Hunger Games is an example of an animal that has been genetically altered by the government. In this assignment, you will explore genetically modified organisms and take a stance on the question: Are transgenic organisms good or bad for society and the world?

**Directions**:

1. In paragraph form, answer the following questions: *In the movie “The Hunger Games,” the Capitol (a term used to refer to what we would call the government) produced genetically enhanced birds called jabberjays to spy on rebels. Unexpectedly, these birds bred with mockingbirds, creating a new hybrid bird called the mockingjay. The Capitol did not intend for this to happen, and the bird became a symbol of rebellion. What lessons can we draw about genetic engineering from these examples? Could a scenario like this, where a genetically engineered organism hybridizes with a wild animal or plant, happen in the real world? Why or why not?*

2. Read the article “D.I.Y. Biology, On the Wings of the Mockingjay”.

3. Answer the following questions:

1. What roles do transgenic organisms play in the book series “The Hunger Games”?
2. What is the value of creating genetically modified organisms? What are some of the concerns surrounding G.M.O.’s?
3. What predictions can you make for what might happen if the tools of biotechnology spread to everyone, and lead to “an explosion of diversity of new living creatures”?

4. Read the article: “Amateurs are New Fear in Creating Mutant Virus”.

5. Turn in your response to step 1 and your answers to step 3.