In *The Hunger Games*, Katniss Everdeen starts off as a strong but guarded girl from District 12, focused mainly on keeping her family alive. However, Katniss begins to change in important ways during her time in the Capitol and the Hunger Games arena. She starts thinking about how unfair the world is around her. Her experiences start to push her from being a person only trying to survive with her family to someone that inspires hope and rebellion against oppression.

In the beginning of the story Katniss’s only focus is surviving for her family. She learns how to hunt and provide for her sister Primrose and her mother, after her father died in a mine accident. “At eleven years old, with Prim just seven, I took over as head of the family. There was no choice. I had to find work. Prim tried to help, but there’s no real work for a seven-year-old. It was up to me. I was lucky to have the woods. (Collins 27). This quote’s theme is Katniss’s sacrifice, and how she became the main provider. This shaped her into someone that avoids emotional attachments. Another key moment from her life in District 12, is when she was gifted the mockingjay pin from Madge. “I suddenly recognize it. A mockingjay. They’re funny birds and something of a slap in the face to the Capitol.” (Collins 42). This quote is a metaphor, Katniss doesn’t realize the importance of this pin and it’s symbol of rebellion. This shows that even in District 12, Katniss was being shaped into someone who can stand up against the Capitol.

Once Katniss enters the arena, she has to face the reality of the games. At first, she is only focused on staying alive. “Care about what Haymitch said. About staying alive.” (Collins 192). This quote's theme is survival and motivation, where Katniss is trying to survive for her sister Prim and mother and is telling Peeta the same. She thinks of strategies to survive and avoid danger. However, as the Games go on, her thinking starts to change. One example is when she forms an alliance with Rue, a young girl that reminds her of Prim. Katniss’s connection to Rue softens her, making her more empathetic and caring in the middle of a brutal fight for survival. After Rue’s death, Katniss says, “I want to do something, right here, right now, to shame them, to make them accountable, to show the Capitol that whatever they do or force us to do there is a part of every tribute they can’t own.” (Collins 236-237). This quote shows Katniss’s internal conflict; she then covers Rue’s body with flowers as an act of defiance against the Capitol. She begins to realize that her actions send larger messages. Furthermore, when Peeta teams up with Careers, Katniss is conflicted, but eventually, she decides to trust him. “Peeta Mellark just saved my life.” (Collins 194). This shows how Katniss starts to understand trust and alliance in the Games. By chapter 22, Katniss changed from a person’s who had hope to survive to a person that wants to rebel and get their rights.

In conclusion, Katniss Everdeen’s journey from a girl focused on survival to a symbol of resistance is shaped by her experiences in both District 12 and the arena. As she faces new challenges and forms relationships, her view of the world deepens. She has the power to rebel. She starts to challenge the unfair system and the world that she is surrounded by. This change prepares her to become a symbol of hope for others later on.