

Panem: Derivation from literature to map

In this document I explain what my thoughts are on the map of Panem, the fictional country from the books from the Hunger Games trilogy written by Suzanne Collins. Panem is a dystopian world, supposed to be located on the North American continent in the distant future. There is no canonic map available for Panem, so fans of the Hunger Games have tried to derive a map of Panem from snippets of information in the books. An exceptionally good try is from Mark Windsor, which can be found on the internet: <http://www.hogwartsprofessor.com/guest-post-a-very-thoughtful-potential-panem-geography/>

I've made my own choices based on the books, inspired by Mark Windsor and others.

Some fans have taken mathematical principles into account when creating the map, like Fibonacci spirals. However fascinating, there is not a single canonic argument why such principles should be handled.

This document has no citations of the books to substantiate my choices. I recommend checking out the website where Mark Windsor carefully cites the different places in the books relevant in constructing his version of the map.

Continent

First of all, we have to figure out what the continent looks like.

The country 'Panem' is located on what we yet know as the contiguous USA with most of Mexico and part of Canada, however a lot of land has disappeared and is replaced by the sea. Most likely the continent has gotten its shape because of a rising of the sea level.

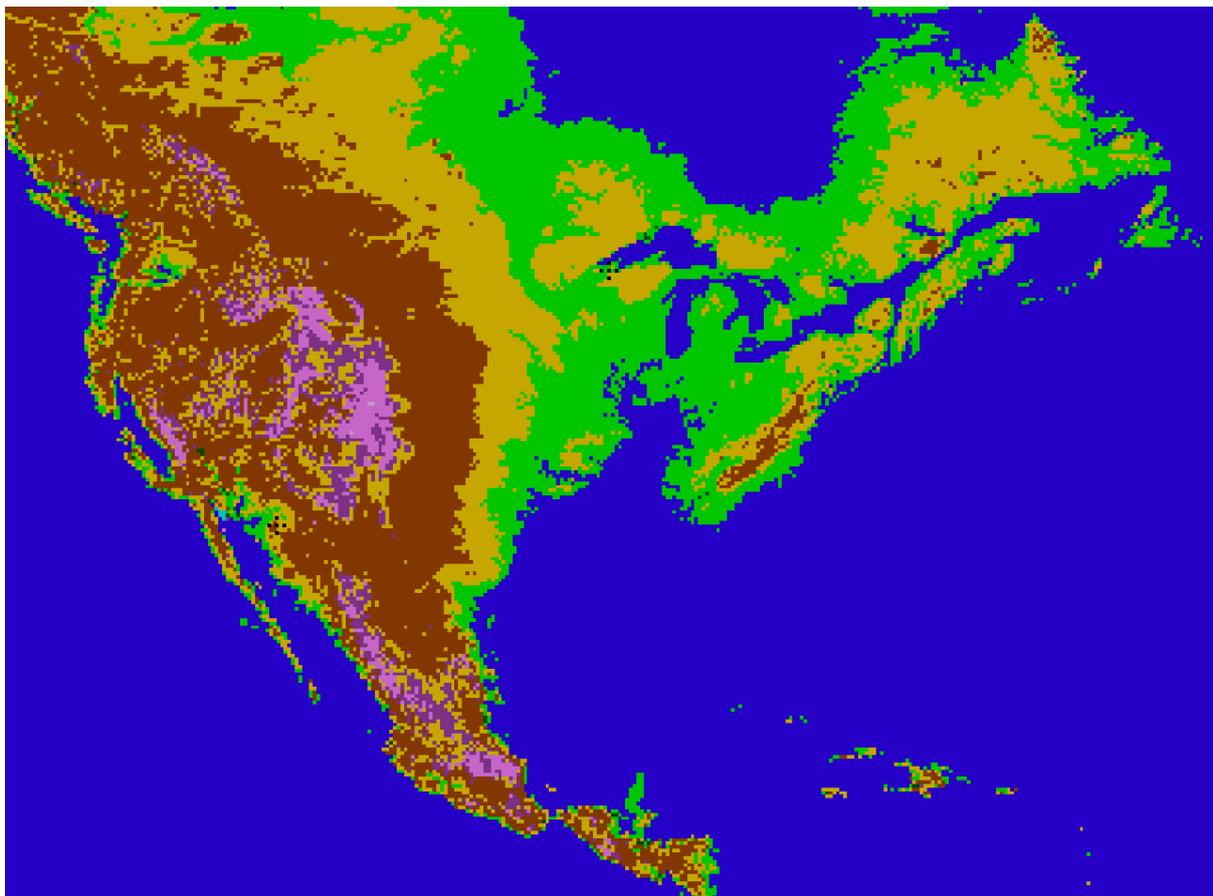
Somewhat arbitrarily I chose a sea level rise of about 150m. This is a pretty high level. The interesting effect is that the Mississippi valley is heavily flooded, with the result that the eastern part of North America has become a peninsula with an isthmus just south of Lake Michigan where it is connected to the mainland.

As a whole, the coast line is receded landward as might be expected. This is most prominent in the southeast: Florida is totally gone.

Other prominent changes in the shape of the continent are the flooding of the Great Valley in California (not unlike a supersized San Francisco Bay), a significant northward extension of the Gulf of California and a connection between the Hudson River and Lake Champlain, making the biggest part of the New England region into an island.

I also chose to flood the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in the south of Mexico.

The map of North America will then look somewhat like:



Numbering and population of the districts

There are 13 districts, each designated by a number, however the thirteenth is officially non-existent. From the books the suggestion rises that those numbers are not entirely arbitrair. A first thought most readers get is that the numbers indicate how far the district is located from the Capitol. It is obvious that district 12 is quite remote and district 13 is even further. It is even tempting to suppose

the districts are located in a sequence, starting from district 1 near the Capitol to district 13 far away, all connected by a long railway. District 6 is then in the middle where is taken care of the railway. However, by working things out it becomes quite soon clear this doesn't add up. Especially district 4, which should be located on a shore, leads to problems.

Other suggestions about the numbering of the districts has to do with loyalty to the Capitol. Districts 1, 2 and 4 are quite loyal, as they provide in professional contestants in the hunger games. Districts 11 and 12 are treated very bad by the Capitol and there is much distrust. However, this does not add up perfectly, as district 3 seems to be quite disloyal and district 8 seems to be far more disloyal than districts 9 and 10.

My suggestion is that the numbering of the districts reflects its importance to the Capitol as a whole, which rests partly on the loyalty and partly on what a district supplies. In that way it can be understood why the district providing in technology, which is of very high value requiring intelligent people, has a lower number than the fishing district, despite the loyalty of the latter is much higher. In general, it is not unreasonable to suppose the lower numbered districts tend to be closer to the Capitol than the higher numbered, that being an effect of the importance to the Capitol and not because a numerical meaning as such.

Another thing there is much speculation about is the population of Panem and of each of the districts. Just one thing is sure: district 12 has just over 8000 inhabitants and has the fewest inhabitants of all the districts. This is of little help, because we only get that there are at least about 100.000 inhabitants in Panem, which seems a ridiculously low number. It can safely be assumed that the population is much lower than it is today. Most guesses made by different people come around a few million in total. I will not elaborate on this, because it is of limited importance for the rest of the document, but this population is what I had in mind when making my choices.

The Capitol

The Capitol is the concentration of power in Panem. After a war the winners resided in the Capitol while the losers resided in the districts. The districts have no meaning than serving the Capitol in its needs, each district having a certain purpose. The people in the Capitol do nothing than just enjoying their superior status, being obsessed with luxury, fashion, TV broadcasts and, most of all, the yearly recurring hunger games.

The Capitol is a concentrated big city, with high buildings and vast suburbs. There is a lot going on. I suppose it has about a million inhabitants, having more inhabitants than the district with the biggest population but less than all districts combined. It seems the residents of the Capitol are not very outgoing, so I suppose all infrastructure from and to the Capitol is very functional and mainly for transporting the goods from the districts.

It is very likely the Capitol is located at a freshwater lake (Mark Windsor points this out perfectly). The books give the location of the Capitol as being in the Rocky Mountains. This limits the location of the Capitol on its east-west coordinate, but it could be as far north as Alaska or as far south as Colorado.

It is important to take into account that the Capitol has to be protected from the districts. As the vast majority of the districts are east of the Rocky Mountains it makes sense to use the Rocky Mountains as a natural defense barrier. This is somewhat substantiated by the long railway tunnel which makes the last phase of the journey from district 12 to the Capitol. So we are looking for a freshwater lake

just west of a high ridge, probably the Great Divide, in the Rocky Mountains. I suppose it is not too far to the north (residents of the Capitol like comfort) and the lake I come up with is Flathead Lake. The Capitol could be located at the north shore, so could be at what we know as Big Fork, Montana.

It is somewhat speculative but not very unreasonable to suppose there is a kind of 'backyard' belonging to the Capitol, not unlike a district. This Capitol District is an easy defensible area with mostly natural borders. In this district are most of the Arena's located which, after having fulfilled their purpose, are tourist attractions.

I locate the Capitol District in what we know as the American States of Washington, Oregon, Idaho and the north of California, Nevada and Utah and part of the south of British Columbia. At the north it borders on remote and cold wasteland, on the west it reaches the Pacific, the east border is formed by the Great Divide and to the south it borders on the loyal districts 2 and 4.

District 1

District 1 is a loyal district providing in the jewelry and other luxury for the Capitol. I'm not sure if it is canon, but a diamond and/or gold mine would be a great asset for this district. In the south of Montana there are known gold and diamond deposits. I suppose district 1 being quite small, because the work they do is quite sophisticated and because the demand for jewelry is limited in comparison with other goods (even taken into account the obsession of the Capitol with luxury). About 20,000 residents would be enough to do the job.

I think District 1 is located just east of the Great Divide in what we know as the southwest of Montana. Just north of the district is the entrance of the railway tunnel to the Capitol. The Square (centre) of the district could be located at what we know as Great Falls, Montana.

District 2

District 2 is by far the most loyal district, officially providing in masonry and mining but actually it is the breeding ground for the military force of the Capitol. The peacekeepers of Panem are recruited from this area and it is obvious quite a lot of them are needed to keep all the districts in line. We learn from the books that district 2 is large and counts small villages on the slopes of mountains. The villages seem to be settlements for miners, but I wouldn't be surprised if they also function as bases for the peacekeepers. In 'Mockingjay' we learn about the existence of 'The Nut', a unique stronghold located in an area surrounded by mountains. It is located on a strategic position in the defense line of the Capitol.

I guess district 2 counts about half a million inhabitants, about half of them distributed among the villages and half of them residing around the Nut and the Square. It is hinted in the books that within the society of district 2 there is also a kind of a class system with a suppressing class and a suppressed class.

I locate district 2 east of the capitol district. I think of it as a long district from north to south covering what we know today as: the south of Saskatchewan, Canada, the east of Montana, Wyoming, most of Utah and Colorado and the north of Arizona. It forms a barrier between the disloyal districts in the east and the Capitol and the loyal districts in the west.

The northern half of the district lies east of the Great Divide. The Great Divide Basin is kind of a hole in the natural barrier and seems an appropriate location for the Nut. The Square could be located at what we know as Casper, Wyoming. The southern half of the district lies west of the Great Divide.

District 3

District 3 provides in sophisticated technology, mostly electronics. It is safe to assume they play a major role in the development of the technology for the arena's and the hovercrafts. The books give us an impression of its residents being somewhat nerdy. Their skills are highly desirable by the Capitol, but there is not much loyalty.

Lot of fans tend to locate the district in what we know today as Silicon Valley. This is obviously because of the fact that today's technology industry is located there. However, there are no remnants of earlier civilizations left in Panem and there is no reason why the technology industry should appear in the same area in a totally different society. Even more, the Great Valley in California is flooded and what might be left of Silicon Valley is located at the tip of a 500 km long peninsula. Keep also in mind that it is not likely the Capitol will locate a disloyal district in its unprotected backyard and we can safely discard this option.

The location of district 3 follows mostly from what is left after placing the other districts and I locate it in what we know as the states of Missouri and the east of Kansas. The Square could be at what we know as Kansas City, Missouri. Because of the risen sea level district 3 borders at the sea (the 'Mississippi Bay') on the east and the southeast. Between the district and the sea is a relatively small strip of waste land where peacekeepers assure nobody escapes from district 3 to the sea. On the southwest it borders on district 5, which provides in the energy for district 3.

District 4

District 4 is a loyal district providing in fish, so it is obvious it should be located at water and most likely at a seashore. District 4 has a low designation number if we compare it to the other food districts which range from 9 to 11. Most likely this has to do with the loyalty of the districts. Obviously fishermen have free access to the sea and have to be trusted not to make misuse by sailing away, conspiring when offshore or misuse their access to sea as an attack opportunity.

Suzanne Collins herself has declared in an interview district 4 should be located on the shore of the Pacific. I positioned the district on the shore from what we know as San Francisco, California to the south of Mexico where the isthmus is broken and a connection exists between the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific. District 4 is entirely located west of the great divide. On the north it borders on district 2 (from the Great Divide to the Colorado river) and on the Capitol District. Small settlements of fishermen are scattered along the coast and on Baja California. The Square could be located west of what we know as Phoenix, Arizona.

District 5

District 5 provides in energy for Panem. Most likely this has to be interpreted as the power supply area of Panem. Which kind of energy source is used is not explicitly stated in the books. The suggestion that it is based on coal power plants using the coal from district 12 can be discarded, because the small district can in no way provide in the huge amount of energy needed for the luxury

of the capitol, the building and running of the arena's and the transportation systems. It is hinted in the books that the coal is primarily meant as an energy source for the poor, especially for the huge district 11. It is also indicated the power supply of Panem is far away from district 12, resulting in a regular shutdown of the electrical fences. It is very unlikely the coal mined in district 12 would be transported to a coal power plant far away.

It is also unlikely that nuclear power is used, because it seems district 13 was meant to be a secret development district for nuclear technology. That implicates that in Panem as is the technology is not available. Even more, we have to assume that the power plant is bound to some geographically limits, because it would make no sense to concentrate power plants in a certain area given that power is needed everywhere in Panem. So the only sources I can think of are natural sources, most likely water and sun.

I think district 5 is located around the Chihuahuan Desert. In the middle of the district is a huge water power plant in the Rio Bravo. In the desert are thermal sun power plants. The Square could be located in the more habitable north of the district at what we know as Lubbock, Texas.

District 6

District 6 is about transportation. It is not clear from the books how that should be interpreted, but most fans tend to suggest that district 6 is kind of a distribution hub. There are cases in the books substantiating this idea. What we also know from this district is that there is a lot of addiction to drugs, suggesting we have to do with a miserable place. Maybe that is the reason a lot of people seem to think it has a very large population. I don't see clear cases for a large population, however, I can go with the assumption of a very dense populated small area with probably heavy air pollution and a lot going on. Think of an industrial terrain with distribution facilities and refueling stations and people living in between in miserable housings.

Obviously this district has to be located somewhere in the middle of Panem and I locate it just south of what we know as Minneapolis, Minnesota. It is not much more than a city at a crossing of two railways: an east-west railway from the Capitol to the 'Appalachian' peninsula in the east and a north-south railway from district 8 in the north to districts 3, 4 and 5 in the south.

District 7

District 7 is about lumber. It seems to be a forest area where wood is harvested and manufactured. Most people tend to locate this district in the vast forests in the northwest of the continent. However, that would place district 7 beyond the Great Divide and pretty close to the Capitol. We get the impression from the books that district 7 is quite disloyal, so this would be problematic. Beside that there is no need for such a large area of forest, a much smaller area could be big enough to provide in the needs of Panem.

A snippet of information is given in 'The Hunger Games' where Katniss is wondering where she is while traveling from district 12 to the Capitol. This is a little bit flimsy suggestion, because we have no clue if her thoughts make any sense, but she seems to be doubtful if it is district 7 or 10 she is passing. If we go from there district 7 should be located along the east-west railway and probably adjoining district 10. I will make the case that district 10 is located on the 'Appalachian' peninsula. I end up locating district 7 between district 6 and district 10 roughly covering what we know as

Wisconsin, the north of Illinois and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. This area is a natural habitat for forests. The Square is located near what we know as Rockford, Illinois.

District 8

District 8 is about textile manufacturing. There are some snippets of canonical information about this area, for example they make clothing for the peacekeepers and there is at least a city in the area with a hospital. Some fans seem to suppose we have to do with a large area and its presumed location varies all over the continent.

Most likely, I think this area is quite small and not much more than a city with textile manufacturing industry, somewhat similar to district 6. The big difference between the two is that, where the inhabitants of district 6 fly into drug abuse district 8 tends to be a rebellious district, if not the most rebellious district of Panem.

It is also suggested district 8 is not very far away from district 6. I ended up with locating it on Lake Superior between what we know as Duluth, Minnesota and Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada.

District 9

District 9 is about grain, not only the agriculture of grain but probably also food processing. There is few canonical information about this district. I assume it is a large area and it should be somewhere in the Great Plains.

I think it comprises what we know as the Dakota's, the north of Minnesota, the east of Montana and the south of Manitoba, Canada. The Square could be in the middle of the Dakota's, for example at what we know as Mobridge, South Dakota.

District 10

District 10 is about livestock. We learn from the books it is relatively close to district 12. It has to be crossed when going from district 12 to district 11 and most likely also when going from district 12 to the Capitol. There is also the suggestion it should border on district 7. Considering this district should provide in all the meat for Panem it has to be not too small.

I have no choice but to locate this district on the 'Appalachian' peninsula. As we will see, district 11 is located south of the Ohio river, while the location of district 12 sets the border in the east. So the district comprises what we know as Michigan (Lower Peninsula), Ohio and most of Indiana. The Square could be at what we know as Columbus, Ohio.

District 11

District 11 is a huge district with strictly enforced rules. It seems to have a relatively big population, maybe around half a million people. The district provides in agricultural products, at least in fruits from trees. To go from district 12 to district 11 you have to cross district 10. There are suggestions in the books the district lies in the south. At least it should be on the 'Appalachian' peninsula, because it is relatively close to district 12.

Fortunately Suzanne Collins has given a clue in one of her interviews that district 11 is somewhere around Atlanta, Georgia.

I think district 11 comprises the whole south of the 'Appalachian' peninsula, on the north bordering on district 10 with the Ohio river as a natural boundary. The district is surrounded by the sea. I suppose between the district and the sea there is a small area of waste land where peacekeepers maintain control to ensure nobody escapes the district. The Square seems to be pretty far in the south, because Katniss mentions a long railway trip through fields before reaching the Square. I think that what we know as Atlanta, Georgia will be a proper location.

District 12

District 12 is the district we get the most familiar with.

First of all, it is a small district. It seems more like a fenced labor camp. It has the size of a village with just over 8000 inhabitants. The district borders on no other district but is entirely surrounded by waste land.

It is mentioned the district lies in the Appalachian region. In the district should be coal deposits.

I could mention a lot of clues regarding weather and vegetation, but there is a lot of consensus about the location of this district among fans and its location should be somewhere in what we know as the Pennsylvania – West-Virginia region. I go with Mark Windsors suggestion and place district 12 in what we know as Coopers Rock Forest, West-Virginia.

District 13

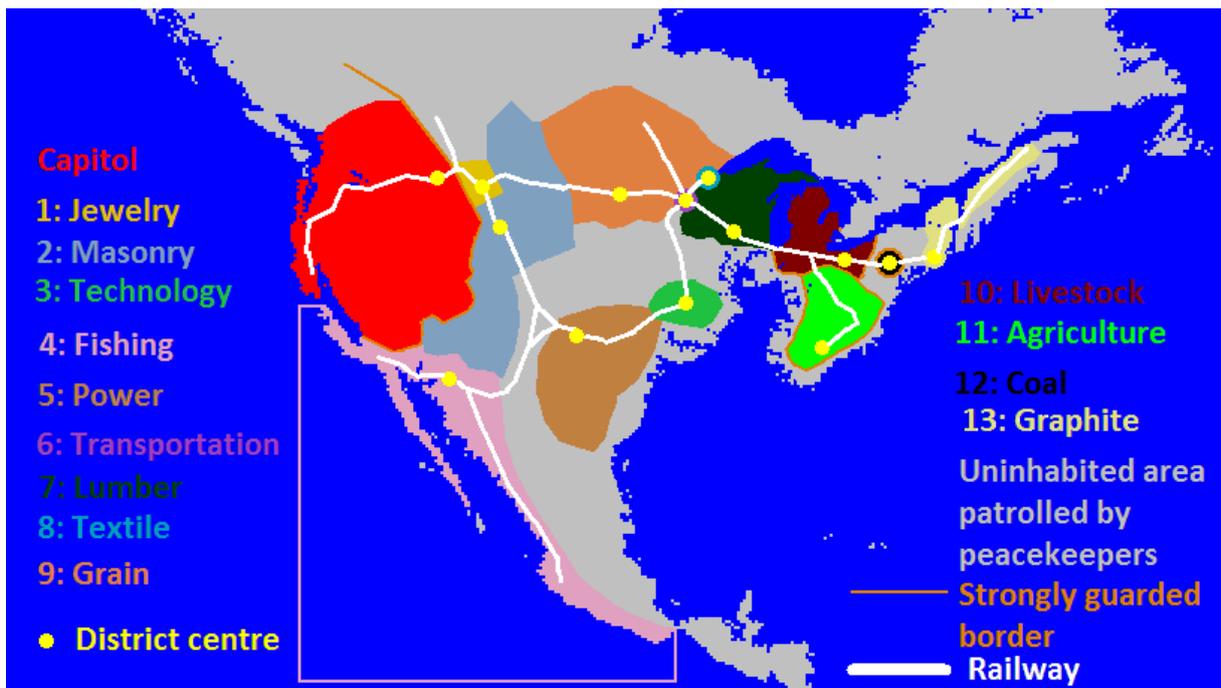
District 13 is an odd one, because the formal narrative from the Capitol is that it is nothing more than an abandoned area. It used to be a district, formally to provide in graphite by exploring mines, but actually by developing nuclear technology. In the aftermath of the last conflict between the Capitol and the districts an agreement was made between the Capitol and district 13. District 13 would go underground and keep silent. By this agreement the district was relieved from delivering tributes to the hunger games. The Capitol did also leave the area of the district, as appears from their broadcasts where they repeat the same recorded views of the abandoned Square.

We learn from the books, especially from 'Mockingjay', that a huge underground city is built under the Square. This underground complex is at most about 200 km from district 12 (a week by foot).

District 13 is behind district 12 as seen from the Capitol. So I end up locating this complex west of what we know as Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

It is highly speculative how far the district stretches from there. What we know is there are graphite deposits in Quebec. I locate district 13 on the east shore of the St Lawrence up to what we know as New Brunswick, Canada.

The whole picture



For the LEGO MOC the Square of each district is represented by a trans yellow bionicle eye. The capitol is also represented by a bionicle eye. Each district has its color (bricklink naming convention):

RED: Capitol with surrounding area

PEARL GOLD: District 1 (Luxury)

LIGHT BLUISH GREY: District 2 (Mining)

DARK PINK: District 3 (Technology)

REDDISH BROWN: District 4 (Fishing)

ORANGE: District 5 (Energy)

DARK PURPLE: District 6 (Transportation)

DARK GREEN: District 7 (Lumber)

MEDIUM AZURE: District 8 (Textile)

TAN: District 9 (Grain)

DARK RED: District 10 (Livestock)

LIME: District 11 (Agriculture)

BLACK: District 12 (Coal)

WHITE: District 13 (Graphite)

BLUE: Sea

TRANS LIGHT BLUE: Lakes

DARK BLUISH GREY: Waste land

So we end up with this:



This document was made by *Bolbuyk from Utrecht, the Netherlands* on March 20 2016.