**Discussion Questions**

*Feed* by M.T. Anderson
During the discussion group meeting(s) that will focus on *Feed*, the following discussion questions may be explored by teen participants.

* *FEED* is a novel, but Anderson includes snippets of advertisements, news, entertainment, and imagery from the feed to convey the experience of being hooked into it. How do these sections affect the way you understand the world of the novel? How alike or different does it seem from the way that we receive information through media?
* Titus and Violet are technically cyborgs: part organic, part technology. Do you think that this changes the nature of their humanity (and would you still consider them human)? What ethical questions arise when humans “merge” with machines? For instance, should FeedTech have been required to help repair Violet’s feed? Why or why not? What are some examples of present-day cyborgism?
* Violet notices that Titus is different from his friends because he is the only one who uses metaphor. For example, he describes some vines waving in space as “like a squid in love with the sky.” What is involved in creating figures of speech? What does this tendency to use simile and metaphor tell us about Titus? Is this a practice worth cultivating in his world? In ours?
* Violet has a breakdown at the party with Titus’s friends, screaming at them that they are talking “in a sestina.” A sestina is a kind of poetic form that relies on the tightly controlled repetition of words, according to the scheme below; if you look through the conversations in the chapter leading up to Violet’s outburst, you’ll see that the words at the end of each sentence actually conform to this scheme, rotating between the words “play,” “fun,” “sexy,” “lesion,” “stupid,” and “good.”

1. ABCDEF

2. FAEBDC

3. CFDABE

4. ECBFAD

5. DEACFB

6. BDFECA

7. (envoi) ECA or ACE

By expressing their repetition of topics and phrases in such a mechanical way, Anderson asks us to consider how much power Titus and his friends have over their own thoughts and words. But if they are not in control, who is? And for what reasons? How does this make the young people into “feed,” as Violet claims they are? You may also want to look at the free Coke episode and Marty’s speech tattoo. How do these examples reflect on our own ability to think freely within our media environment?

* Titus seems very connected to Violet, and as a result of their conversations begins to see the hypocrisy and absurdity of his world. But if this is true, why does he push her away so strongly when her feed starts to seriously malfunction and she nears the end of her life? Why does he sabotage a relationship with someone who has had such an impact on him? Do you think he has changed at the end of the novel?

*The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins

During the discussion group meeting(s) that will focus on *The Hunger Games*, the following discussion questions may be explored by teen participants.

* When Katniss volunteers for the Hunger Games, the people in her district refuse to applaud and give her a silent local sign of farewell instead. How are these each acts of resistance, especially in the Capitol-controlled media environment in which they live? How can a non-act (like silence) be a form of dissent?
* Because of her role in the televised Games, Katniss learns to live a life constantly in the public eye: performing versions of herself based on how she thinks that an outside audience will perceive her. During the process of spinning a love story for her and Peeta’s survival, she becomes confused about her actual feelings towards her friend. Do you think their love story is real? Can you relate to Katniss’s confusion? Do you think that the way we act for others (both in real life and online) can influence who we actually are?
* *The Hunger Games* is set in a futuristic society, but Suzanne Collins has said that she was inspired by the history of the Roman Empire. Over 2,000 years ago it took resources from the provinces that it conquered and controlled provincial people with Roman troops and rulers. The Latin phrase “panem et circenses,” (“bread and circuses” – notice the Latin word for bread!) sums up the Roman approach to managing the masses through promises of food and entertainment. This included gladiatorial matches to the death, which took place in public arenas and were often fought by people taken from the provinces. What other allusions to ancient Rome can you find in *The Hunger Games*? How can this combination of history and science fiction help us to think about the media and politics of the present?
* *The Hunger Games* is a television spectacle, and Collins shows how the Capitol uses editing to create controlled narratives out of real footage. But Collins chose tell her story as a novel, written from a first-person perspective. Why do you think she chose this medium and point of view? How does the novel form affect your experience of Katniss’s story? What ethical and artistic questions do you think the filmmakers had to face when turning *The Hunger Games* from a book into a movie?

*MARCH* by John Lewis

During the discussion group meeting(s) that will focus on *MARCH*, the following discussion questions may be explored by teen participants.

* The look of comic books and graphic novels often calls up associations with youth, drama, and superhero stories. Why do you think that John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell decided to tell this story as a graphic novel? How do the conventions of graphic novels (including stylized imagery and handwritten text in boxes) affect the way that you think about Lewis’s character and the Civil Rights Movement?
* *MARCH* jumps back and forth in time between January 20, 2009 and Lewis’s youth in the 1950s and ‘60s. This allows us to see from the start that John Lewis grows up to be an American congressman, but the authors don’t explain the significance of this date. How do you think it relates to the rest of the story? What effect do these leaps in time have on how you read the book?
* The first time that John Lewis really considers how life can be different for African Americans is when he takes a trip to Buffalo, New York as a child. Why is it so important to experience and think about other ways of living? Lewis is able to continue his social education back in Alabama through the resources at his school library (including black magazines and newspapers like *Jet*, *Ebony*, *The Baltimore Afro-American*, *The Chicago Defender*), and through media like the radio and television. What are the benefits and limitations of learning through personal experience vs. hearsay vs. mass media? How do you decide which sources you can trust?
* In order to fight segregation, the young John Lewis and his fellow activists practice being beaten and humiliated rather than training for attack. What kind of power can come from restraint and self-control? How is mass media important to this approach to changing unjust laws and norms? Do you think that these tactics can work as well in our contemporary media environment, in which anyone with a smartphone and Internet connection can capture, create, and share information?
* A number of recent student and youth-led resistance movements (especially in the Arab world) have used social media in their attempts to overthrow oppressive regimes, with mixed results. In some cases, governments have shut down sites like YouTube and Twitter to limit communication, and in others they have turned off the Internet altogether. What political and social conditions made it possible for John Lewis and his fellow activists to use nonviolent sit-ins to create change? Why do you think it took so long? How can you take part in civic action, both through the media and in your local community?