

Sophomore English Summer Reading Assignment

The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini

To start our year, you will read *The Kite Runner*, a novel that is set in both Afghanistan and the United States. According to the book jacket, the novel is “about friendship, betrayal, and the price of loyalty. It is about the bonds between fathers and sons, and the power of fathers over sons—their love, their sacrifices, and their lies. Written against a backdrop of history that has not been told in fiction before, *The Kite Runner* describes the rich culture and beauty of a land in the process of being destroyed. But with the devastation, Khaled Hosseini also gives us hope: through the novel’s faith in the power of reading and storytelling, and in the possibilities he shows for redemption.”

Part I. You will annotate *The Kite Runner*.

During the reading - Mark the text and write notes in the margins. Do not simply highlight text.

You may want to create a system for annotating: box unknown vocabulary words, summarize each chapter, color code, etc. Please consider this list as you annotate the novel.

- Characters – you may want to start a list on the inside front cover with page references. Consider the relationships between Amir and Hassan. And between Baba and Ali. Are any of the characters redeemable? Discuss the difference between Baba and Ali and between Amir and Hassan. Are Baba's and Amir's betrayals and similarities in their relationships of their servants (if you consider Baba's act a betrayal) similar or different? Do you think that such betrayals are inevitable in the master/servant relationship, or do you feel that they are due to flaws in Baba's and Amir's characters, or are they the outcome of circumstances and characters?
- Summarize plot points and character development at the end of each chapter.
- Make predictions
- Formulate opinions
- Make connections with films, music, other novels, current events.
Ask questions. What is the significance of story-telling? What is the significance of the irony in the first story that Amir writes? After hearing Amir's story, Hassan asks, "Why did the man kill his wife? In fact, why did he ever have to feel sad to shed tears? Couldn't he have just smelled an onion?" How is his reaction to the story a metaphor for Amir's life? How does this story epitomize the difference in character between Hassan and Amir?
- Comment on the different examples of situational, verbal, and dramatic irony.
- Analyze the author's craft; ask why he crafted the story the way he did. Consider diction, pacing, tone, sense of place, imagery, symbolism, dialogue, etc. What details are included/excluded? Amir's confrontation with Assef in Wazir Akar Khan marks an important turning point in the novel. Why does the author have Amir, Assef, and Sohrab all come together in this way? What is the significance of the scar that Amir develops as a result of the confrontation? Why is it important in Amir's journey toward forgiveness and acceptance?
 - Write reflections/reactions/comments
 - Examine symbols; patterns/repetitions; motifs. Consider the significance of pomegranate trees and scars.
 - Are there any scenes that seem to parallel each other? Why do you think Hosseini might be making some parallel?
 - Consider the meaning of the novel's title.

Part II. You will have an essay test at the beginning of the school year.