

**Teacher Guide**

**Grades 9–12**

# **The Kite Runner**

**Khaled Hosseini**

 **NOVEL UNITS**<sup>®</sup>



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# THE KITE RUNNER

by  
Khaled Hosseini

## Teacher Guide

Written by  
Pat Watson

### Note

The 2004 Riverhead Books paperback edition of the novel, © 2003 by TKR Publications, LLC, was used to prepare this guide. The page references may be different in other editions. Novel ISBN: 1-59448-000-1

**Please note:** This novel deals with sensitive, mature issues. Parts may contain profanity, sexual references, and/or descriptions of violence. Please assess the appropriateness of this book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading and discussing it with them.

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## Table of Contents

Summary .....	3
About the Author.....	3
Characters .....	4
Background Information .....	5
Initiating Activities.....	6
<b>Eight Sections</b> .....	7
Each section contains: Summary, Vocabulary, Discussion Questions, and Supplementary Activities	
Post-reading Discussion Questions .....	25
Post-reading Extension Activities .....	28
Assessment.....	29
Scoring Rubric.....	37
Glossary.....	38

## Skills and Strategies

### Thinking

Analysis, compare/contrast,  
brainstorming, inferring

### Comprehension

Cause/effect, summarizing,  
predicting, conflict/resolution,  
decision-making

### Literary Elements

Theme, metaphor, simile,  
symbolism, foreshadowing,  
irony, characterization, setting,  
genre, tone, style

### Writing

Journal, poetry, script, review,  
monologue, sequel, riddle

### Vocabulary

Target words, definitions,  
application, connotation,  
denotation

### Listening/Speaking

Discussion, performance,  
reports

### Across the Curriculum

Music—appropriate selections,  
ballad; Art—collage, montage,  
poster; Current Events—research,  
newspaper/magazine articles

## Chapter Twenty-Five

Sohrab nearly dies in the hospital, and Amir prays for the first time in 15 years. Sohrab eventually recovers physically from his suicide attempt but remains emotionally withdrawn. Amir takes him to the United States, but he does not respond to Amir's and Soraya's love. When General Taheri asks whom he should tell the neighbors Sohrab is, Amir proudly acknowledges Sohrab as his nephew. Amir and Soraya raise money for a hospital on the Afghan-Pakistani border that helps land mine victims. Amir tells Sohrab about Hassan's kite-fighting and kite-running talents, and he and Sohrab fly a kite together. Sohrab smiles slightly for the first time in almost a year, and Amir runs a kite for him.

Vocabulary	
benevolent	
serpentine	
protocol	
myriad	
catharsis	
eccentric	
tele-	

### Discussion Questions

1. Amir suffers greatly while Sohrab is in critical condition in the hospital. In what ways is Amir's suffering significant? What does Amir's prayer, and what does his prayer indicate about how his character has changed? *(Amir's suffering is significant because it causes him to pray for the first time in 15 years. Perhaps more significant than the fact Amir prays is the manner in which he prays. Amir kneels on a makeshift prayer rug in front of everyone in the waiting room, not caring what others think of him. In this moment, all that matters is Sohrab. It is true that Amir's prayer is partially motivated by guilt [since he desires that he does not want Sohrab's blood on his hands], but he is also genuinely worried about Sohrab's well-being. He does not seem to be around to pressure Amir to do the right thing, yet Amir thinks nothing of sacrificing himself in the interest of saving another human being. Furthermore, Amir promises General Taheri that he will pray all the time from now on, not just when he has a special request. Loss and the threat of loss have changed Amir. He has learned selflessness, gratitude, and humility.)*
2. How and why does Amir become "the man behind the microscope" (p. 355)? *(Just as Amir once put Hassan's loyalty to the test, closely examining and scrutinizing him by asking Hassan if he would eat dirt for him, Sohrab now tests Amir's loyalty with his responses. Sohrab probably felt that he had placed a lot of trust in Amir based on his recent experience with people, but he eventually decided to trust Amir anyway. However, shortly after this, his trust in Amir was shaken when it seemed that Amir was going to break his promise. Sohrab becomes more distant than ever, allowing Amir to see him as long as is necessary to earn back his trust.)*
3. Why does it not bother Amir to think that the neighbors may have considered Hassan to be "the son"? *(Amir has forgiven his father, so he is no longer a prisoner of anger. In addition, he has also forgiven himself, which means that he is no longer a prisoner of guilt and is able to love himself. He believes he is good and worthy of love, and that is what is most important.)*
4. How does Amir respond to General Taheri's inquiry about Sohrab? What is significant about Amir's statement? *(Amir states flatly that Sohrab is his nephew, as well as how this came to be. He tells the general that he is never to refer to Sohrab as "the Hazar boy" in his presence. Amir shows courage and conviction as he stands up for Sohrab. By taking such a firm stance, Amir risks alienating the general and possibly the Afghan community. Amir again sacrifices himself in order to do what is right, and by proudly recognizing Sohrab as a full-fledged member of the family, he shows that he is no longer influenced by the racist and classist attitudes which have proven toxic in his country and his life. Amir's attitude toward life is one of love.)*

5. How does Amir cope with Sohrab's long silence? Why might this cause be close to Amir's heart, and what similarities between Amir and Baba does this new activity reveal? (*Amir immerses himself in a project that funds a hospital on the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan that helps land mine victims. Rahim Khan once commented that there is not a "more Afghan way of dying" [p. 206] than being killed by a land mine, so this is a way for Amir to give back and stay connected to his home country while continuing to live in America. His return to Afghanistan impressed upon him that his country needs him and that there is more to being a "true Afghan" than simply having grown up in Afghanistan. Also, Ali was killed by a land mine, and Amir once wondered if Hassan's and Ali's lives might have turned out completely different if they had not remained in Afghanistan. It is too late to help Ali, but Amir may feel moved to pursue this cause in honor of him. Amir seems to have grown into a man who is very similar to his father in that he has a son he does not quite know how to connect with, and to fill the void he feels, he gives back to his community.)*

6. What "small, wondrous thing" gives Amir hope? (*Amir tells Sohrab about Hassan's kite-fighting and kite-running talents, and as they fly a kite together, Sohrab's eyes become alert and lose their glassy, vacant look. Amir looks down at Sohrab and sees that loquacious grin and an almost imperceptible nod of the head. Amir asks if Sohrab wants him to buy a kite for him.)*

How does Amir show his loyalty to Sohrab in the novel's final scene? What do Amir's actions reveal about him? (*In all the years Amir and Hassan worked together in kite fighting, Amir was always the one who flew the kite and Hassan was his assistant. Hassan ran the kite for him but always returned it to Amir, and gave the "victory" for the win. Now Amir elevates Sohrab to his former role and demotes himself to Hassan's role. Answers will vary, but Amir's humble and selfless act of loyalty to Sohrab [and some may say, Hassan] is particularly notable because Amir is under no moral pressure to offer it.)*

### Supplementary Activities

1. Write a seven-line poem about Amir's journey to redemption.
2. Add to your simile/metaphor list. Example: **similes**—"...each breath is like inhaling fire" (p. 345); "His skin is dark like the richest Swiss chocolate..." (p. 333); **metaphors**—legs: blocks of concrete, a cart, a black hammer (p. 345)

## Post-reading Extension Activities

### Writing/Speaking

1. Write and present orally a monologue in which Sohrab explains his life before and after coming to America.
2. View the movie version of the novel. Then write a report in which you compare/contrast the two works.
3. Write a sequel set five years after the end of the novel.
4. Using the poem "The Elephant in the Room" by Terry Kovering as a model (Source: <http://www.geocities.com/tcf-troy/OthersWrite/ElephantInRoom.html?200812>; active at time of publication), write a poem about an "elephant in the room" from the novel, e.g., Rahim Khan's illness, Baba's sin and forsworn, Amir's guilt, or Amir and Soraya's inability to have a child. Then read your poem to the class.

### Drama/Music

5. Working with a small group, write and stage a new ending for the novel.
6. Write and perform a ballad telling the story of Amir and Soraya.
7. Working with a small group, stage a scene from the novel. Add appropriate background music and lighting.

### Art

8. Create a collage depicting Amir's guilt and his search for redemption.
9. Prepare a montage showing the devastation of various political regimes caused in Afghanistan.
10. Design a poster advertising the novel.

### Research/Current Events

11. Bring to class current newspaper and magazine articles relating to the ongoing strife in Afghanistan. Display these on a poster board with appropriate headings.
12. Research and write a report about Afghanistan's current political leaders.

## Metaphors and Similes

A **metaphor** is a comparison between two unlike objects. For example, "he was a human tree." A **simile** is a comparison between two unlike objects that uses the words *like* or *as*. For example, "the color of her eyes was like the cloudless sky."

**Directions:** Complete the chart below by listing metaphors and similes from the novel, as well as the page numbers on which they are found. Identify metaphors with an "M" and similes with an "S." Translate the comparisons in your own words, and then list the objects being compared.

Metaphors/Similes	Idea (Objects Being Compared)
1.  Translation:	
2.  Translation:	
3.  Translation:	



# Story Map

Directions: Fill in each box below with information about the novel.

The diagram consists of six rectangular boxes arranged in a staggered, descending pattern from top-left to bottom-right. The boxes are labeled as follows:

- Main Characters** (top-left)
- Setting (time and place)** (top-right)
- Main Conflict** (middle-left)
- Summary of Major Story Events** (middle-right)
- Climax** (bottom-left)
- Resolution of Conflict** (bottom-right)

Dashed arrows indicate the following relationships:

- An arrow from **Main Characters** to **Setting (time and place)**.
- An arrow from **Main Conflict** to **Summary of Major Story Events**.
- An arrow from **Summary of Major Story Events** to **Climax**.
- An arrow from **Summary of Major Story Events** to **Resolution of Conflict**.
- An arrow from **Climax** to **Resolution of Conflict**.

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