

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

The Kite Runner

by Khaled Hosseini

written by Elizabeth Scott

Copyright © 2008 by Prestwick House Inc., P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938. 1-800-932-4593.
www.prestwickhouse.com Permission to copy this unit for classroom use is extended to purchaser for his or her
personal use. This material, in whole or part, may not be copied for resale.

ISBN 978-1-60389-839-3

Item No. 302958

Note to Teacher

The Kite Runner, the first novel by Khaled Hosseini, is also the first novel published in English by an Afghani. It is set in both Afghanistan and the United States immediately before and during the rise of the Taliban. Hosseini was born in Afghanistan and immigrated to the United States in 1980. Much of the novel is drawn from his personal experience.

The Kite Runner contains some very strong profanity, derogatory language, references to drug use, and graphic descriptions of violence, including rape. This novel does deal with mature subject matter, including that of rape. Younger or more immature students may have difficulty with such subject matter.

All references come from the Riverhead Books edition of *The Kite Runner*, copyright 2003.

The Kite Runner

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. define and cite examples of:
 - conflict
 - simile
 - metaphor
 - antagonist
 - foreshadowing
 - symbol
 - flashback
 - point of view
 - epistle
2. understand the use of tone in specific scenes.
3. identify the subplot(s) and how they affect Amir throughout the novel.
4. define the vocabulary terms listed throughout the unit.
5. understand the author's style.
6. discuss the idea of territory and explain how location shapes Amir's idea of himself.
7. trace Amir's coming-of-age in the story, noting key points in his growth and development.
8. explain the importance of names in the book, giving relevant examples.
9. identify instances of foreshadowing and parallelism in the book.
10. describe the purpose and effect of the flashbacks throughout the story.
11. recall the plot elements in the story and give a chronological depiction of the events, without the insertion of flashbacks.
12. explain the many types of prejudice in the novel, and show how they affect the characters.

The Kite Runner

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. Compare Hitler and Assef. How are they the same? How do they differ?
2. Discuss why the date and location are given at the beginning of some chapters and not others. Even when the time and location change between chapters, Hosseini does not always state outright what the new setting is.
3. Why does Hosseini have Amir study English at college? How would the story have been different if this fact were changed?
4. Gender, education, socioeconomic status, religion, and class play an important role in this novel. How do they affect the characters' interactions and experiences?
5. The style of narration, including tense and perspective, changes through the story. What does this accomplish?
6. How does patriotism affect the characters, if at all?
7. Discuss the concept of forgiveness. What and who would the characters need to forgive, and explain how they might accomplish that.
8. The author often mentions the characters' sleeping habits. Though this is a normal part of life, it is generally not written in novels. Why does Hosseini write about his characters' sleeping habits?
9. There are several ironic incidents in the book. Discuss how Hosseini uses irony; which characters are aware of the irony, and how do they react to it?
10. How does Hosseini integrate modern concepts of Afghanistan?
11. Identify the main subject of this story. Supply information from the text to support your conclusion.
12. Why does Hosseini not reveal the rape in the beginning of the book? Is it, in your opinion, effective to put that scene in the middle? How would it have changed the basic plot if the scene had been placed in the beginning?
13. How do Amir and Baba change when they move to the United States? How does their relationship change?
14. Is *The Kite Runner* a tragedy? Why or why not? What similarities and dissimilarities does it share with classic Greek tragedy?

The Kite Runner

Chapter One December 2001

Vocabulary

unatoned – not made up for; unsettled

1. What image does the narrator show at the beginning of the novel and what does it mean?

2. What literary tool or tools does Hosseini use in this chapter and how does his usage frame the story?

Chapter Seven

Vocabulary

adjacent – next door
austere – serious
bisecting – dividing in half
blameless – innocent
curtly – shortly, roughly
demise – death
dwindling – decreasing in number
huddling – gathering close together
imminent – about to occur
lame – crippled
milling – wandering around
morose – gloomy
redemption – rescue from sin
sallow – sickly yellow
secluded – solitary, hidden
shirked – avoided
shrill – high-pitched
squabbling – bickering
tabla and harmonium – traditional musical instruments, drums and an organ
taut – tight
tremor – tremble, shaking
unabashedly – openly, not disguised
vindication – justification, defense

1. Why does Amir not apologize to Hassan for being rude about his dream?

2. Why does Hassan tell Amir about the dream?

3. How does the blood from the kite string accentuate the kite flying scene?

5. What is ironic about Baba's statement, "[W]hat happens in a few days, sometimes even a single day, can change the course of a whole lifetime"?

6. What is the literary term that describes the sentence, "America was a river, roaring along, unmindful of the past"?

Chapter Fifteen

Vocabulary

aptness – truthfulness, appropriateness
chuff – a noisy puffing sound
clichés – statements said so many times that they are overused and meaningless
garrulous – talkative, outgoing
gaunt – extremely thin
gnarled – bent or twisted
incessant – never-ending
melancholic – sad, gloomy
negligent – neglectful
nonchalantly – casually, unconcernedly
pragmatic – practical
rickshaws – two-wheeled passenger carts pulled by a person
samovar – a metal urn used to boil water for tea
Taliban – the extremist group that ruled Afghanistan until the U.S invasion
wallow – to indulge; devote excessive amounts of time to something

1. The previous time Amir and Rahim Khan had spoken on the phone, Baba had just died. The two only spoke for a few minutes before they lost the intercontinental connection. How is this significant?

2. When Amir tells Rahim Khan about the stories he wrote in the journal that was his birthday present, Rahim Khan says he does not remember it. Why is this mentioned?

3. What is the situation in Afghanistan as Khan describes it?
