

Reflections:

*A Student Response Journal for...*

# *The Kite Runner*

*by Khaled Hosseini*

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ISBN 978-1-60389-122-6  
Item No. 303165

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## *The Kite Runner*

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

### **Pre-Reading**

1. What do you think the title *The Kite Runner* signifies? Before beginning the book, using information from the front and back covers, write a paragraph predicting what this novel will be about.
2. *The Kite Runner* is a bestselling novel. The first few pages contain quotes from respected literary sources that provide positive reviews about the book. The quotes provide small glimpses into the content and tone of the book. They are meant to draw interest and entice people to buy it.

Imagine that someone has written a biography of your life. What elements about the book would you include to intrigue people and make them want to read about your life? Write a hypothetical quote praising the book and the author's skill in recounting your story. In other words, compose a back cover for a book on the story of your life.

3. Many people consider it an honor for an author to dedicate a book to them. Authors often dedicate their books to loved ones, people who've been supportive, or the people they most admire. If you wrote a novel, to whom would you dedicate it? Write an email to the person you would dedicate the novel to, explaining the dedication and explaining why you specifically chose him or her.

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**One**

4. Most good authors attempt to draw readers into their book by writing a dynamic first paragraph or chapter. In your opinion, does the first chapter of *The Kite Runner* have enough impact to lure readers? Does it make you want to read more?

Write a short paragraph for a study guide of *The Kite Runner*, giving your opinion about the author's ability to interest readers and explaining what Hosseini does or does not do to make you want to read more of the book.

5. The narrator of this book is reminded of his past when he sees kites being flown in a park. This proves to be quite significant later in the book, when the author talks about a life-changing event that happened to him in a kite flying contest when he was a child.

Many people have strong memories of things in their past, even if those things seem tiny and insignificant. Is there an object, song, movie, book, or anything else that reminds you of a specific time in your life? Write journal entry describing something that reminds you of your childhood and why it takes you back to the time when you were a child. Then write a few sentences about how it affected your life.

**Two**

6. At the beginning of this chapter, the narrator talks about some of the things he and Hassan did as children to annoy people. It seems like there were many ways to get on the nerves of adults. In this regard, the narrator and his friend are not unusual. Most of us, intentionally or not, have done or said things that caused bothered adults.

Using the narrator and his friend as examples, write a humorous guide for kindergarteners, listing the 10 best ways to annoy adults.

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7. The narrator's father, whom he calls Baba, and his friends gather regularly to discuss "politics, business (and) soccer." Some people would argue, though, that politics is a subject to avoid discussing with others, even your friends, because people have so many strong opinions about the subject, and expressing strong opinions frequently leads to arguments.

Write a posting for an online newsletter, giving people a list of three "safe" subjects to discuss instead of controversial topics like politics or money. Make sure you include reasons why those subjects are preferable to politics.

8. The narrator describes a prized photo of his grandfather with King Nadir Shah, the former supreme ruler of Afghanistan. This photo is proudly displayed in the narrator's home as a sign of the political importance of his family. It was probably an important moment in his grandfather's life to have met the king of his country. If you could meet someone famous, which person would you choose to meet? Write a letter to this person, explaining why you'd like to meet. Then make a list of ten questions you would want the person to answer.
9. The narrator and his friend Hassan take a shortcut to the movie theater one day, even though the narrator's father has forbidden them to go that way. It's all right to do this, though, the narrator reasons, because his father is out of town, so he'll never find out about it.

Write a speech of no more than one page, to be presented at a school assembly, advising students that it is not a good idea to disobey an authority figure, even if that person will never find out that you disobeyed. Make sure your speech includes an introduction, supporting information, and a conclusion.

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10. The soldiers make rude remarks about Hassan, putting down his social class and his culture. They call him names and make sexual comments about him and his family. They ridicule Hassan because he is a Hazara, someone they consider to be of a lower class, and, therefore, inferior to them. This verbal abuse greatly upsets Hassan. The narrator, who is *not* a Hazara, comforts Hassan about the incident.

Using this as an example, write a short poem of at least 10 lines describing what friendship means to you and what it takes to be a good friend. The poem may rhyme, but does not have to.

11. In describing another character, the narrator explains that Ali can use his eyes, but nothing else, to express his thoughts and emotions because he has a paralysis in his face. Even so, the narrator says, “The eyes are windows to the soul,” so it is easy to tell what Ali is thinking most of the time.

“The eyes are the windows to the soul” is a familiar adage or proverb. It is a statement that many of us have heard before, and it reveals a truth. Make a list of at least 5 other familiar adages, and explain the meaning of each. Use the saying, “The eyes are the windows to the soul” as the first one.

**Three**

12. Baba decides that he'd like to build an orphanage. He is so dedicated to building it that he funds the entire project himself. This is undoubtedly a huge financial undertaking, but Baba obviously feels that it's for a worthwhile cause.

If you had unlimited funds, what type of charity would you support? Write a letter to Baba, asking him to join your charity's Board of Directors, and explaining why you think it is important.

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13. Baba works three long years to get the orphanage ready, spending thousands of dollars of his own money. When the orphanage finally opens, he holds a large public ceremony to mark the occasion. Local dignitaries are there, and Baba makes a speech to introduce the orphanage to the community.

As a newspaper reporter, write an article about the grand opening of Baba's orphanage. Include the important elements of who, what, where, when, why, and how.

14. Although Baba is a giving person with a good sense of humor, he has one character flaw, according to Amir: he "(sees) the world in black and white." You've probably heard this phrase before, but what does it really mean?

Using a few examples of Baba's actions from the text, explain what you think the phrase means. Below each example, write your vision of how the situation would be different if Baba didn't see the world in black and white.

15. Baba believes it's possible to confuse school with education. In his opinion, being educated involves more than what teachers, especially the fundamentalist teachers at Amir's school, tell students. To some people, this may be true, but others may have a different view.

What does it mean to be truly "educated"? Does education mean only that one can recite historical dates or scenes from Shakespeare? Can someone who has traveled the world and has had a wide variety of life experiences be considered educated, even if he or she has never attended school?

Write a dialogue for a TV show in which a representative of a teacher's union and an education reform supporter debate over whether traditional schooling is all one needs to become educated. A good way to begin might be:

Host – Thank you for joining us. Our guests today are...