# The Kite Runner

# **Companion Packet**

| Name: |  |      |  |
|-------|--|------|--|
| •     |  | <br> |  |

Period: \_\_\_\_

Explain whether you agree or disagree with each statement in the boxes provided. Use complete sentences.

|  | AGREE | DISAGREE_ |
|--|-------|-----------|
| A parent's love is always constant—it never goes away.   |       |           |
| Once you do something that is wrong there is no way to forget it – it will always be there and can affect all of your decisions. |       |           |
| When friends hurt each other it is easy to make up and be friends again.   |       | 77        |
| Ð  |       |           |
| The way you feel about your parents now is the way you will feel about them in 10 or 20 years.                                   |       |           |
| Love doesn't cost anything.  |       |           |
| Parents don't pick favorites -<br>they are equally fair and<br>loving to all of their children.                                  |       |           |

# Introduction

After the decimation of the World Trade Center by terrorists on September 11, 2001, Afghanistan, a country associated with terrorists, came under fire for threatening America's national security. Very few Americans knew much, if anything, about Afghanistan. Many assumed it was part of the Middle East and populated by Arabs. In fact, Afghanistan is part of central Asia, bordered on the north by former Soviet republics, on the east by Iran, on the south and west by Pakistan and China. Afghans, the people of Afghanistan, are multiethnic and generally not Arab, as these lessons will show.

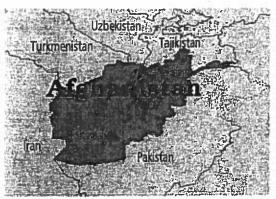
Although the American-sponsored "War on Terror" has defined Afghanistan as a domicile for our enemies, it is important to remember that the United States supported Afghan rebels (the mujahedin) in their fight against the Soviet invasion in 1979. Ironically, a country once defined by the U.S. government as a victim of an oppressor is now cast as a destroyer of democracy, freedom, and innocent victims. Amidst the consternation following September 11, many Americans, along with the government, saw a bin Laden in every Arab, Persian, or Muslim they encountered.

The intention of this unit is to dispel a stereotypical notion of Afghan citizens and Muslims by trying to understand the culture and history of the Afghan people. It also reaches deeper by exploring the ways that males and females are defined within a culture, as well as how social class and race grasp every corner of our consciousness. Amir's central conflict in the novel stems from his inability to define himself within the rigid rules outlined by his culture. Amir feels intimidated by his father's size and prowess. He has little in common with his father: he doesn't enjoy sports, lacks Baba's aggressiveness, and enjoys writing and reading (hobbies of his deceased mother). Baba doesn't believe in God's power to help humans and denounces Muslim mullahs, but Amir doesn't know what religion means in his life. To further complicate Amir's sense of himself, his closest friend, Hassan, is also his servant; later in the novel, his love interest, Soraya, has a past that threatens to ruin her chance of marriage. Just like men, Afghan women have social roles that are clearly defined and limited.

All of these plot strands center on Amir's problem of self-definition, a universal problem. His struggle throughout the novel for self-understanding and acceptance is the timeless journey of a hero, parallel to Odysseus's quest for home. Although this unit looks closely at Afghanistan—its history, culture, geography, values, religion, ethnicity, and gender roles—it also focuses on the universal human search for identity and meaning. In this sense, Amir's inner conflict mirrors Afghanistan's conflict; both struggle with finding an identity amidst rampant social unrest and pressures from outside influences. The lessons show how every human's identity is meshed with cultural expectations and parental models. The Kite Runner offers students a glimpse into a foreign culture that has been vilified by our own ignorance, but it also illustrates the common themes of humanity: the desire to be loved and accepted by others as well as by ourselves.



# Introduction to Afghanistan



Afghanistan is an ethnically diverse country. Its inhabitants form a complex mosaic of ethnic and linguistic groups, a reflection of the country's geographic location as well as its history of frequent external occupiers. As of July 2007, there are approximately 32 million people estimated to live in Afghanistan. Pashtu and Dari are considered the official languages of Afghanistan, and are spoken by 85% of the people. Thirty other minor languages are also spoken in Afghanistan, representing the last 4% of the population. There is also a large degree of bilingualism amongst the inhabitants of the country. About 99% of the population is Muslim, and of these Muslims, 84% belong to the Sunni sect. there has

been a long history of an ethnic hierarchy within Afghanistan. It has created imbalances in wealth, influence and education within its society. Traditionally, Pashtuns have dominated the country because they are the presumed majority of the population. As a result, many of the other ethnic groups have not had a strong voice within the society. The ethnic groups in Afghanistan do not form a concrete caste system like India. But, the society does have a firm and structured hierarchy which dominates the inter-ethnic interactions and relations.

#### ETHNIC GROUPS

| Tribe                              | Pushtun  | Tajiks  | Hazaras  | Uzbeks  | Turkomans or<br>Turkmen   |
|------------------------------------|--|---|--|---|---|
| Home                               | Southern<br>Afghanistan,<br>near and below<br>Qandahar                             | Northeastern<br>Afghanistan                                       | Central<br>mountain<br>region  | Northern plains   | Northern<br>plains  |
| Percentage of<br>Afghan Population | 40%  | 25%   | 18%  | 6%  | 2.5%  |
| Language                           | Pashto   | Dari  | Hazaragi   | Turkish   | Turkish   |
| Religion                           | Islam  | Islam   | Islam  | Islam   | Islam   |
| Fast Fact                          | Pushtuns have<br>been the main<br>ruling group in<br>Afghanistan<br>for 250 years. | Tajiks are the<br>wealthiest of<br>Afghanistan's<br>tribal groups | Hazaras are believed to be descended from the Mongols. In the 1800s, many Hazaras were kept as slaves by Pushtuns. | Uzbeks are<br>known for<br>breeding<br>karakul sheep.<br>Karakul sheep-<br>skins are one<br>of the nation's<br>most important<br>exports. | Turkomans<br>are known for<br>weaving beau-<br>tiful woolen<br>carpets. |

#### BASIC FACTS

- Afghanistan is a landlocked country, making the export of goods difficult and expensive.
- It has rugged mountains and plains and is prone to natural disasters such as earthquakes and drought.
- Temperatures are extreme, as hot as 120° F in the summer and as cold as -15° F in the winter.
- There are limited natural fresh water sources, and most of the land has been overgrazed and deforested, causing desertification and soil degradation, making farming difficult.
- Over 80% of labor force is employed in agriculture (farming, sheep, goats)

- Area: 251,825 sq. mi: slightly smaller
- Capital: Kabul
- Population: 31,056,997 (July 2006 estimate) 80% Sunni Muslim, 19% Shia Muslim

http://teacher.scholastic.com/scholasticnews/indepth/afghanistan/reprol.pdf



#### ETHNIC GROUPS OF AFGHANISTAN

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#### **PASHTUNS**

- Pashtuns are the majority ethnic group in Afghanistan, about 42% thereby constituting just under half of the population
- They are the highest ethnicity on the social ladder and dominate governmental bodies
- · Pashtu is their native language
- · They consist mainly of Sunni Muslims

#### **TAJIKS**

- · Tajiks account for about 27% of the population of Afghanistan
- They are the second largest ethnic community within Afghanistan
- · They are identified with agriculture and town life
- They mainly inhabit the fertile eastern valleys
- They are a group that is considered to have low income and like many Hazaras, they are not the highest on the social ladder. However, there Tajiks that are successful and important members of the government
- Large numbers of Tajiks are city dwellers as well

#### **HAZARAS**

- The Hazara ethnic group resides mainly in the central Afghanistan mountain region called 'Hazarajat'
- They make up approximately 9% of Afghanistan's population
- There are also significant populations of Hazaras in Pakistan and Iran
- Historically, the Hazara seem to have Mongolian origins, as evidenced by physical attributes and parts of the culture and language
- It is commonly believed that the Hazara are descendants of Genghis Khan's army, which marched into the area during the 12th century. Proponents of this view hold that many of the Mongol soldiers and their family members settled in the area and remained there after the Mongol empire dissolved in the 13th century, converting to Islam and adopting local customs



#### INTRODUCTION TO AFGHANISTAN



#### HAZARAS (CONTINUED)

- Most of the Hazaras are Shi'ite Muslims, and, the 1% of the population which is not Muslim is either Hindu, Sikh, or Jewish
- In The Kite Runner book and movie, it is evident that Hazaras are considered to be on the lower end of the socio-economic scale

#### UZBEK AND TURKMEN

- 12% of the population is comprised of the Turkmen (3%) and Uzbeks (9%)
- The Uzbeks are descendants from the Turkish invasion around the beginning of the first millennium
- The Turkmen are related to the Uzbeks and are mostly farmers, herders and craftsmen and live in the northern plains
- These two groups are such a small part of the population that they have not been able to hold many positions of power.

#### NURISTANIS, AIMAQS AND BALUCHIS

- The remaining 10% of the Afghan population is comprised of the Nuristans, an ancient people of Mediterranean descent, the Fariswan, the ethnic Shi'a Persians, the relatively few in number Baluchis of the south, and the scattered members of the Kuchi and Aimaq nomads
- · Nuristanis are predominantly Sunni who speak dialects of Dari and often also Pashtu
  - o They live in the Kunar, Nangarhar, Laghman, and Parwan areas of eastern Afghanistan
  - The area where the Nuristanis live, Nuristan, was the scene of the first armed opposition to the Khalq government
- · Aimags are more of farming and herding tribe rather than an ethnicity
  - o They inhabit the western part of Afghanistan
  - o They speak Dari and are predominantly Sunni Muslims
- · The Balochis comprise approximately 2% of the population
  - o They are a Sunni Muslim group with Iranian ties and they live mostly/in southern Afghanistan
  - They have historically been a nomadic tribe and were well known for camel breeding
  - They also speak Dari and Pashtu as well as their own, Baluchi. These tribes are all extreme minorities

The information on this fact sheet has been sourced from the following websites: http://www.stanford.edu/class/e297a/Afghanistan,%20the%20United%20States.htm http://www.pbs.org/newshour/indepth\_coverage/asia/afghanistan/http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/afghanistan/index.html http://www.afghan-network.net/Ethnic-Groups/



# **Map of Afghanistan**





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If you like Khaled Hosseini's story, you might also like: Benazir Bhutto, Mohamed ElBaradei. Joan Didion. Carlos Fuentes. John Grisham, John Irving. Hamid Karzai, James Michener, Greg Mortenson, Joyce Carol Oates, Wole Sovinka, Amy Tan and Gore Vidal

Khaled Hosseini can also be seen and heard

KEALID HOSSEN



STORYTELLING PHENOMENON

"I was so taken with the story and so swept up in that world that I had to write it."

- Inducted: 2008 -

PROFILE

BIOGRAPHY

INTERVIEW

PHOTO GALLERY

Khaled Hosseini Biography Afghanistan's Tumultuous History

Print Biography

Khaled Hosseini Date of birth: March 4, 1965

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### TAPESTRY OF FRIENDSHIP, REDEMPTION AND HOPE

A THE PERSON OF WASHINGTON

Khaled Hosseini was born in Afghanistan, the oldest of five children, and spent the first years of his childhood in the capital city, Kabul. His family lived in the affluent Wazir Akbar Khan district of the city, in a cultivated, cosmopolitan atmosphere, where women lived and worked as equals with men. His father worked for the foreign ministry, while his mother taught Persian literature, and Khaled grew up loving the treasures of classical Persian poetry. His imagination was also fired by movies from India and the United States, and he enjoyed the sport of kite fighting he portrayed so vividly in his book *The Kite Runner*.

In the early '70s, Hosseini's father was posted to Afghanistan's embassy in Tehran, Iran, where young Khaled deepened his knowledge of the classical Persian literary tradition that Iran and Afghanistan share. Although Afghan culture lacked a long tradition of literary fiction, Hosseini enjoyed reading foreign novels in translation and began to compose stories of his own. He also made the acquaintance of his family's cook, a member of the Hazara ethnic group, a minority that has long suffered from discrimination in Afghanistan. Young Khaled Hosseini taught the illiterate man to read and write, and gained his first insight into the injustices of his own society.

The Hosseinis were at home in Kabul when the 200-year-old Afghan monarchy was overthrown in 1973. The king's cousin, Daoud Khan proclaimed himself president of the new republic, but a long era of instability had begun. In 1976, Hosseini's father was assigned to the embassy in Paris and Khaled moved, with the



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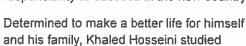
rest of his family, to France. Although he did not know it at the time, it would be 27 years before he would see his native country again. Only two years after their arrival in Paris, a communist faction overthrew the government of Afghanistan, killing Daoud Khan and his family.

Although the new government was purging civil servants from the old regime, the Hosseinis still hoped that they might be able to return to Afghanistan. Infighting among the new leaders, and armed resistance to the regime in the countryside, plunged the country into chaos. The Hosseinis were still in France when the Soviet army entered Afghanistan in December 1979. The Soviets attempted to reinstate their communist allies, while numerous armed factions attempted to expel them. The Soviet occupation would last nearly a decade, while 5

million Afghans fled their country.

A return to Afghanistan was now out of the question for the Hosseini family, and they applied for political asylum in the United States. Young Khaled arrived in San José, California in the fall of 1980 at age 15, speaking almost no English. Having lost everything, his family subsisted for a time on welfare, and father and son went to work tending a flea market stall alongside fellow Afghan refugees.

In his first year of school in the U.S., Khaled Hosseini struggled with English, but his encounter with John Steinbeck's Depressionera novel *The Grapes of Wrath* rekindled his love of literature, and he began to write stories again, this time in English. Khaled's father found work as a driving instructor, and the family's situation gradually improved, but Khaled, as the oldest child, felt a particular responsibility to succeed in the new country.





biology at Santa Clara University and medicine at the University of California, San Diego. He completed his residency at UCLA Medical Center and began medical practice in Pasadena. Now married, Khaled and his wife Roya decided to return to Northern California to be nearer their families. Dr. Hosseini joined the Kaiser Permanente health maintenance organization and settled in Mountain View, California to start a family.

Throughout his medical studies, Hosseini had continued to write short stories in his spare time. Happily settled in his new country, he found his thoughts returning to the land he left behind. After the departure of the Soviets in 1998, the extremist Taliban faction had seized control of Afghanistan, imposing a brutal theocratic rule and providing a base for anti-Western terrorists. Women's rights, which previous regimes had promoted, were completely eliminated along with all foreign art or culture. Hosseini felt compelled to tell the world something of the life he had known before his country was consumed by war and dictatorship. In 2001, with the encouragement of his wife and father-in-law, he decided to try expanding one of his stories into a novel.

For a year and a half, he rose at four o'clock every morning to work on his novel before a full day of seeing patients. When the United States and allied countries launched military operations in Afghanistan, he considered abandoning the project, but with the defeat of the Taliban, he felt it more important than ever to telf his story to the world. With the eyes of the world turned on his country, he completed his tale of two Afghan boys,



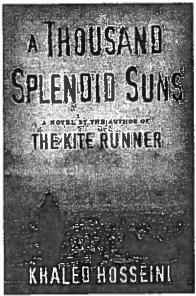
childhood friends separated by the calamities of war, and the divergent paths their lives take. Once Hosseini found an agent to handle the manuscript, the book was soon placed with publisher Riverhead Books, a division of the Penguin Group. The Kite Runner was published, with little publicity, in 2003.

Initial sales of the book in hard-cover were slow, but word of mouth built gradually as copies of the book were passed from reader to reader. The paperback edition found an enthusiastic audience around the world. The Kite Runner spent more than two years on The New York Times bestseller list, and returned to the list, five years after its initial appearance. As of this writing, it has sold more than 12 million copies, with editions published in more than 40 languages. Although it was greeted with acclaim in most circles, some Afghans objected to Hosseini's portrayal of ethnic prejudice in Afghanistan. Hosseini had no regrets, and hoped that his treatment of the subject would spark an overdue dialogue among his fellow countrymen.



Following the success of his book, Hosseini returned to Afghanistan for the first time in 27 years. He was shocked by the devastation that years of war had wrought on the city he knew as a child, but moved to find the traditional spirit of hospitality and generosity was unchanged. Everywhere, he heard stories of the tragedies his countrymen had suffered.

Hosseini continued to practice medicine for a year and a half after his book was published, but the demands on his time eventually compelled him to take a leave of absence. In 2006, he agreed to serve as a special envoy for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, assisting displaced persons in war zones around the world. In this capacity he has traveled to eastern Chad to meet with refugees from Darfur and returned to Afghanistan to meet with refugees returning from Iran and Pakistan.



Since his 2003 visit to Afghanistan, Hosseini had been at work on a second novel, focusing on the experience of women in pre-war Afghanistan, during the Soviet occupation and the civil war, and under the Taliban dictatorship. His new book, eagerly awaited by an army of readers, was published in 2007. A Thousand Splendid Suns takes its title from a poem by the 17th century Persian poet Saib-e-Tabrizi. The story follows two women, Mariam and Laila, both married to the same abusive man. Like its predecessor, A Thousand Splendid Suns became a massive international bestseller, topping the bestseller lists as soon as it was published. The paperback edition spent over two years on the New York Times bestseller list.

Later that year, *The Kite Runner* became a highly acclaimed motion picture, photographed in Kashgar province in the far west of China. Although the producers of the film were American, they chose to shoot the film in the Dari language to preserve the authenticity of the story. A controversy erupted in Afghanistan because a sexual assault against a young boy is

depicted in the film. The child actor and his family were threatened with violence by traditionalists who believed this portrayal to be shameful. Release of the film was postponed while the boy and his family were relocated.

For the time being, Dr. Hosseini has given up his medical practice to write and continue his work for the United Nations. His third novel, *And the Mountains Echoed*, was hailed by *The New York Times* as his "most assured and emotionally gripping story yet." He and his wife Roya, and their two children, make their home in Northern California.

This page last revised on Jun 02, 2014 15:26 EST

| Name |  |  |      |
|------|--|--|------|
|      |  |  | <br> |

| The Kite Runner                  |
|----------------------------------|
| Activity #1 • Prereading         |
| Use Before Reading               |
| (Locate Information/Predictions) |

### **Clue Search**

**Directions:** Collect information about the book for each of the items. Write down the information, and then make some predictions about the book.

| Information Source                    | Information Provided |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Dedication                            |                      |
| Title                                 |                      |
| Cover Illustration                    |                      |
| Teasers on the cover                  | 7                    |
| Friends' recommendations              |                      |
| Reviewers' recommendations/awards won |                      |

Your predictions about the book:





## **BBCNEWS**

#### TIMELINE: AFGHANISTAN A CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS

**1919 - Afghanistan** regains independence after third war against **British** forces trying to bring country under their sphere of influence.

**1926** - Amanullah proclaims himself king and attempts to introduce social reforms leading to opposition from conservative forces.

1929 - Amanullah flees after civil unrest over his reforms.

**1933** - Zahir Shah becomes king and **Afghanistan** remains a monarchy for next four decades.

**1953** - General Mohammed Daud becomes prime minister. Turns to **Soviet Union** for economic and military assistance. Introduces a number of social reforms, such as abolition of purdah (practice of secluding women from public view).

1963 - Mohammed Daud forced to resign as prime minister.

**1964** - Constitutional monarchy introduced - but leads to political polarisation and power struggles.

**1973** - Mohammed Daud seizes power in a coup and declares a republic. Tries to play off **USSR** against Western powers. His style alienates left-wing factions who join forces against him.

1978 - General Daud is overthrown and killed in a coup by leftist People's Democratic Party. But party's Khalq and Parcham factions fall out, leading to purging or exile of most Parcham leaders. At the same time, conservative islamic and ethnic leaders who objected to social changes begin armed revolt in countryside.

1979 - Power struggle between leftist leaders Hafizullah Amin and Nur Mohammed Taraki in Kabul won by Amin. Revolts in countryside continue and Afghan army faces collapse. Soviet Union finally sends in troops to help remove Amin, who is executed. Soviet intervention

1980 - Babrak Karmal, leader of the People's Democratic Party Parcham faction, is installed as ruler, backed by Soviet troops. But anti-regime resistance intensifies with various mujahedin groups fighting Soviet forces. US, Pakistan, China, Iran and Saudi Arabia supply money and arms.

1985 - Mujahedin come together in Pakistan to form alliance against Soviet forces. Half of Afghan population now estimated to be displaced by war, with many fleeing to neighbouring Iran or Pakistan. New Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev says he will withdraw troops from Afghanistan.

**1986 - US** begins supplying mujahedin with Stinger missiles, enabling them to shoot down **Soviet helicopter gunships**. Babrak Karmal replaced by Najibullah as head of Soviet-backed regime.

**1988 - Afghanistan, USSR**, the **US** and **Pakistan** sign peace accords and Soviet Union begins pulling out troops.

1989 - Last Soviet troops leave, but civil war continues as mujahedin push to overthrow Najibullah.

1991 - US and USSR agree to end military aid to both sides. Mujahedin triumph

1992 - Resistance closes in on Kabul and Najibullah falls from power. Rival militias vie for influence.

1993 - Mujahideen factions agree on formation of a government with ethnic Tajik, Burhanuddin Rabbani, proclaimed president.

**1994** - Factional contests continue and the Pashtun-dominated Taliban emerge as major challenge to the Rabbani government.



#### HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF AFGHANISTAN

#### TIMELINE: AFGHANISTAN A CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS

**1996** - Taliban seize control of Kabul and introduce hardline version of Islam, banning women from work, and introducing Islamic punishments, which include stoning to death and amputations. Rabbani flees to join anti-Taliban northern alliance. Taliban under pressure

**1997** - Taliban recognized as legitimate rulers by **Pakistan** and **Saudi Arabia**. Most other countries continue to regard Rabbani as head of state. Taliban now control about two-thirds of country.

1998 - Earthquakes kill thousands of people. US launches missile strikes at suspected bases of militant Osama bin Laden, accused of bombing US embassies in Africa.

**1999 - UN** imposes an air embargo and financial sanctions to force Afghanistan to hand over Osama bin Laden for trial.

#### 2001 -

January - UN imposes further sanctions on Taliban to force them to hand over Osama bin Laden.

March - Taliban blow up giant Buddha statues in defiance of international efforts to save them.

April - Mullah Mohammad Rabbani, the second most powerful Taliban leader after the supreme commander Mullah Mohammad Omar, dies of liver cancer.

May - Taliban order religious minorities to wear tags identifying themselves as non-Muslims, and Hindu women to veil themselves like other Afghan women.

September - Eight foreign aid workers on trial in the Supreme Court for promoting Christianity. This follows months of tension between Taliban and aid agencies.

September 9 - Ahmad Shah Masood, legendary guerrilla and leader of the main opposition to the Taliban, is killed, apparently by assassins posing as journalists.

October - US, Britain launch air strikes against Afghanistan after Taliban refuse to hand over Osama bin Laden, held responsible for the September 11 attacks on America.

**November** - Opposition forces seize Mazar-e Sharif and within days march into Kabul and other key cities. Taliban falls.

December 5 - Afghan groups agree deal in Bonn for interim government.

**December 7** - Taliban finally give up last stronghold of Kandahar, but Mullah Omar remains at large.

**December 22 -** Pashtun royalist Hamíd Karzai is sworn in as head of a 30-member interim power-sharing government.

#### 2002 -

January - First contingent of foreign peacekeepers in place.

April - Former king Zahir Shah returns, but says he makes no claim to the throne.

May - UN Security Council extends mandate of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) until December 2002.

Allied forces continue their military campaign to find remnants of al-Qaeda and Taliban forces in the south-east.

**June** - Loya Jirga, or grand council, elects Hamid Karzai as interim head of state. Karzai picks members of his administration which is to serve until 2004.

July - Vice-President Haji Abdul Qadir is assassinated by gunmen in Kabul.

**September** - Karzai narrowly escapes an assassination attempt in Kandahar, his home town.

**December** - President Karzai and Pakistani, Turkmen leaders sign deal to build gas pipeline through Afghanistan, carrying Turkmen gas to Pakistan.

#### 2003 -

**August - NATO** takes control of security in Kabul, its first-ever operational commitment outside Europe. New constitution





#### 2004 -

**January** - Grand assembly - or Loya Jirga - adopts new constitution which provides for strong presidency.

March - Afghanistan secures \$8.2bn (£4.5bn) in aid over three years.

September - Rocket fired at helicopter carrying President Karzai misses its target; it is the most serious attempt on his life since September 2002.

October-November - Presidential elections: Hamid Karzai is declared the winner, with 55% of the vote. He is sworn in, amid tight security, in December.

#### 2005 -

**February** - Several hundred people are killed in the harshest winter weather in a decade.

**May** - Details emerge of alleged prisoner abuse by **US** forces at detention centres. New parliament

**September** - First parliamentary and provincial elections in more than 30 years. **December** - New parliament holds its inaugural session.

#### 2006

**February** - International donors meeting in London pledge more than \$10bn (£5.7bn) in reconstruction aid over five years.

May - Violent anti-US protests in Kabul, the worst since the fall of the Taliban in 2001, erupt after a US military vehicle crashes and kills several people.

May-June - Scores of people are killed in battles between Taliban fighters and Afghan and coalition forces in the south during an offensive known as Operation Mountain Thrust. NATO takes over

**July onwards - NATO** troops take over the leadership of military operations in the south. Fierce fighting ensues as the forces try to extend government control in areas where Taliban influence is strong.

October - NATO assumes responsibility for security across the whole of Afghanistan, taking command in the east from a US-led coalition force.

March - Pakistan says it has arrested Mullah Obaidullah Akhund, the third most senior member of the Taliban's leadership council. NATO and Afghan forces launch Operation Achilles, said to be their largest offensive to date against the Taliban i the south. There is heavy fighting in Helmand province. Controversy over Italian deal with Taliban, which secures the release of five rebels in exchange for kidnapped reporter Daniele Mastrogiacomo. His Afghan driver and translator are beheaded.

May - Taliban's most senior military commander, Mullah Dadullah, is killed during fighting with US, Afghan forces. Afghan and Pakistani troops clash on the border in the worst violence in decades in a simmering border dispute.

July- Former King Zahir Shah dies in Kabul

#### From BBC NEWS:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hl/world/south\_asla/country\_profiles/1162108.stm Published: 2007/05/15 12:37:40 GMT © BBC MMV



| The Kite Runner |    |
|-----------------|----|
| Lesson 1        |    |
| Handout 2 (page | 1) |

| Date |  |  |
|------|--|--|

#### The Hazaras

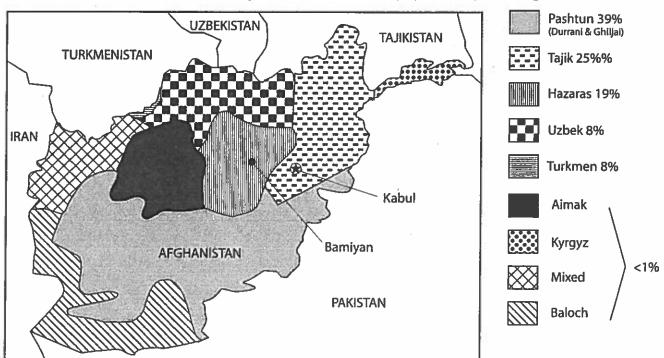
**Directions:** Read the following information, and answer the questions.

The Hazaras are one ethnic group among many in Afghanistan. The Hazaras constitute approximately 9 percent of the total population of Afghanistan. Other ethnic groups include the Pashtun (42 percent), the Tajik (27 percent), the Uzbek (9 percent) and the Turkmen (3 percent). There are an estimated five million Hazaras throughout Central Asia, with the largest populations in Afghanistan and Iran. In Afghanistan, the majority of Hazaras live in mountainous central Afghanistan, and their homeland is called Hazarajat. Bamiyan, a city in central Afghanistan, is considered to be a historic Hazara cultural center.

The Hazaras are believed to be descendants of the Mongols who conquered present-day Afghanistan in the thirteenth century. Hazaras have physical features that distinguish them from the other ethnic groups. Most Hazaras are Shiite Muslim, making them a minority in the predominantly Sunni Afghanistan. Sunni and Shiite Muslims became two distinct groups after the death of Mohammed due to disagreement over who should lead the Muslim community. Today, approximately 85 percent of Muslims in the world are Sunni, and about 15 percent are Shi'a.

Throughout history, the Hazaras have been treated as an inferior ethnic group in Afghanistan. In the 1880s, under the rule of Amir Abdur Rahman Khan, a Pashtun ruler, Hazaras were persecuted by government troops. Hazaras were massacred, tortured, imprisoned, and enslaved. During the twentieth century, Hazaras continued to be enslaved and subjected to menial labor in the cities. Hazaras who do not live in cities have been pushed out to the most remote and least fertile areas of Afghanistan, causing isolation and poverty.

Afghanistan's Hazara Minority
Breakdown of ethnic groups and estimated population percentages



1"Afghanistan," CIA World Factbook, <a href="https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/af.html/#People">https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/af.html/#People</a> (14 August 2006).

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| The Kite Runner |    |
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| Lesson 1        |    |
| Handout 2 (page | 2) |

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1. Why were the Hazaras singled out for persecution?

2. What are the long-term effects of the persecution of the Hazaras?

3. Historically, what was the Pashtun attitude toward the Hazaras?



| The Kite Runner |
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| Lesson 3        |
| Handout 7       |

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#### Baba the Bear

**Directions:** Read the first two paragraphs of chapter 3 of *The Kite Runner.* In the first column of the chart below, record the diction, description, and figures of speech that are particularly effective in describing Baba's character. Then, in the second column, explain what each of these suggests about Baba's character.

| ramples of Diction, Description, Sigures of Speech from the Text | What Do These Examples Reveal about Baba? |
|--|---|
|  |   |
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| The Kite Runner   | Name  |
| Lesson 5<br>Handout 12 (page 1)   | Date  |
| Amir's Inner  | Turmoil                                       |
| Part A.   |   |
| Directions: Answer the following questions about th   | e rape scene in chapter 7 of The Kite Runner. |
| <ol> <li>What is the significance of the memories Amir is<br/>do they suggest about his feelings or thoughts</li> </ol> | recalls as he witnesses Hassan's rape? What?  |
|   |   |
|   |   |
|   |   |
|   |   |
|   |   |
|   |   |
| 2. What is the significance of the dream Amir reconsuggest about his feelings or thoughts?                              | alls as he witnesses the rape? What does it   |
|   |   |
|   |   |
|   |   |
|   | 22V   |
| 4   |   |
|   |   |
| 3. How does the sheep serve as a symbol in this slaughter during the rape?  | chapter? Why does Amir recall the sheep's     |
|   |   |
|   |   |

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#### Part B.

**Directions:** Decide which statement best explains why Amir does not try to stop Hassan's rape. Find evidence from the novel to support your answer. Be prepared to defend your choice.

- 1. Amir fears Assef's violence will be turned against himself if he intervenes.
- 2. Amir wants the kite to please Baba and win his affection. If he intervenes, Assef will take the kite.
- 3. Amir thinks that, as a servant and a Hazara, Hassan is less worthy than himself.

| The Kite Runner |
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| Lesson 5        |
| Handout 13      |

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### The Scapegoat

Directions: Read the following description of the nature of a scapegoat. Then answer the questions.

A scapegoat, according to the Book of Leviticus in the Old Testament of the Bible, is a goat that is sent into the wilderness to symbolically carry away the sins of the Israelites. In the New Testament of the Bible, Jesus Christ is seen as a scapegoat because he takes away humanity's sins by dying on the cross.

The scapegoat, in modern society, has more than just a religious reference. The scapegoat is used to describe a person or group that is blamed for the misfortunes of others. This person, like the scapegoats from the Bible, is an innocent person that is blamed for social problems. Some examples are given below.

- In the Salem Witch Trials, in Salem, Massachusetts, people were accused of being witches (loyal to the devil) even though many had not done anything immoral. Sometimes, people who were strange or who did not conform to society's rules or morals were accused of being witches. In this context, people accused of witcheraft were used as scapegoats upon which others put their fears of the unknown. When the scapegoat was killed or cast out of society, those who remained felt as if they had been cleansed of the sin or evil that the scapegoat represented.
- Adolf Hitler used the Jews as a scapegoat for the problems Germany was facing. As a result, Hitler and the Nazi party rationalized the mass murder of the Jews.
- Joseph McCarthy, a U.S. senator in the 1950s, used innocent people as scapegoats to justify the public's fear that communism might take over democracy.
- After the terrorist attacks on Washington, D.C., and the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, many people who looked Middle Eastern were seen as guilty even though they had done nothing wrong. These people were scapegoats who were blamed for the evils of a few radical individuals from the Middle East. This act of blaming a person for another person's behavior based on the same racial or ethnic group is often called guilt by association.
- What do you know about the biblical background of the scapegoat?

2. In what sense is Hassan a scapegoat?

Source: "Scapegoat," Wikipedia, 2 May 2006, <a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scapegoat">http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scapegoat</a> (10 May 2006).

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| The Kite Runner |
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| Lesson 6        |
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### Adapting to America

**Directions:** Explore the changes in Baba and Amir as they adapt to American society. Refer to chapters 11 and 12 in the novel to gather support for your answers.

Analyze the scene in chapter 11 where Baba fights with the Nguyens in their store. What
does this scene show about Baba's character? Select specific words from the text to support your response.

2. Why does Baba come to America? Explain your answer by using specific quotations from the text.

3. Why does Amir have an easier time adapting to American culture than Baba does?

4. Does Soraya help Amir develop as a character? Why or why not?

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# Kite Runner Log Prompts

| ) | Chapter                      |  |  |  |
|---|------------------------------|--|--|--|
|   | of Text<br>Chapters<br>2 & 3 | Response to the Following Prompt:  At the end of the chapter, we learn that Amir's first word was "Baba," and Hassan's first word was "Amir." Amir says he thinks that "the foundation for what happened in the winter of 1975—and all that followed—was already laid in those first words" (11). Discuss the significance of these "first words." What might they foreshadow? What do they suggest about the relationship between Amir and Hassan, and what do they suggest about the relationship between Amir and Baba?  OR |  |  |
|   |                              | Re-read pages 22 & 23. Baba says twice of Amir, "There is something missing in that boy" (22). Based on this chapter, what do you think Baba means? What is "missing" in Amir? Provide one quotation as evidence to support your ideas.  |  |  |
|   | Chapter 4                    | What does it mean to be a friend? Describe the kind of relationship you have with your closest friend. Amir says, "I never thought of Hassan and me as friends." What prevents Amir from calling Hassan a friend? Do you think that Hassan would call Amir a friend?   |  |  |
|   | Ŧ:                           | OR   |  |  |
| ) |                              | In what ways have you seen Amir acting ethically (with kindness, generosity, etc.)? In what ways has Amir acted unethically (with cruelty, selfishness, etc.)? Overall, do you think Amir is a good person at heart? Why or why not?   |  |  |
|   | Chapter 5                    | Based on what you know so far, what kinds of ideas about race are people in Amir's culture exposed to? (Consider what you've heard from Assef as well as Amir). To what extent (how much) do you think Amir accepts what Assef says about race? Give an example or quote from the text to support your answer.   |  |  |
|   |                              | Optional: Make connections to how race is treated today in American culture.   |  |  |
|   | Chapter 6                    | Choose three quotations in the chapter that reveal something about the relationship between Hassan and Amir (look especially for quotes that show who has more power in the relationship). For each quote of the three quotes that you choose, write 1-2 sentences describing what you think the quote reveals about the relationship between the two boys.  |  |  |
|   | Chapter 7                    | Briefly escribe a time where you saw or heard something happen that you knew was wrong, but didn't stop it. Why didn't you stop what was going on? (Did you not know how? Were you afraid? Etc.)   |  |  |
|   |                              | When Hassan is being attacked, Amir simply watches and then runs. He explains, "The real reason I was running, was that Assef was right: Nothing was free in this world. Maybe Hassan was the price I had to pay, the lamb I had to slay, to win Baba" (77). What does Amir mean? How is Hassan "the lamb" that he has to "slay"?  |  |  |
|   |                              | Optional: Where else does a lamb come up in this chapter? What effect does it have to describe Hassan as a lamb?   |  |  |



| Chantar         | After You Read, Complete a Log in Your Journal in  |
|-----------------|--|
| Chapter of Text | Response to the Following Prompt:  |
| Chapter 8       | If a person harms someone, what are three things the person can do to ease his or her guilt? What do you think Amir will do to ease his own guilt about not standing up for Hassan and not telling anyone about the rape? Why do you think that's what might happen? Use evidence from the text (what you know about Amir) to support your answer.   |
| Chapter 9       | Hassan and Ali decide to leave Baba's house, even though Baba forbids it (107). We never get to witness the scene in Hassan and Ali's hut where they are making this decision to leave Baba's house, but we know they are talking for at least 30 minutes because that is how long Amir and Baba wait for Ali and Hassan to join them (105). Write your version of that missing scene in the hut when they decide to leave. Write it as a dialogue between Hassan and Ali.   |
| Chapter<br>10   | You've just finished the last chapter that takes place during Amir's boyhood in Afghanistan. Using phrases from the text, write a poem as if it were written by Amir that gives the reader an idea of Amir's background. Your poem may be as playful/light or as dark/serious as you like; just remember that Amir wrote it. (You'll need to look back through Chapters 1-10 to get ideas for what to include in your poem).   |
| Chapter<br>11   | Explore the differences in the way that Amir and Baba experience the move to America, using a quote for Baba and a quote for Amir. Which one feels more positively toward America, and why? How is Amir adjusting to America? How is Baba adjusting to America? Which person do you predict will be more successful and/or happy in America? Why?  Optional: Have you ever moved from one location to another? How was the new place different? Were there differences in the way that you and other members of your family adjusted?      |
| Chapter<br>12   | Choose three quotations that tell you something about gender roles in traditional Afghan culture (at least 1 quote must be from Chapter 12; the other 2 can be from any chapter). Write down the three quotations, and analyze/explain what each one shows about how the expectations/roles for men in Afghan culture are different than the expectations and roles for women.   |
| Chapter<br>13   | Amir recalls the following from Baba's funeral: "I realized how much of who I was, what I was, had been defined by Baba" (174). Later, when Amir is considering adopting a child, he reflects on his own father: "What sort of father would I make, I wondered. I wanted to be just like Baba and I wanted to be nothing like him" (184). What "sort" of father was Baba? (Consider both positive and negative qualities). What qualities do you think are most important for a father to have? Does Baba have these? Does Amir have them? |
|                 | Optional: Make connections to Things Fall Apart (about Okonkwo's style of being a father).   |
| Chapter<br>14   | Rahim Khan tells Amir that "there is a way to be good again." Do you think that Amir can ever really be "good again"? Should he be forgiven for what he did to Hassan? Begin your log with a "thesis" arguing either that Amir does or does not deserve forgiveness. Then use evidence from the text to support your response (make sure to include quotations from the text as evidence).   |

| Chapter             | After You Read, Complete a Log in Your Journal in  |  |  |  |
|---------------------|--|--|--|--|
| of Text             | Response to the Following Prompt:  |  |  |  |
| Chapters<br>15 &16  | When Hassan goes to live with Rahim Khan, why does he move his family into his old hut instead of into the big house, even though there's plenty of room in the house and that's where Rahim Khan wants him to live? What do you think about Hassan's decision? What does it tell you about Hassan and about how Hassan views his relationship with Amir? Use at least one quote to support your answer.   |  |  |  |
| Chapters<br>17 & 18 | Pretend that you are Amir and that you can still communicate with Hassan (even though he is dead). Knowing what you know now after reading this chapter, write Hassan a letter in response to his letters to you. In your letter, you may choose to  • Apologize to Hassan  • Tell Hassan that you are brothers  • Respond to what Hassan wrote in his letters  • Write about who you feel about everything that has happened lately You may include anything you want in your letter, as long as it could believably have been written by Amir. |  |  |  |
| Chapters<br>19 & 20 | Farid says that Amir has always been a tourist in Afghanistan, even when he lived there (232). What does Farid mean by that? Later, when Wahid finds out that Amir has come to Afghanistan to find Sohrab, Wahid calls Amir a "true Afghan" (238). How do you think Amir would identify himself at this point? (As an Afghan? An American? An Afghan-American? Something else?) Which country does he feel more connected to—America or Afghanistan? Defend your answer by citing 1-3 quotes from the text.                                      |  |  |  |
| Chapter<br>21       | Describe your reaction (as a reader) to the scene at the stadium. What did this scene make you feel or think? What questions do you have about what happened at the stadium?  Why do you think Hosseini included this scene in the novel? What do you think it is meant to show?   |  |  |  |
| Chapter<br>22       | When Assef breaks Amir's ribs, Amir says that his "body was brokenbut [he] felt healed. Healed at last" (289). Why do you think suffering physical pain makes Amir feel healed? Use evidence from the text to support your ideas.  Optional: See if you can make connections to 1984.  |  |  |  |
| Chapter<br>23       | As Amir, write a letter back to Rahim Khan responding to his letter. Make sure to spend extra time responding to Rahim Khan's statements about ethics and morality. This will be the last time you (Amir) communicate with Rahim Khan, so if there is anything else you would like to tell him that did not come up in Rahim Khan's letters, now is your chance.   |  |  |  |
| Chapter<br>24       | Sohrab tells Amir, "Father [Hassan] used to say it's wrong to hurt even bad people. Because they don't know any better, and because bad people sometimes become good" (318). Do you agree with Hassan's statement? Use evidence from the text to explain your answer, as well as evidence from your own life.  |  |  |  |

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# Chapter 25

Socratic Seminar Prep: Prepare five excellent questions for our Socratic Seminar. (Your questions should be Level 2 or Level 3 questions...in other words, they shouldn't be questions that have one obvious answer. Level 2 questions ask people to analyze something in the text, and level 3 questions ask a more general or universal question that is related to the text but that could be answered with other knowledge/experience as well).

#### Tips for Writing Good Questions:

- Ask people to relate themes in the book to their own lives.
- Ask about why the author made certain choices.
- Choose an important quotation and ask people to analyze its significance in the novel.
- Ask what characters, places, or objects might symbolize in the novel.
- Start questions with "why," "how," and "what do you think about..." They usually spark discussion because they could have more than one acceptable answer.
- To make sure your question is a good one, brainstorm a possible answer for it. If you can't think of any possible answer or how it could be answered, it might be too general or too confusing for the class!

