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Literature
Teaching Unit

Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



The Kite Runner

by Khaled Hosseini

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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ISBN: 978-1-60389-060-1

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Item No: 302960

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 Five

Vocabulary

akin – similar

beget – cause, bring on

cackled – laughed with a high-pitched tone

constitutional monarchy – a government in which the powers of the king or queen are restricted by a constitution

coyly – shyly

fag – an offensive term for a gay man

grandiose – more complicated than necessary

loins – the area around the hips

lorries – trucks

nuances – very small differences

preceded – came before

republic – a form of government in which the people have control

sociopath – a person who lacks a sense of right and wrong

trepidation – trembling fear

1. Why would Amir be envious of Hassan during the gunfire?

2. What does Assef mean when he says, “Too late for Hitler...[b]ut not for us”?

3. Why are the boys and their fathers so affected by the gift Baba gives to Hassan?

Chapter Twelve

Vocabulary

brunt – main burden
chastise – criticize; punish
coiffed – done up, styled
crinkling – wrinkling
dappled – spotted
furtive – sly, glancing
hacking – coughing harshly
insinuation – indirect hint, usually negative
metastasized – spread to other parts of the body
oncologist – a doctor who specializes in treating cancer
palliative – soothing without curing
phlegm – mucus
prognosis – a forecast of how a disease will progress
reticence – hesitance, reserved behavior
slouch – droop, bend
smirk – smug smile
tenets – strongly held beliefs

1. Why is General Taheri's wife described as having "heartbreakingly eager, crooked smile and ...barely veiled hope in her eyes"?

2. What is the General's reaction to Amir's giving Soraya a short story?
