

SUMMER READING FOR AP LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

2018-19 SCHOOL YEAR

MRS. ANDERSEN AND MR. GIBBS

INTRODUCTION

This summer, we invite you to journey to Afghanistan with a reading of *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, written by Khaled Hosseini and published in 2007. Against a backdrop of Soviet occupation, civil war, and the rise of the Taliban, Hosseini tells the stories of two Afghan women, Mariam and Laila, whose lives are dramatically shaped by the national and political landscape in addition to their own personal losses. Here is an overview from the Barnes and Noble website:

Propelled by the same superb instinct for storytelling that made The Kite Runner a beloved classic, A Thousand Splendid Suns is at once an incredible chronicle of thirty years of Afghan history and a deeply moving story of family, friendship, faith, and the salvation to be found in love.

After 103 weeks on the New York Times bestseller list and with four million copies of The Kite Runner shipped, Khaled Hosseini returns with a beautiful, riveting, and haunting novel that confirms his place as one of the most important literary writers today.

Born a generation apart and with very different ideas about love and family, Mariam and Laila are two women brought jarringly together by war, by loss and by fate. As they endure the ever escalating dangers around them--in their home as well as in the streets of Kabul--they come to form a bond that makes them both sisters and mother-daughter to each other, and that will ultimately alter the course not just of their own lives but of the next generation. With heart-wrenching power and suspense, Hosseini shows how a woman's love for her family can move her to shocking and heroic acts of self-sacrifice, and that in the end it is love, or even the memory of love, that is often the key to survival.

A stunning accomplishment, A Thousand Splendid Suns is a haunting, heartbreaking, compelling story of an unforgiving time, an unlikely friendship, and an indestructible love.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: KHALED HOSSEINI (FROM WWW.KHALEDHOSSEINI.COM)

- ★ Born in Kabul, Afghanistan, in 1965
- ★ Father's job as a diplomat brought his family to Paris in 1976
- ★ Family sought political asylum in the United States (San Jose, CA) in 1980 after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan
- ★ Earned his medical degree at the University of California, San Diego and practiced medicine as an internist from 1996-2004
- ★ Published *The Kite Runner* in 2003, which spent over 100 weeks on the *Times* bestseller list
- ★ *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* have sold over 10 million copies in the U.S. and over 38 million copies worldwide
- ★ Was named a Goodwill Envoy to the United Nations Refugee Agency in 2006
- ★ Established the Khaled Hosseini Foundation, which provides humanitarian aid to the people of Afghanistan

BEFORE CLASS STARTS IN AUGUST, READ THE BOOK CAREFULLY AND ANNOTATE ACCORDING TO THE DIRECTIONS ON THIS HANDOUT (SEE BACK). COME READY TO DELVE INTO DISCUSSION OF THE NOVEL, AND EXPECT A COMPREHENSIVE OBJECTIVE TEST DURING OUR FIRST WEEK OF CLASS.

ANNOTATION INSTRUCTIONS

Using a different color of highlighter/pen for each category, mark occurrences of the following. Provide a color code when you turn in your book for grading.

★ SETTING (Use a **different color** to mark each category.)

- PHYSICAL/GEOGRAPHICAL: While a majority of the novel takes place in Kabul, other settings also play important roles. Think both large and small scale. Track changes in setting as you read, and consider viewing locations on Google Maps for a clear concept of place.
- HISTORICAL/POLITICAL: Track the turbulent events taking place in Afghanistan that form the backdrop for Mariam and Laila's remarkable journeys.
- CULTURAL: Consider Afghan culture paying particular attention to the effects of the country's changing political climate. You may want to track gender roles, the arts, pop culture.

★ STYLE

- Remember that style is not *what* the author says, but rather *how* he/she says it.
- Look for interesting in choices in diction, syntax, point of view, narrative voice, figurative language, irony, imagery, allusions, tone, and more.
- You are obviously not required to mark every stylistic choice Hosseini made in writing this book. That would be impossible since, in essence, each word Hosseini uses is a "stylistic choice." Your job is to highlight choices that you think are especially intentional, interesting, beautiful, controversial, or important to the book's meaning or effect. AP Lang & Comp graduates, think rhetorical analysis here.

For all annotations, in addition to simply marking the passage, write commentary/explanation of why you marked the passage. Comments may be brief, but if they are not there, we don't know why you marked the passage to begin with. Keep in mind that **commentary is more than a label**. For example, if you annotate a passage with rich imagery, you need to write more than "imagery" or "good imagery." Next to a description of the city of Herat (see chapter 5), you might write "imagery shows Herat is lush and lively."

FINAL NOTE

While the book is not stylistically difficult, please be prepared for mature content, including themes and descriptions of war violence, physical abuse, and sexuality.

HAPPY READING! WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU IN THE FALL.

Advanced Placement Literature and Composition: Prerequisite Skills and Work Expectations

All honors English courses at SME are rigorous classes designed for students who are skilled in Language Arts and who are committed to challenging themselves with advanced curriculum at an accelerated pace.

PREREQUISITE SKILLS: *Students who enroll in this course should already. . .*

- have succeeded in an honors course or have made strong A's every quarter in a standard class (see further explanation below)
- be advanced vocabulary learners; students should be able to easily memorize and use new words
- demonstrate a thorough knowledge of formal written language; students need to have mastered parts of speech, be proficient with punctuation, and have studied a variety of sentence patterns
- be adept at clearly expressing original and insightful thoughts in writing and class discussion
- be adept at structuring ideas and arguments in a logical, organized manner
- be adept at correctly embedding and citing quotations in formal papers
- be advanced in reading comprehension and able to tackle challenging texts at a rigorous pace
- be advanced in applying various interpretive techniques to challenging texts
- be open to a variety of literary interpretations of various works of literature

WORK ETHIC EXPECTATIONS: *Students who enroll in this course should be able and willing to. . .*

- complete the summer reading requirement(s)
- do 30 minutes to 1 hour of homework per school day (on average), including at least 20 pages of reading per night (on average)
- compose the following kinds of papers: a college application essay, a 6-page outside reading project first semester with primary and secondary sources, an 8-10 page "Senior Research Paper" second semester with primary and secondary sources (non-AP classes write 5-7 pages), timed in-class essays, creative assignments (original poetry, short story, etc.), and more
- participate actively and productively in class discussions, including Socratic seminars
- practice excellent time management and self-discipline
- complete most assignments at home rather than in class
- expect that no late work will be accepted for credit
- prioritize being in class
- be prepared to make up missed exams and in-class essays on the first day back after an absence
- adhere to school/district timeline for completing make-up work without reminders from the teacher
- adhere to a strict honor code: all students are expected to do their own work and read all of the assigned literature, never substituting internet sources or summaries, never copying worksheets/assignments from another student, etc.
- be responsible for one's own behavior, assignments, and any conflict resolution

STANDARD vs. HONORS CLASSES: *Please be advised. . .*

It is generally rare for a student to move from a standard class to an honors class from year to year. (Movement has usually been due to a rare occurrence or an extenuating circumstance that prevented a student from taking the honors class the year before.) It is expected that a student who moves from a standard class into an honors class will have received strong A's each quarter in his/her standard class and has a pre-established work ethic. Even then, students who move to an advanced class need to realize and accept that they will likely not have covered all of the skills and material presented in the honors course; therefore, the student is responsible for bridging this gap by acquiring the prerequisite skills independently or through extra assistance.

HONORS ENGLISH CONTRACT

We understand the prerequisites and the work ethic expectations that apply to this agreement. The decision to enroll in this course is an academic one, based on current skills and motivation; it is not a social decision. We are committed to tackling the challenge of an advanced curriculum at an accelerated pace. We feel that this is a wise decision, and we are committed to fulfilling these requirements.

Student Name (printed)

Student Signature

Date

Parent Name (printed)

Parent Signature

Date

As an enrollee in an honors class, I understand there is an initial requirement for summer reading. Regardless of the completion of this, I will not be allowed to drop or transfer out of this course unless it is at the end of the semester. Furthermore, I understand and take responsibility for any grade that I receive as a result of failure to meet this initial requirement.

Student Initials _____