

**SUMMER READING FOR AP LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION**  
**2020-21 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.*

GETTING A COPY OF THE BOOK

We would encourage you to get your own copy of the book so that you can interact with it over the summer and in the beginning weeks of the school year next fall. We understand that stay-at-home orders and closings may present some additional challenges in getting a copy of the book this year. A quick internet search found both new and used copies available through many booksellers as well as copies available to borrow through [The National Emergency Library](#).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: KHALED HOSSEINI (FROM [WWW.KHALEDHOSSEINI.COM](http://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. His third novel, *And The Mountains Echoed*, was published in 2013. In 2018, he published *Sea Prayer*, a short illustrated book to call attention to the refugee crisis in Syria.
- ★ *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

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.

**BEFORE CLASS STARTS IN AUGUST, READ THE BOOK CAREFULLY. COME READY TO DELVE INTO DISCUSSION OF THE NOVEL.**

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