

# Accelerated Sophomore English: Summer Reading Assignment 2021

“The role of a writer is not to say what we can all say, but what we are unable to say.”  
-- Anais Nin

*The Kite Runner*, by Khaled Hosseini  
ISBN: 978-1594631941

Welcome to 10<sup>th</sup> Grade English! This year we will read a variety of novels, short stories, and poetry from cultures around the world. We will begin our journey with *The Kite Runner*, a novel set in both Afghanistan and the United States. According to the book jacket, the novel is “about friendship, betrayal, and the price of loyalty. It is about the bonds between fathers and sons, and the power of fathers over sons – their love, their sacrifices, and their lies. Written against a backdrop of history that has not been told in fiction before, *The Kite Runner* describes the rich culture and beauty of a land in the process of being destroyed. But with the devastation, Khaled Hosseini also gives us hope through the novel’s faith in the power of reading and storytelling, and in the possibilities he shows for redemption.” Your summer assignment is a chance for you to explore ideas and write in response to what you are reading and thinking. The assignment has three parts and all work will be collected the first day of classes.

As Voltaire said, “Think for yourself and let others enjoy the privilege of doing so too.” Enjoy the privilege of reading this wonderful novel, enjoy the writing process, and have a great summer!

## **Part I – Organizing**

**Watch:** [How I Take Notes](#) and [10 Note-Taking Tips](#)

After watching StudyTee’s notes system, I want you to think about how you can benefit from this organization method that will be used for this summer and throughout the year.

**Assignment:** Get a notebook of your choice with the style of paper that you prefer (lined, graph, blank, bullet point, etc.). We will use this notebook to create notes for the major works that we study, so find one that you really like.

**Why it is important:** The process of learning something often starts out feeling disorganized and unwieldy; the most important aspects are not always salient.

Consolidation helps organize and solidify learning. This notebook will serve as a means to consolidate what you have learned throughout the year, allowing you to retrieve the significant progress we make. Make it your own. Decorate it if you like or keep it clean and clear.

## **Part II – Seeing**

### **Watch:** [The Nerdwriter Analyzes Edward Hopper's "Nighthawks"](#)

Evan Puschak has his own [YouTube channel \(NerdWriter\)](#) in which he offers video essays on a range of topics from art, to film, to politics, to literature. He is thoughtful, well-researched, and has a keen sense of timing and audience awareness. In this video essay he analyzes one of the iconic 20th century American paintings, “Nighthawks.” Pay attention to not only what he sees, but also notice the biographical and historical context he weaves into his analysis.

**Assignment:** For your first set of notes, I want you to write 2 pages. Choose a piece of Afghan art. It can be a work of literature. It can be a painting. It can be a song. It can be any creative endeavor that has some fascinating artistry. I want you to analyze that work of art on a similar level to Evan Puschak (the Nerdwriter). If you look at his show notes on the YouTube page for the “Nighthawks” video essay, he has done a fair amount of research. I want you to do the same. In your notes, find an organized way to explain its artistic merit and value. Don’t just provide a summary of what it is, analyze how it operates and why it is important. Include a copy of the work you chose to class and be prepared to discuss your findings.

**Why it is important:** Use your notes to enrich your personal language, background knowledge, and vocabulary. For that to happen, these notes should be so much more sophisticated than a summary. They should reveal the complexity of the work of art. Articulate not only what it means to you, but also the broader cultural and historical context in which it was created.

## **Part III – Reading**

### **Text: The Kite Runner**

**Assignment:** Read *The Kite Runner*. As you read, you will record your responses to the text in journal entries. For full credit, you must write a minimum of 6-8 pages. How you organize those pages is up to you. You can respond to the text in a variety of ways. The most important thing to remember is that your observations should be specific and detailed. Write about what strikes you in the text. Your journal shows your own thoughts and ideas about the things we read for class. Be as original and creative as you would like to be.

If you are stuck or unsure where to begin in your responses, consider the following list:

- ❖ Make note of effective &/or creative use of stylistic or literary devices, such as a metaphor, simile, personification, etc.
- ❖ Note intriguing examples of sensory details and imagery.
- ❖ Note examples of patterns: recurring images, ideas, colors, symbols, or motifs.  
Look out for the following images: pomegranate trees, scars, kites, winter scenes, references to writing or books, slingshots, watches, blood
- ❖ What parts of the story are ironic? Why is Hosseini being ironic?
- ❖ What you learn about the narrator from narration/interior monologue?

**Note: your journal entries should be *responses to the text*, not simply transcribed quotations.**

**Why it is important:** Thoughtful readers write to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately by selecting apt and specific evidence, organizing that evidence into broader ideas, and conveying the impact of its meaning. A mature thinker chooses and develops his or her own criteria in order to evaluate the quality of texts.

**Reminder:** This summer project is worth a significant portion of your first quarter/semester grade. Also, please expect in-class writing assessments and discussions on *The Kite Runner* throughout the first week of school. I hope you enjoy reading this novel and doing a bit of research on Afghanistan.