

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES FOR KITE RUNNER
COLLEGE BOOK FOR SPRING 2006

Look at disciplines other than your own to get ideas for classroom assignments or opportunities for students to receive extra credit. For all foreign languages, look at Spanish.

All disciplines should look at <http://www.afghan-web.com>

Administration of Justice:

Did execution by stoning originate in Islam? To answer, go to the Library and look at sources such as Encyclopedia of Crime and Justice, Encyclopedia of Religion and Encyclopedia Judaica and follow references given there.

Anthropology:

(p. 169+ in the book) Compare/contrast the wedding customs of Afghanistan and any other country.

Are there cultures other than the one described in the book where there is a "brotherhood" of children who nursed at the same breast?

Compare/contrast Shi'a (Hazara) and Pashtun (Sunni) Muslims. How are they alike? How are they different?

Architecture:

Draw the entryway to Baba's house from the description on p. 4.

Art:

Draw the entryway to Baba's house from the description on p. 4.

Draw Baba from the description on pp. 12-13.

Astronomy:

Research Ulugh Beg and his contributions to astronomy.

Biology:

Research different types of biological warfare, choose one, and write a short paper about its effects on humans.

Chemistry:

Research different types of chemical warfare, choose one, and write a short paper about it.

What was the earliest form of chemical warfare?

Child Development:

(p. 46) Is circumcision done more or less now? Why or why not?

(p. 46) How can a parent prepare a child for surgery?

(p. 21) Rahim Khan said, "Children aren't coloring books. You don't get to fill them in with your favorite colors." Have a class discussion about this. How do parents push their own values and interests on children, and what harm can this do to the child?

(p. 22) Baba said, "A boy who won't stand up for himself becomes a man who can't stand up for anything." Discuss this in the context of little boys fighting. Does our culture expect this? Are boys who won't fight still called "sissies", or worse?

(pp. 32-33) Compare and contrast the ways in which Baba and Rahim Khan react to the story Amir wrote. How does a parent's reaction affect a child's self-esteem? How can teachers help parents to understand this?

(pp. 40-43) How should children be taught to deal with bullying?

(p. 157) Baba (to Amir) said about his cancer, "What's going to happen to you, you say? All those years, that's what I was trying to teach you, how to never have to ask that question." Discuss how parents can foster independence in their children even at an early age.

(p. 58) Baba said that it is "better to get hurt by the truth than comforted by a lie." Comment on this. How would you explain to a child the importance of telling the truth? At what age is a child able to distinguish the truth from a lie?

Communication:

Tell about the history of kites.

Tell how to make a kite.

Go to <http://www.afghan-web.com>. Choose a holiday and research it to make a class presentation.

Describe the Afghan flag as it has changed through history.

(p. 48) Read about what Amir does on the day of the first snowfall each year. Do you have a tradition for any particular day? Speak to the class about it.

(p. 140) General Teheri told Amir that if he can truly appreciate his father he's half-way to being a man. Speak to the class about your own father, his strengths and weaknesses, and what he has taught you.

(p. 157) Baba (to Amir) says about his cancer, "What's going to happen to you, you say? All those years, that's what I was trying to teach you, how to never have to ask that question." Was Baba successful?

In the Reference section of the Library, you will find several encyclopedias about the experiences of different immigrant groups in America. Look at the articles on Afghans and tell whether Baba and Amir were typical.

(p. 58) Baba said that it is "better to get hurt by the truth than comforted by a lie." Comment on this.

(pp. 17-18) Baba said that there is only one sin, theft, and all other sins are a variation of it. Do you agree or disagree?

(pp. 122-123) "I only knew the memory lived in me, a perfectly encapsulated morsel of a good past . . ." Do you have a "morsel of a good past" that you would like to share with the class?

(p. 26) Hassan and Amir saw "Rio Bravo" three times and "Magnificent Seven" thirteen times. Which film(s) have you seen over and over and why?

Baba is a fascinating, complex character with many seemingly contradictory characteristics. Prepare an oral presentation about him. What is your opinion of this man?

The Oxford English Dictionary is a wonderful resource in which you can find not only the origin and meaning of a word but also how it has been used throughout history. And it's available online from off-campus if you have the Library's remote access passwords! Look up the word "kite" and make a brief report.

Create an interview. You work for CNN and have been given the job of interviewing one of the book's characters. Write your questions and the character's answers and then, with a classmate, present it orally to the class.

Dance:

In the Library, research Afghanistan in a dance encyclopedia. Also, find the website for the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival (this year it will be in January 2006) and find out about Afghan dancers who have appeared there in the past.

Dental Hygiene:

Do a Google search on *Operation Rimini*, which is helping people in Afghanistan in many ways, including with dental care. Can you find and publicize a way that Southwestern College students and staff could provide dental supplies to be sent there?

Economics:

Using *Country Watch* on the Library's list of databases (available from off-campus if you ask for the passwords), read about the economy of Afghanistan and answer this question:

When the Taliban were deposed, what was the average annual income in the country?

(p. 176) Contrast the views on food stamps and welfare of Baba and General Taheri.

English:

The Oxford English Dictionary is a wonderful resource in which you can find not only the origin and meaning of a word but also how it has been used throughout history. And it's available online from off-campus if you have the Library's remote access passwords! Look up the word "kite" and make a brief report.

(p. 22) Baba said, "A boy who won't stand up for himself becomes a man who can't stand up for anything." Does this statement fit Amir? Write a brief essay telling why or why not.

(p. 48) Read about what Amir does on the day of the first snowfall each year. Do you have a tradition for any particular day? Write an essay about it.

(p. 140) General Teheri told Amir that if he can truly appreciate his father he's half-way to being a man. Write an essay about your own father, his strengths and weaknesses, and what he has taught you.

(p. 157) Baba (to Amir) says about his cancer, "What's going to happen to you, you say? All those years, that's what I was trying to teach you, how to never have to ask that question." How did Baba try to teach this to Amir? Was he successful? Write a short paper about this.

(p. 58) Baba said that it is "better to get hurt by the truth than comforted by a lie." Do you agree or disagree? Write a short essay about this.

(p. 52) "Afghans cherish customs but abhor rules." Find examples of this in the book and write a short paper.

(pp. 17-18) Baba said that there is only one sin, theft, and all other sins are a variation of it. Do you agree or disagree?

(pp. 122-123) "I only knew the memory lived in me, a perfectly encapsulated morsel of a good past . . ." Do you have a "morsel of a good past" that you would like to share with the class?

(p. 26) Hassan and Amir saw "Rio Bravo" three times and "Magnificent Seven" thirteen times. Which film(s) have you seen over and over and why? Write a short essay.

Baba is a fascinating, complex character with many seemingly contradictory characteristics. Write a paper about him. What is your opinion of this man?

When Amir and Baba move to the States their relationship changes, and Amir begins to view his father as a more complex man. Discuss the changes in their relationship. Do you see the changes in Baba as tragic or positive?

(p. 176) Contrast the views on food stamps and welfare of Baba and General Taheri.

Imagine that Sohrab has grown up and is in college. (Where do you think he might go to college?) He is now in his dorm room and writing a letter to his parents. What does he say?

Fire Science:

Research the International Security Assistance Force and Operation Fingal, through which British military personnel have given Afghan firefighters their first training in more than 23 years. Imagine that you have been involved in this. What would you need to teach the Afghans? How has firefighting changed (use the U.S. for this) in the past quarter-century?

Geography:

Find Afghanistan on a map of the world. A good source of information is the Library database *Country Watch*.

History:

Write a research paper about the relations between India and Afghanistan over the centuries.

Make a timeline for Afghanistan showing the various conquerors of the region.

Research and write a short paper on Ahmad Shah Durrani, who is called the founder of modern-day Afghanistan.

In the Reference section of the Library, you will find several encyclopedias about the experiences of different immigrant groups in America. Look at the articles on Afghans and tell whether Baba and Amir were typical.

Journalism:

Use the *Historical New York Times* database to read primary source articles from a selected period in the history of Afghanistan.

Write an article for an underground newspaper during the time of the Taliban.

Write a newspaper article reporting about the recent return of Amir back to the United States after his trip to Afghanistan. Remember to include *who, what, when, where, why* etc.

Mathematics:

Using the Statistical Abstract of the United States, look up Afghanistan in the index and follow the referral. Make two bar graphs, one showing how the number of Afghan immigrants has changed over the years and the other showing the change in number of Afghans as permanent residents. You may find the numbers for 2001 surprising; do you know why?

Music:

p. 61 Was Ahmad Zahir, the singer who performed at Amir's birthday party, a real person?

Look up Afghan music and musical instruments in the Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians and the Garland Encyclopedia of World Music and online at <http://www.afghanland.com>.

Nursing:

(p. 46) Recently there have been reports that circumcision might drastically reduce the cases of AIDS in Africa. Using the Library's databases, find articles about this. Why would circumcision reduce AIDS? Why would African men resist circumcision?

(p. 3) What causes harelip (cleft palate)? How is it treated? Research *Doctors Without Borders*, a group of doctors in the U.S. who volunteer their time to treat cleft palate in other countries.

(p. 8) Ali had a congenital paralysis of his lower facial muscles. What is the medical term for this?

Paralegal:

Go to the Librarians' Internet Index (<http://lii.org>) and type *Afghanistan*. Read about the country's constitution.

Personal Development:

(p. 157) Baba (to Amir) says about his cancer, "What's going to happen to you, you say? All those years, that's what I was trying to teach you, how to never have to ask that question." If you were suddenly without family and resources, would you be able to manage on your own? How have your family members encouraged you to be able to do things for yourself?

Philosophy:

(p. 115) Baba said to the Russian soldier who said that there is no shame in war, "Tell him he's wrong. War doesn't negate decency. It demands it, even more than in times of peace." Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

(pp. 155-156) ". . . like Satan, cancer has many names." How many names for Satan can you find?

(p. 58) Baba said that it is "better to get hurt by the truth than comforted by a lie." Comment on this.

Political Science:

What were the Geneva Accords and what did they have to do with Afghanistan? the Islamabad Accords? Jalalabad Accords?

Russia says that the Taliban supported the rebels in Chechnya. Find some articles in a newspaper database (ask a librarian to help you) and tell whether you agree or disagree.

Why did France not support U.N. sanctions against the Taliban? Can you find articles to explain it?

(pp. 125-126) Baba called Israel "real men" and said "You're Arabs, help the Palestinians, then!" Does this surprise you? Does this fit with Baba, while living in Fremont, considering himself a Republican?

(p. 126) Baba said of Jimmy Carter that he "had unwittingly done more for communism than Leonid Brezhnev." Do you agree or disagree?

In the Reference section of the Library, you will find several encyclopedias about the experiences of different immigrant groups in America. Look at the articles on Afghanis and tell whether Baba and Amir were typical.

Psychology:

(p. 21) Rahim Khan said, "Children aren't coloring books. You don't get to fill them in with your favorite colors." Comment on this. How do parents push their own values and interests on children, and what harm can this do to a child?

(p. 22) Baba said, "A boy who won't stand up for himself becomes a man who can't stand up for anything." Do you agree?

(p. 38) Does Assef fit the definition of a sociopath?

(p. 55) "And that's the thing about people who mean everything they say. They think everyone else does, too." Comment on this.

(p. 121) Review the description of panic and comment on this.

(p. 157) Baba (to Amir) says about his cancer, "What's going to happen to you, you say? All those years, that's what I was trying to teach you, how to never have to ask that question." Comment on this.

(pp. 112-113) The book describes a situation where people were spying on each other. How does this affect a human being, physically, emotionally, etc.?

(pp. 128-129) Why did Baba have such a hard time adjusting to life in America? Do you think he was typical of immigrants?

Baba is a fascinating, complex character with many seemingly contradictory characteristics. Write a paper about him. What is your opinion of this man?

(p. 176) Contrast the views on food stamps and welfare of Baba and General Taheri.

What are Amir's strengths and weaknesses at the beginning of the book and at the end?

Sociology:

Recently there have been reports that circumcision might drastically reduce the cases of AIDS in Africa. Using the Library's databases, find articles about this. Why would African men resist circumcision?

(pp. 112-113) The book describes people spying on each other. Read this and compare/contrast to another situation in history, perhaps during the Holocaust ([The Diary of Anne Frank](#) or [Dr. Zhivago](#)).

Spanish:

Tell, in Spanish, how to make a kite.

Go to <http://www.afghan-web.com>. Choose a holiday and research it to make a class presentation.

In Spanish, describe the Afghan flag as it has changed through history.

Go to <http://www.afghan-web.com>. Click on *Culture*. Choose a wisdom story or a proverb to translate into Spanish.

(p. 48) Read about what Amir does on the day of the first snowfall each year. Do you have a tradition for any particular day? Tell the class about it in Spanish.

(p. 140) General Tehherri told Amir that if he can truly appreciate his father he's half-way to being a man. Write a short paper about your own father, his strengths and weaknesses, and what he has taught you.

(p. 157) Baba (to Amir) says about his cancer, "What's going to happen to you, you say? All those years, that's what I was trying to teach you, how to never have to ask that question." Comment on this, either in writing or orally before the class.

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Telemedia:

The film "Osama" was the first Afghan film produced after the fall of the Taliban. View the film and write a review of it, perhaps commenting on the techniques used in filming, and/or look for articles about the film in magazines and newspapers.

Travel and Tourism:

Imagine that a journalist for a TV station needs to go to Kabul, Afghanistan, to do an important story. He asks you to help him by getting him a flight and a hotel and any information you think he should know. (Don't forget to go to the Department of State website and search there for relevant information.)