

May 5, 2017

**Dear (Nearly!) Junior A.P. Scholar:**

Hello! We will be teaching Junior Advanced Placement Literature and Composition next year, and we want to welcome you to a great year! ☺

We also want to give you a “head’s up” about a few things. **First, we want to make sure you understand that we are counting on your commitment to AP to be a serious one.** AP requires a *significant* dedication to scholarly endeavors – and that means a *lot* of work! **Our expectation is that you are both capable of meeting AP’s high standards and willing to work to your potential to do so!**

Secondly, we need to share information about your summer reading. We would like you to read *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini. You may purchase the book as a hard copy or electronic copy, but you must have a copy to use for the summer and first several weeks of school. This novel is epic in nature, broad in scope and time. It contains a type of odyssey: a journey seeking a rebirth of spirit. Additionally, the story delves deeply into the age-old dilemma of good versus evil. As you read, watch for these motifs and take note of specific examples.

To understand this book, it would be helpful for you to read Genesis Chapter 4: 1 – 16. You should notice several examples of symbolism and allusion to the story of Cain and Abel woven into Hosseini’s tale.

Dr. Khaled Hosseini, a physician currently living in California, turns his childhood memories of Afghanistan into fiction. *The Kite Runner*, which was his first book, traces how myths and the past affect the family dynamics. It also focuses on individual characters but captures the cataclysmic worldwide events that seep through the protective walls of family and into the souls of its members. Although it is not an autobiography, Hosseini has certainly drawn from his own knowledge and experiences to create this Afghani-American odyssey.

Because *The Kite Runner* includes many terms which might not be familiar to you, we are including pages of information that you can consult as you read. These notes are also available on the English Department webpage (<http://www.bcsc.k12.in.us/domain/287>). We expect that you will be familiar with these materials when you report to class.

We think you will find this book enjoyable and fascinating. **It is imperative that you read this book carefully and completely!** Take time think about what you are reading; “skimming” will not be an effective approach to this text! You can count on a comprehensive test on the **second day of school**. Additionally, there will be several graded discussions and writing assignments centered around *The Kite Runner* during the first few weeks of school. **Your first nine weeks grade will undoubtedly suffer if you do not complete the summer reading assignment.**

It is also important for you to know that this summer reading book, as well as every other book taught in this course, is approved for use on the Open Essay part of the AP Literature and Composition Test that faces you next May, so it will be helpful for you to know it well!

Important note: While there is a movie on this work, we recommend not seeing it - at least until you've read the book. It's very easy to confuse a book and its movie, and the class will be focusing on the written word. **Also, you need to know that we unconditionally ban the use of “study guides” like *Cliff's Notes*, *Sparks Notes*, and their entire ilk; they are crutches designed for academically-challenged or motivationally-challenged people, and if you are one of those, our AP course is not for you!** AP courses are very discussion-oriented, and what *you* think about a work matters! AP epiphanies are the best!

As you read, look at how these motifs work throughout the novel:

- the journey (which involves suffering and ultimately seeks a rebirth of spirit)
- family dynamics/relationships
- good versus evil
- the resilience of the human spirit
- accepting responsibility for one's actions

Highlighting pens and Post-it notes work very well to keep track of key ideas, motifs, and your epiphanies!

We are looking forward to working and learning with all of you. Have a great summer!

**Sincerely,**

**Katie Chaplin  
Kelley Culp  
David Spencer  
Kate Stahl**