

Timeline of Afghan History

- 1919–1929** King Amanullah introduces reforms to modernize Afghanistan; conservative religious groups revolt against the government
- Jan. 14, 1929** Amanullah abdicates
- Oct. 17, 1929** Nadir Shah, former general and minister of war, becomes king
- Nov. 8, 1933** Nadir Shah assassinated; his son, Zahir Shah, becomes king
- Sept. 6, 1953** King Zahir Shah asks his cousin, Muhammad Daoud Kahn, to become Prime Minister
- Mar. 10, 1963** Prime Minister Daoud resigns
- July 1973** Daoud deposes King Zahir Shah and proclaims Afghanistan a republic; Daoud is president
- 1978** Daoud executed by members of the Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), a party founded on Marxism
- Dec. 21, 1979** The Soviet Union invades Afghanistan in support of the Marxists
- 1980** The US and other countries send arms to Afghan resistance groups fighting the Soviets
- 1981** Five Afghan resistance groups form alliance named mujahedin
- 1981–1989** The mujahedin battle the Soviet troops in Afghanistan
- May 1988** Soviet troops begin to withdraw from Afghanistan, ending Feb 1989
- 1989–1992** The mujahedin fight Afghan gov. led by PDPA member Najibullah
- 1992** Najibullah resigns; the mujahedin elect Rabbani president
- 1992–1996** With the Communists gone, suppressed ethnic rivalries resurface, leading to civil war
- 1994** The Taliban, mostly Pashtuns, gather followers in southern Afghanistan
- Sept. 27, 1996** Taliban take Kabul
- 1997** Led by Ahmad Massoud, non-Pashtun ethnic groups of Afghanistan form the Northern Alliance to fight the Taliban
- July 1998** The Taliban attack Mazar-i-Sharif, killing about 6,000 Hazaras
- 1998–2001** The Taliban fight the Northern Alliance
- Sept. 11, 2001** Supported by the Taliban, Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda attack the US
- Oct. 7, 2001** The US begins bombing Afghanistan after Taliban refuses to hand over Osama bin Laden
- 2002–2006** International coalition forces fight remnants of Taliban; Afghans work to create a constitution and hold democratic elections
- Dec. 7, 2004** Hamid Karzai becomes the first democratically elected president in Afghanistan's history

Sources:

San Jose State University—<http://www.sjsu.edu/reading/KR2006.htm>

University of Texas at Arlington—<http://www.uta.edu/uac/one-book/?c=ONE-BOOK-2006-07>

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The Kite Runner Reading Guide



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As you read, think about . . .

Friendship: Are Amir and Hassan true friends? What is your definition of friendship?

Identity and self-determination: Amir says, "That Hassan would grow up illiterate like Ali and most Hazaras had been decided the minute he was born" (28). In what ways are our lives scripted for us? How does Amir rebel against the "script" he's been given?

Power of Experience: In the first sentence of the book, Amir narrates, "I became what I am today at the age of twelve." What events and circumstances shaped his life? What events and circumstances have shaped your life?

Guilt: Amir is tortured by guilt. What is he guilty of? How does his guilt affect him? What, if anything, enables him to be free of his guilt?

Redemption: "My body was broken...but I felt healed. Healed at last" (289). What does Amir mean, in both psychological and spiritual terms? Does he redeem himself?

Power: Who has power in the novel? Although Amir has a position of wealth, how might Hassan have power over Amir?

Other: symbolism; the role of religion, culture and politics; the immigrant experience and the American Dream

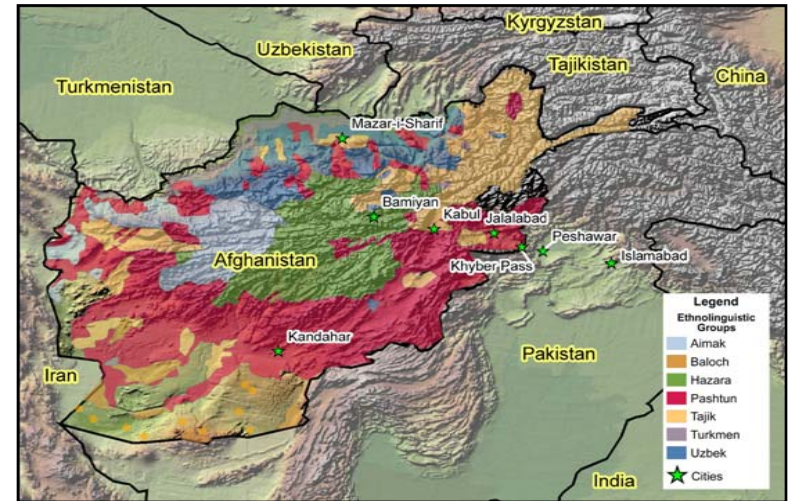
More reading questions are in the back of the book and at www.uncw.edu/commonreading/



The National Flag of Afghanistan

Characters

- Ali (AH-lee)** - Hassan's father; servant to Baba and Amir
- Amir (AH-meer)** - Main character and narrator
- Assef (AH-sef)** - Childhood tormentor of Amir and Hassan
- Baba (baw-baw)** - Amir's father
- General Taheri (TAH-hair-REE)** - Soraya's father
- Hassan (HA-sahn)** - Servant and friend to Amir
- Khaled Jamila (ha-lah jah-MEE-la)** - Soraya's mother
- Rahim Khan (RAW-heem HON)** - Baba's friend and business partner; mentor to Amir
- Sohrab (so-RAWB)** - Hassan's son
- Soraya (so-raw-YAH)** - Amir's wife



Fast Facts about Afghanistan

Capital	Kabul (pop. 2,000,000)
Size	647, 500 sq. km. (slightly smaller than Texas)
Population	31,889,923 (July 2007 estimate)
Government	Islamic Republic
Ethnic Groups	Pashtun (42%), Tajik (27%), Hazara (9%), Uzbek (9%), Other (13%)
Religions	Sunni Muslim (80%), Shi'a Muslim (19%), Other (1%)
Languages	Afghan Persian (50%, official), Pashtu (35%, official), Turkic Languages (11%), 30 minor languages, much bilingualism
Life Expectancy	43.77 years
Literacy	36% (Male 51%, Female 21%)

Source: CIA—The World Factbook—Afghanistan

See reverse for a [Timeline of Afghan History](#) and more resources.