

## English 12 - Summer Assignment

In order to prepare for English 12 you are required to read *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini and write your personal essay. This assignment must be brought to your English class on the first full day of classes in September and will count toward your first quarter grade.

### Part I - *A Thousand Splendid Suns*

This book tells the story of two women, Mariam and Laila, and how the religious and political realities in present day Afghanistan shaped their lives and decisions.

After you have read this novel, please respond to the following questions:

1. Briefly relate the plot of this novel in 2 or 3 paragraphs. Be sure to write about the exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and the resolution.
2. Life in Afghanistan, before and during the harsh reign of the Taliban, is the setting of this book. It is a place of political and religious unrest. How does this reality affect the daily lives of the people there, especially the women?

3. In this book the following relationships are very important to the story:

a.) Mariam and Jalil

b.) Laila and Tariq

For each of these relationships:

A. identify the characters.

B. refer to specific incidents in the book to describe the relationship between the characters and the impact of the relationship on either Mariam or Laila. How was she affected or changed?

4. The central relationship of the book is between Mariam and Laila. Describe the evolution of their relationship (how it changed and why) by writing about at least 3 specific incidents in the book.

5. How does the writer characterize Rasheed? Answer this question by referring to at least 3 specific incidents in the book.

6. Choose two of the following themes and describe in detail how the author brings out these themes:

A. repression of women

B. sacrifice for the sake of love

C. heroism

D. friendship

E. hope and endurance

F. parent - child relationships

7. The title of the book is taken from a poem written by a 17<sup>th</sup> century Persian poet, part of which can be found in Chapter 26. Keeping in mind the major themes of this book, what do you think “the thousand splendid suns” symbolize? Please explain.

## Summer Assignment for Juniors – The College Essay

Please write a personal statement that can be used as part of your college application in the Fall. The purpose of this essay is to share information about yourself in ways different from courses, grades, test scores and other objective data that will be provided by St. Joseph's High School to the schools you apply to. This statement will enable you to demonstrate your ability to organize your thoughts and express yourself. After reading your essay, the reader should know you better as a person.

Please write a three page essay. Your essay should use a 12 pt. font, Times New Roman, have a one inch margin and be double-spaced.

Your essay will be graded on content, organization, correct grammar and usage and correct spelling. It must be handed in on the first full day of classes in September.

Choose one of the following topics for your personal essay:

- A. Describe and evaluate a significant experience or achievement that has special meaning to you.
- B. Discuss an issue of personal, local or national concern and its importance to you.
- C. Write about a person who has had significant influence on you and describe that influence.
- D. Write about a character in fiction, a historical figure or a creative work (as in art, science etc.) that has had an influence on you and explain.
- E. Discuss your short and long term educational and career goals. How are they related? Which are priorities? Are there any courses you have taken in high school that have influenced your career goals?
- F. Discuss a leadership experience you have had in any area of your life: school, work, athletics, family, church, community, etc. How and why did you become a leader in this area? How has this experience influenced you and your goals?
- G. Discuss your involvement in and contributions to a community or volunteer organization near your home, school or elsewhere. What did you accomplish? How has this experience influenced you and your goals? How did your involvement in these activities make a difference to others?