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Dr. David R. Schuler  
Superintendent

Eileen M. Hart  
Principal

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Dear Student:

Our records indicate that you are enrolled in Honors World Literature next year. In order to prepare for a rigorous year in the sophomore honors program, you need to spend part of your summer reading from a list of selected titles. As honors English students, you will need to read two works this summer: *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by **Khaled Hosseini** and **one of the summer reading selections from the all school list**. You are required to complete an assignment for each book (see the attached details) and both are due upon your return next school year. Failure to complete these assignments may jeopardize your success in class.

Please feel free to contact the school with any questions you may have regarding your summer reading. The phone number is (847) 718-5674.

Have a safe and restful summer. We look forward to having you in class.

Sincerely,

  
Peter Mikulak

  
Alicia Rafacz

**Honors World Literature and Composition**  
**Summer Reading Assignment for *A Thousand Splendid Suns***  
**and an all-school book**  
**2017**

Respond to two of the prompts. Each response should be a page in length minimum, in MLA format, and thoughtfully answer the questions. When you are asked to evaluate, you may use your personal experience or observation along with textual evidence.

You will not be assessed for "correctness." Your answers will give the instructor an opportunity to evaluate how carefully you have read the texts and serve as a writing sample, but you will be given full credit for effort no matter how effective or accurate your answers are. Please be sure to include textual evidence in all of your responses.

1) The phrase "a thousand splendid suns," from the poem by Saib-e-Tabrizi, is quoted twice in the novel – once as Laila's family prepares to leave Kabul, and again when she decides to return there from Pakistan. It is also echoed in one of the final lines: "Miriam is in Laila's own heart, where she shines with the bursting radiance of a thousand suns." Discuss the thematic significance of this phrase.

2) Mariam's mother tells her: "Women like us. We endure. It's all we have." Discuss how this sentiment informs Mariam's life and how it relates to the larger themes of the novel.

3) Growing up, Laila feels that her mother's love is reserved for her two brothers. "People," she decides, "shouldn't be allowed to have new children if they'd already given away all their love to their old ones." How does this sentiment inform Laila's reaction to becoming pregnant with Rasheed's child? What lessons from her childhood does Laila apply in raising her own children?

4) At several points in the story, Mariam and Laila pass themselves off as mother and daughter. What is the symbolic importance of this subterfuge? In what ways is Mariam's and Laila's relationship with each other informed by their relationships with their own mothers?

5) One of the Taliban judges at Mariam's trial tells her, "God has made us different, you women and us men. Our brains are different. You are not able to think like we can. Western doctors and their science have proven this." What is the irony in this statement? How is irony employed throughout the novel?

6) The driver who takes Babi, Laila, and Tariq to the giant stone Buddhas above the Bamiyan Valley describes the crumbling fortress of Shahr-e-Zohak as "the story of our country, one invader after another... we're like those walls up there. Battered, and nothing pretty to look at, but still standing." Discuss the metaphorical import of this passage as it relates to Miriam and Laila. In what ways does their story reflect the larger story of Afghanistan's troubled history?

7) While the first three parts of the novel are written in the past tense, the final part is written in

present tense. What do you think was the author's intent in making this shift? How does it change the effect of this final section?

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### **Summer Reading Assignment for One All-School Book**

Read one of the summer reading selections from the all school list. For the book, answer all of the following questions using textual evidence to support your answer. Please type your responses.

#### **The Questions**

- 1) Who is the speaker? (Describe the author's persona. What do you know about the person who is telling this story?)
- 2) What is the occasion? (When does the story take place? When is the story being told? Why does the author need to tell this story?)
- 3) Who is the intended audience for this book? (What assumptions does the author seem to make about his/her readers?)
- 4) What is the purpose of this book? (In other words, what does the author want his/her audience to believe or do after reading this book?)
- 5) What is the tone of this book? (Select an adjective that describes the tone—sympathetic, confused, angry, disappointed, etc. Then explain how and why the author uses this tone.)

#### **The Writing Assignment**

After answering all of the above questions for each book, write a 2-3 page narrative (typed, double-spaced, 12-point font) that vividly describes a personal experience or an observation of someone else's experience. Tell a story about one of the main characters from your novel that reveals something about the "internal landscape" of the person you are describing. (Internal landscape refers to the attitude, personal philosophy, or emotional state of the subject.) Be sure to include sensory descriptions of the central character as well as the setting and the action. If necessary, also include dialog. This scene should be created from inferences you take from the text and not just be a re-telling of what the author originally wrote.