Study Guide:

Three Cups of Tea

OBJECTIVES
• Students will read and comprehend Three Cups of Tea.
• Students will respond to questions about the text.
• Students will make connections between the text, self, and others through discussion and writing.
• Students will be able to identify elements of nonfiction (characters, setting, plot).
• Students will analyze and interpret text.
• Students will draw conclusions about the text and will demonstrate what they have learned through discussion and in writing.

RESOURCES AND MATERIALS
• The text Three Cups of Tea by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin
  
  Note: A study guide for Three Cups of Tea—Young Reader’s Edition is found in the Middle School Curriculum section.
• Glossary of Terms (located in the Pennies for Peace Toolkit section)
• Character Attribute Chart (provided below)
• Choices & Consequences Chart (provided below)
• Story Structure Chart (provided below)
• Central Asia Institute & Pennies for Peace Story (located in the Pennies for Peace Toolkit section)
• Videos (located in the Pennies for Peace Toolkit section)
• Photos (located in the Pennies for Peace Toolkit section)
• Fact sheets (located in the Pennies for Peace Toolkit section)
• Printable Map (located in the Pennies for Peace Toolkit section)
• Research tools such as newspapers, news magazines, and the Internet
• Central Asia Institute blog, which can be found at http://centralasiainstitute.org/field-notes/

BEFORE READING
Text Structure, Activating Prior Knowledge, Building Schema
• Review with students the text structure—map, table of contents, introduction, titled chapters, photographs, index, etc. Explain and discuss these elements as necessary. How does the structure of this nonfiction text differ from a work of fiction? How is it similar? How can the reader use the structural elements to aid in comprehension?
THREE CUPS OF TEA continued

- Read the introduction by David Oliver Relin.
- Using the map at the beginning of the book, have students identify the location of K2, the second-highest mountain on Earth. Then have students find Pakistan on a world map or globe. Share with students the brief summary of the story on the outer cover. Share with students the photos in the middle of the book. Based on these photos, describe the setting of the story. How is this setting similar or different from where they live?

DURING READING
Using Graphic Organizers and Questions to Deepen Comprehension

- As students read the text, have them use the Story Structure and Choices & Consequences charts (both provided below) to summarize the key events in the story. Students may opt to keep charts independently in reading journals, or work collaboratively.

- Have students complete the Character Attribute chart (provided below) as major characters are introduced, and add to their charts as they progress through the text.

CHAPTERS 1–3

- Describe the setting and mood at the beginning of the story. Record your thoughts on the Story Structure Chart.
- Who assists Greg Mortenson on his way to Askole/Korphe?
- What does Mortenson drink for nourishment? Why is this significant to the story?
- Does the poem that begins chapter 2 reflect self-determination or destiny? Do you agree with the poem’s sentiment? Explain. Why do you think the author chose to place the poem in this chapter?
- What does Mortenson discover about the quality of life in Korphe, specifically in regard to healthcare and education? In what ways is the quality of life in Korphe better or worse than your own? Cite evidence from the text.
- Create a Character Attribute Chart for Mortenson. Add to the chart as you read.
- Who is Haji Ali? Create a Character Attribute Chart for Ali.
- How do the villagers help Mortenson? How does Mortenson help the villagers?
- What promise does Mortenson make to the villagers of Korphe?

CHAPTERS 4–5

- List three important details from Mortenson’s childhood. How might his childhood have prepared him for his experience in Pakistan? Explain.
- How does Mortenson feel about his sister Krista? How do you know? Cite evidence from the story.
THREE CUPS OF TEA continued

- How does Mortenson try to raise money for the school? Is he successful?
- What roles do Kishwar Syed and Jean Hoerni play in Mortenson’s fundraising?

CHAPTER 6
- When Mortenson returns to Pakistan with money for the Korphe school, Abdul Shah, the watchman at the hotel, says, “By the merciful light of Allah Almighty, tomorrow we make much bargain.” What does Shah mean? What do the act of bargaining and the mention of Allah reveal about Shah’s culture? How is it similar to or different from your own culture?
- Much of this chapter recounts Mortenson trying to assimilate into a non-Western (Muslim) culture. Relin writes, “Mortenson had known … that the word ‘Muslim’ means, literally, ‘to submit.’ And like many Americans … had found the idea dehumanizing. But for the first time, kneeling among a hundred strangers, watching them wash away … impurities … he glimpsed the pleasure to be found in submission to a ritualized fellowship of prayer.” Describe a time when you saw a cultural difference in a new light. What enabled you to change this perception?
- Is it possible to embrace cultural diversity without being exposed to a variety of cultures? Cite evidence from the text as well as your own experience to explain your answer.

CHAPTERS 7–11
- Describe the roads on which Mortenson traveled.
- At one point, Mortenson says that he feels like a “flashing neon dollar sign” (p. 95). Why does he feel this way?
- Make a Character Attribute Chart for Changazi. How does he compare to Mortenson?
- When Mortenson finally returns to Korphe, what new obstacle does he face?
- In your own words, retell the hunt that Mortenson participates in. How does this hunt reflect the values and traditions of the Balti community?
- Review your Character Attribute Charts for Ali and Mortenson. What similarities and differences do they have?
- Why does Mortenson enlist George McCown to help pay those who were working on the bridge?
- The title of chapter 10, “Building Bridges,” has a literal and a figurative meaning. Define both and tell how each relates to the story.
- What important personal event takes place at this point in the story? Update your Story Structure Chart. Compare and discuss with a classmate.
THREE CUPS OF TEA continued

CHAPTER 12
• At the school construction site, what does Ali instruct Mortenson to do (pp. 149–150)? How is this situation representative of a clash of cultures? Does Mortenson listen to Ali’s advice? What would you have done in the same situation?
• In your own words, retell the custom of “three cups of tea” as defined by Ali. How does embracing this custom affect Mortenson’s success?
• What are some of the sacrifices the people of Korphe made in order to build this school?
• Why does Mortenson consider Ali to be the “wisest man he ever met”?
• Describe the wisest person you know and why he or she is wise.

CHAPTER 13
• Describe the tone of this chapter.
• Why does a Waterpik advertisement in a *Time* magazine cause Mortenson to cry?

CHAPTERS 14–16
• What important advice does Ali give to Mortenson that he incorporates into the Central Asia Institute’s plans for building new schools? Do you think this advice would serve Mortenson well if he were building schools in the United States? Why or why not?
• Throughout the story Mortenson encounters obstacles to building the schools. Would it have been easier and/or more effective for Mortenson to have used builders from the United States to build the schools? Explain. Why is how Mortenson chose to build the schools important?
• What does this story reveal about the rights of girls?
• What is a “fatwa”?

CHAPTERS 17–20
• What does Ali mean when he tells Mortenson to “listen to the wind”?
• Locate Kashmir on a map and determine the distance from Kashmir to Skardu.
• What does Mortenson hope Westerners will understand in the example of Syed Abbas?
• What are the Wahhabi madrassas?
• Chapter 19 recounts the events of September 11, 2001, and concludes with a speech by Muslim leader Syed Abbas at a CAI school inauguration celebration. How did reading Syed Abbas’s speech make you feel? Did you find other quotations in the book from Muslim leaders, schoolchildren, or others to be surprising, informative, or reassuring? Explain your answer. (Source: Penguin Young Readers Group 3 Cups of Tea Discussion Guide)
• Compare and contrast Mortenson’s conversation with the Taliban at the Marriott hotel and the “BobBillPete” interview in Katmandu.
THREE CUPS OF TEA continued

• Why do you think Mortenson’s “repeated pleas not to lump all Muslims together” in the months after 9/11 resulted in envelope after envelope of hate mail? (p. 275)

CHAPTERS 21–END

• How is going to Washington D.C. “like being dropped into a remote Afghan village” for Mortenson?

• Mortenson says, “The difference between becoming a good local citizen and a terrorist could be an education.” Do you agree or disagree? How so? Could Mortenson’s statement apply to citizens in the United States, as well? How so?

• How do Jahan’s words demonstrate that the schools are improving the lives of the students who attend them?

• How is education like water? (p. 312)

AFTER READING

Drawing Conclusions, Making Connections

• What was the author’s purpose in recounting his story?

• What lesson(s) can someone learn from reading this story? Are these lessons universal truths? Explain.

• How is the plot of this story similar to climbing a mountain?

• How has reading this book affected the way you look at your own education? Discuss/explain.

• How has reading this book affected the way you look at other cultures? Discuss/explain.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

• Lesson Plan for Three Cups of Tea: Education Is Essential for Lasting Peace.

• Analyze: Have students discuss and analyze the Story Structure, Choices & Consequences, and Character Attribute charts, then write a paragraph or make an illustration summarizing one of the charts.

• Visual Retelling: Ask students to choose a scene from the book that is memorable to them and re-create it in a painting, an illustration, a comic strip, a poem, or a song.

• Narrative Writing: Mortenson’s “failure” to reach the summit of K2 results in a life-changing event. Have students write a descriptive narrative about a life-changing event that has happened to them or to someone they know.

• Timelines: Have students use their completed Story Structure Charts to sequence key events in Mortenson’s story and create a timeline using the timeline maker at the following link: http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/timeline/index.html.
THREE CUPS OF TEA continued

- Research: Ask students to use the Fact Sheets and Additional References (located in the Pennies for Peace Toolkit) to research U.S. involvement (e.g., military involvement, aid and relief efforts) in Pakistan or Afghanistan during the same time period as Mortenson’s story. Have them create a timeline of key events using the timeline maker at [http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/timeline/index.html](http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/timeline/index.html) and compare and contrast their timelines.
Character Attribute Chart

Use this chart to identify the key attributes of the main characters in the story.

Character: __________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

Statements: _________________________________________

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____________________________________________________

Acts: ________________________________________________

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Feelings: ____________________________________________

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Other characters’ actions or thoughts toward this character: __________________________________________________

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# Character Attribute Chart

Use this chart to identify the key attributes of the main characters in the story.

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Central Asia Institute
Story Structure Chart

Fill in the appropriate sections of the chart after each chapter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point of View</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Characters</th>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Problem</th>
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Use this organizer to chart the cause-and-effect relationship between important events in the story. Some of the events are already listed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAUSE</th>
<th>EFFECT</th>
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<tr>
<td>Greg Mortenson wants to honor the memory of his sister Krista.</td>
<td>He attempts to climb K2.</td>
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<td>The villagers of Korphe take care of Mortenson.</td>
<td>Mortenson wants to repay their kindness.</td>
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<td>Jean Hoerni donates money.</td>
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<td>Unable to bring supplies to Korphe without a bridge.</td>
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<td>CAUSE</td>
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<td>Mortenson shares a third cup of tea.</td>
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Mortenson shares a third cup of tea.