



Study Guide:

Three Cups of Tea— Young Reader's Edition

Note: A study guide for *Three Cups of Tea* is also found in the High School Curriculum section.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and comprehend *Three Cups of Tea—Young Reader's Edition*.

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- 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

- *Three Cups of Tea—Young Reader's Edition* by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin, adapted by Sarah Thomson
- Glossary of Terms (located in the Pennies for Peace Toolkit section)
- Character Attribute Chart (below)
- Cause & Effect Chart (below)
- Story Structure Chart (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

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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?

- Have students identify their town's location on a globe or map and then show students the location of K2, the second-highest mountain on Earth, in the Karakoram Range, in the Himalayas, in Pakistan. Tell students that this is a true story (nonfiction) that takes place primarily in a village called Korphe, which is located in Baltistan, a region of Pakistan. 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 to or different from their own setting?
- Ask students to predict what they think the book will be about, based on the title, photos, timeline, etc.

DURING READING

Using Graphic Organizers and Questions to Deepen Comprehension

- Print the map (located in the Pennies for Peace Toolkit section). Locate K2, where the story begins. As students read the story, have them track Mortenson's journey with pushpins and string, or just a marker.
- Model using the Story Structure, Cause & Effect, and Character Attribute charts provided below to summarize the key elements, events, and characters of the story. Have students complete the charts as they read. Students may keep their charts independently in reading journals, or they may work collaboratively using chart paper.

CHAPTERS 1–3

- Is "Failure" an appropriate title for Chapter 1? Discuss/explain.
- The first line of the story begins, "Greg Mortenson was lost." The word "lost" can have both a literal and a figurative meaning. State what you think the author meant by this sentence.
- What role does the setting—the high altitude and the treacherous terrain of the Himalayas—play in the initial events of this story?
- Who assists Mortenson on his way to Korphe?
- What does Mortenson drink for nourishment? Why is this significant to the story?
- 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?
- Who is Haji Ali?
- How do the villagers help Mortenson? How does Mortenson help the villagers?
- What promise does Mortenson make to the villagers of Korphe?

**THREE CUPS OF TEA—YOUNG READER'S EDITION** continued

CHAPTERS 4–5

- List three important details from Mortenson's childhood.
 - List three of Mortenson's actions or thoughts from the chapter that reveal his character. Based on the actions you list, describe Mortenson using only one adjective.
 - 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?
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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 culture?
 - Describe how Mortenson felt before a branch of a poplar tree "smacked him in the face." How do these feelings compare to his feelings toward the end of the chapter?
 - What misunderstanding occurs in this chapter?
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CHAPTERS 7–9

- Mortenson has great news to deliver to Haji Ali about the school, but first he takes tea. What does this reveal about Mortenson? What does taking tea reveal about the Balti culture and traditions? Why is this significant to the story? Describe a custom or a tradition of hospitality from your culture.
 - What new obstacle does Mortenson face in this chapter?
 - In your own words, retell the hunt that Mortenson participates in. How does this hunt reflect the values and traditions of the Balti community?
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CHAPTERS 10–11

- 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.
- Describe the friends Mortenson has made up to this point in the story. Chart these people on the Character Attribute Chart.
- What important personal event takes place at this point in the story?

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CHAPTERS 12–13

- At the school construction site, what does Haji Ali instruct Mortenson to do? How is this situation a “culture clash”?
 - Retell, in your own words, the custom of “three cups of tea” as defined by Haji 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 Haji Ali to be the “wisest man he ever met”?
 - Describe the wisest person you know and why he or she is wise.
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CHAPTER 14

- Describe the tone of this chapter.
 - Mortenson wants to call his wife, Tara, but there are no phones. Imagine that a phone call did take place and write the dialogue of their conversation.
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CHAPTERS 15–16

- What advice does Haji Ali give to Mortenson that he incorporates into the Central Asia Institute (CAI) plans for building new schools? Do you think this advice would serve Mortenson well if he were building schools in the United States? Discuss/explain.
 - What does this story reveal about the rights of girls?
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CHAPTERS 17–18

- Locate the Kashmir region on a map.
 - What does Mortenson hope Westerners will understand in the example of Syed Abbas?
 - How has your understanding of Muslims/Muslim culture changed from reading this story?
 - List at least three reasons why there is a need for a water pump in Skardu.
 - Who is one of Mortenson’s role models? How do you know?
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CHAPTERS 19–21

- 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, school children, or others to be surprising, informative, or reassuring? Explain your answer. (Source: Penguin Young Readers Group – Three Cups of Tea Discussion Guide.)
- What does Haji Ali mean when he tells Mortenson to “listen to the wind”?
- Mortenson says, “The difference between becoming a good local citizen and a terrorist could be

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an education." Do you agree or disagree? How so? Does Mortenson's statement apply to citizens in the U.S. as well? How so?

- Why was going to Washington D.C. like being "dropped in a remote Afghan village" for Mortenson?
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CHAPTERS 21–22

- What evidence is revealed that demonstrates that CAI schools are improving the lives of the students who attend them?
 - Mortenson states that the war on terror "will ultimately be won with books, not bombs." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Discuss/explain.
 - How is education like water?
 - How is life like climbing a mountain?
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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 a mountain climb?
 - 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.
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EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Lesson Plan for *Three Cups of Tea—Young Reader's Edition: Recipe for a School*
- Lesson Plan for *Three Cups of Tea—Young Reader's Edition: "Failure"*
- Analyze: Discuss and analyze the Story Structure, Cause & Effect, and Character Attribute charts. Write a paragraph or make an illustration summarizing one of the charts.
- Visual Retelling: Choose a scene from the book that is memorable to you. Recreate the scene 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. Write a descriptive narrative about a life-changing event that has happened to you or to someone you know.
- Timelines: Use the completed Story Structure Chart to sequence key events in Mortenson's story. Create a timeline using the timeline maker at the following link: <http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/timeline/index.html>.



Character Attribute Chart

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

Character: _____

Statements: _____

Acts: _____

Feelings: _____

Other characters' actions or thoughts toward this character: _____



Character Attribute Chart

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

Acts: _____

Statements: _____

Thoughts: _____

Feelings: _____

Character: _____

Other characters' actions or thoughts toward this character:



Story Structure Chart

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

Point of View	Setting	Characters	Events	Problem	Solution	Ending

←————— plot —————→



Cause & Effect Chart

Use this organizer to chart the cause-and-effect relationship between important events in the story. Some of the events are already listed.

CAUSE	EFFECT
Greg Mortenson wants to honor the memory of his sister Krista.	He attempts to climb K2.
The villagers of Korphe take care of Mortenson.	Mortenson wants to repay their kindness.
	Jean Hoerni donates money.



CAUSE & EFFECT CHART PAGE 2 OF 2

CAUSE	EFFECT
Unable to bring supplies to Korphe without a bridge.	
	Mortenson shares a third cup of tea.