

Exit West
Summer Reading Assignment

Our summer reading text is *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid. You can check out a copy from me or purchase your own so you can annotate it; it is available in paperback. If you do use one of my copies, I suggest you purchase sticky tabs to mark key pages for later discussion.

As you read, stop at the end of each chapter and answer the discussion question for that chapter. You can download this assignment document and keep just the questions, typing your response below each one. Save the document, as you will turn in a paper copy on the **first day of school** and then upload your work to eCampus so it can run through the plagiarism checker. We will spend the first two weeks of school discussing this text.

Each response should be one substantial paragraph in length, and you must use short quotes from the text to support your response. Cite your quotes at the end of the sentence with just the page number. Please use formal writing rules, though the use of first person is appropriate for some of the questions.

This assignment is best done over the course of a couple of weeks, rather than the day before school starts. Please manage your time accordingly. You will need an in-depth understanding of each of the books we study to do well on your Internal Assessment (IA) junior year. Approximately half of your IB English Diploma score is earned in year one (junior year) of this HL course.

It is imperative that you do this assignment on your own, without the assistance of online cheat sites, friends, or any other inappropriate resources. If you are to be successful in the English portion of your IB program, you must sharpen your own ability to analyze literature, and this will NEVER happen if you let others do your work for you. Stay away from Sparknotes, Shmoop, and all other websites.

Early bird extra credit- You can email your responses to me over the summer by Sunday, July 17th for extra credit. My email address is Kelly_Meahl@scps.k12.fl.us. You will still upload your assignment to the plagiarism checker when you return to school and the paragraphs may not change after they are sent to me. They will not be re-graded if you decide to continue working on them after that date. If you send me early bird work and receive a confirmation email, you do not need to bring a paper copy on day 1.

Chapter 1:

What complexities and contradictions do you notice in the character of Nadia?

Chapter 2:

On pages 29-31, the story cuts away to Tokyo, where a pair of Filipina girls pass through one of the magical doors. Describe the man who watches them and the two girls. What comment is Hamid making about refugees and natives through the implications of this interaction?

Chapter 3:

The beginning and end of chapter 3 discusses cell phones. What do you think the cell phones represent? How are they utilized differently by Saeed and by Nadia? At the end of the chapter, what are the implications of the loss of the cell phones?

Chapter 4:

Why is Nadia reluctant to move in with Saeed and his parents? What prompts her to finally do so? How has the war been encroaching closer and closer over the past few chapters?

Chapter 5:

Chapter 5 contains a number of examples of gruesome violence that are relayed by Hamid in an almost casual, matter-of-fact tone. Discuss the portrayal of violence in this chapter. Why do you think he describes the violence in this way?

Chapter 6:

In chapter 6, Nadia and Saeed pass through a magical door and end up in a refugee camp in Mykonos. Hamid writes, "In this group, everyone was foreign, and so, in a sense, no one was." What does he mean by that?

Chapter 7:

How do the doors both assist people and create new complications? Give specific examples—they need not be exclusively from this chapter.

Chapter 8:

How does Nadia's relationship with the Nigerians differ from Saeed's relationship with them? How does Hamid use the dialogue on pages 152-153 to show this difference?

Chapter 9:

Respond to this quote: "[T]hey did not yet know that shame, for the displaced, was a common feeling, and that there was, therefore, no particular shame in being ashamed" (184).

Chapter 10:

The chapter closes with the story of an old woman in Palo Alto, and the narrator observes "everyone migrates, even if we stay in the same houses our whole lives, because we can't help it. We are all migrants through time" (209). Apply this quote to Nadia and Saeed, to yourself, or to the world today.

Chapter 11:

Nadia's black robe has been mentioned often throughout the book. What is her initial reason for wearing it? How do the people at the cooperative view it? How does Saeed feel about her wearing it?

Chapter 12:

No one in the book is given a name except for Nadia and Saeed. Why do you think Hamid chooses to end the story with this short glimpse into their lives 50 years later? How does he bring back several important motifs at the end, such as birds, Nadia's black robe, and the stars?