King for a Day
Teacher’s Guide for Grades K - 3
With Student Activity Sheets

by Rukhsana Khan
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About Rukhsana Khan

Rukhsana has been writing seriously since 1989. Currently she has twelve books published, several of which have been nominated and/or won awards. She is an accomplished storyteller and has performed at numerous festivals. For more information on Rukhsana and her books please visit her website: www.rukhsanakhan.com

Rukhsana was born in Lahore, Pakistan and immigrated to Canada, with her family, at the age of three. She began by writing for community magazines and went on to write songs and stories for the Adam's World children's videos. Rukhsana is a member of SCBWI, The Writers Union of Canada and Storytelling Toronto. She lives in Toronto with her husband and family.

Books by Rukhsana:

*King for a Day*
*Big Red Lollipop*
*Wanting Mor*
*A New Life*
*Many Windows*
*Silly Chicken*
*Ruler of the Courtyard*
*The Roses in My Carpets*
*Muslim Child*
*King of the Skies*
*Bedtime Ba-a-a-lk*
*Dahling if You Luv Me Would You Please Please Smile*

To see the video book talk/tutorials for *King for a Day* and other titles, check out Rukhsana’s Youtube channel [https://www.youtube.com/user/MsRukhsanaKhan](https://www.youtube.com/user/MsRukhsanaKhan)
The following curriculum applications are fulfilled by the discussion topics and activities outlined in this teacher’s guide:

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For insights into the creation of this book, read the interview between the author Rukhsana Khan and the illustrator Christiane Kromer in Appendix 1.

**Discussion Topics before reading the book**

**Grades K - 3:**

Examine the cover of *King for a Day*.

What do you notice?

What kind of clothes is the boy on the cover wearing? What kind of hat?

Do you see any unusual buildings in the background that make you think this story is set in another country?

Where do you think the story is set?

One of the kites on the cover is bigger than the others. What sort of animal do you see on the big kite?

Do you think this big kite is going to be important in the story?

Which of the kites is your favorite?
What kind of chair is the boy sitting in?
What does that tell you about the boy?
Why do you think the book is called *King for a Day*?
How would you feel if you were king for a day?
What kinds of things would you do?
How would you behave towards other people?
Have you ever flown a kite?
What did it feel like?

**Explore the Setting and Basant:**

Find Pakistan and then Lahore on a map.

Read the information piece at the back of the book. Discuss the meaning of any unusual words.

Basant is a spring festival. What other spring festivals can you name?

The following books describe kite flying and kite festivals in other cultures. Discuss what makes the festivals in these books the same as Basant and what makes them different.

*Kite Flying* by Grace Lin

*The Emperor and the Kite* by Jane Yolen

*The Tiny Kite of Eddie Wing* by Maxine Trottier
Discussion Topics and Activities after reading the book:

Discussion Topics
Grades K - 3:

- Why do you think Malik only made one kite?
- Why is the day of Basant so important to Malik?
- Describe the steps you would take to build a kite to compete with his at next year’s Basant celebration.
- Imagine if the Bully had won the kite battle with Malik? What would Malik have done?
- How would you feel if you were Malik?
- Predict what the Bully will say to Malik the next time he sees him.
- What do you think will happen next year at the celebration of Basant?
- In the story, Malik says: “Because it is so big, Goliath is slow.” Are big kites always slower? Why do you think that is true?
- In your own words define these words: Basant, downwind, ‘currents of air’, ‘bird of prey’.
- What do you think are the rules of Basant? What happens if you cut another kite string?
- Why do you think Malik doesn’t go downstairs with his brother and sister right away? Why does he say, “I want to make my day last a little longer.”?
- Do you think that Malik will still be a ‘king’ the next day?
- Why did Malik drop the Goliath kite off the roof so the little girl could have it?
- Do you think that was a good idea?
- How do you think the Bully would feel if he knew that his Goliath kite was given to the girl he pushed down?
- At the end of the story Malik says, “My day is done. I am no longer king of Basant.” Do you think Malik minds going back to being ‘normal’? Would you?
Additional Discussion Topics

Grades 2 – 3:

On a deeper level, this story is a moment in Malik’s life that he has been preparing for and that will affect the rest of his life.

The story doesn’t occur within a vacuum. There is a history between Malik and the Bully that Malik hints at.

During the course of our lives, each one of us will probably have a little ‘realm’ where we are king or queen. Learning some of the traits that make Malik such a good ‘king’ could help us in our dealings with those we ‘rule’. Malik displays many characteristics that a good ‘king’ might have.

Some of the traits that Malik displays:

**Preparation:**

Malik has worked hard and he gets up early on the day of Basant.

**Confidence:**

Malik has put a lot of thought into the design of his kite, so even though there’s only one kite, he’s confident it will be ‘enough’.

**Teamwork:**

He enlists his brother and sister to help him.

**Empathy:**

He can tell his sister’s feelings are hurt by the Bully’s mean words.

**Strategy:**

He has a plan. He positions his brother downwind keeps his sister close.
Skill:

By his proficiency, it’s obvious Malik has been practicing and studying how to best fight the bully’s kite.

Restraint:

Even after he has beaten the Bully, Malik restrains himself from taunting or calling him names.

Co-operation:

The siblings cooperate all through the day.

Mercy/Justice:

When Malik sees the little girl in the alleyway being abused, he drops the Bully’s kite down in an act of charity and justice. Then he hides so his gift is anonymous.

Guided discussion: As a class, explore some of these traits, and describe incidents in your own life when you too may have displayed them.

K-3 Activities:

Find some Basant or Pakistani music from the internet for example:

http://www.flixya.com/video/4779393/Top-Basant-Song- In a circle, pretend you are a kite flying up in the air swooping and diving. Try not to bump into anyone.

On pg. 9, color the picture of the kite and design it so that it would best represent you.

In pairs, act out the entire story told in King for a Day.

Using the first page, tap out the rhythm of the words as the teacher reads them.

The girl in the alley never says a word yet we know how she feels. Pretend you are her and write a story of what happened when you went home to tell your mother.
Grades 2 – 3 Activities

Read the interview between the author and the illustrator in the appendix. Create a ‘writers’ theater’: Copy and paste appropriate excerpts to create a script. Have two student volunteers read aloud as if they’re the author and illustrator discussing the book.

Create a found poem: Read the story out loud as the students jot down any words that stand out to them. Compose and edit the found words into a poem. Recite them out loud in front of the class.

Using bamboo and tissue paper, design a kite for height and speed. Why do the big bulky kites move slower than the small stream-lined kites?

As you reread the story, write down all the feelings that each person would have felt throughout the tale. Example: Girl on street: disappointment, sadness, surprise, joy, excitement.

This story is about a boy with one disability and one amazing ability. Make a graph for the class. List everyone’s disabilities and abilities. ie. Who can skip rope, who can ride a bike, who can tie their shoes, who can whistle, who can snap their fingers. This will show that just like the boy in the story there are some things we can do and some things we can’t do—we each have our own abilities and disabilities.

Draw a silhouette of yourself on a kite shape. On the front write all the things you can do. On the back write things you wish you could do. Hang the kites in the classroom ceiling for your own Basant.
Student Activity Sheet

Grades K – 3

Colour the Kite for Basant!
1. Who are the major characters in the story?

___________________________________________________________

2. Why is the day of Basant so important to the boy?

___________________________________________________________

3. Describe how his sister and brother help Malik with the kites.

___________________________________________________________


   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

5. Who is the nicest to each other: Malik to his sister, Malik to his brother, or the other way around? Why?

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
Other Resources:


*The Kite Book: all the know-how you need to fly a kite* (2007) by Rosanne Cobb

*Kites: Flying Skills and Techniques, from Basic Toys to Sport Kites* (2007) by Rosanne Cobb


*The Kite Fighters* by Linda Sue Park

*The Kite Festival* by Leyla Torres
Appendix 1: Interview with Christiane Kromer

www.christianekromer.com

RK: How did you get the inspiration for the illustrations?

CK: At the very beginning of getting the manuscript I visited an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art called Wonder of the Age: Master Painters of India 1100-1900, and I came out transformed. I felt such a surge of energy and that was still independent of the manuscript. At the time I didn’t know that Lahore was a major city of the Mughals. I knew about Pakistan and India being separated, I’d seen movies but I didn’t know a lot about the actual geography. I didn’t know where Lahore was or that it even existed. I didn’t know that culturally India and Pakistan were so close. And then when I found out I really wanted to do the whole book in Mughal style.

RK: How did you start designing it?

CK: The first thing I did was do research on youtube and I was really put off. I saw amateur videos of macho men on the roofs and I saw no women. And I thought, ‘That’s not a national holiday, it’s a men’s holiday.’ At the same time I knew that when the story comes to me, and I believe the story illustrations come from God, I just knew that I’m going to transform it into something beautiful. It’s been a work of two years. Finally I got the manuscript I could work with and then the publisher wanted me to do pencil sketches and at first I thought I could trick them. With collage you can just push items across the paper and see which looks best. You never have to commit till it looks really good. Pencil sketches confine you to so little. Then I did the sketches and they became very detailed. They wanted to know what are you going to do there and what are you going to put in that corner. I didn’t want to commit. To me that kills the fun of it. It just turned out to be the process. With Anh’s Anger I had very little time to do it. With King for a Day it became a very detailed work, and meticulously planned.

RK: So did you really grow from this process?

CK: I did.

RK: In what ways did you grow?

CK: I grew a lot in communicating with the publisher. I’ve never been as authentic in my communication, discussing changes and talking about what I want to do with the
illustrations. And when we were discussing changes I was really speaking from the heart. I learned to trust in doing that. There were so many things going on in New York, 9/11 and then Hurricane Sandy, and I kept thinking that life can be interrupted at any moment and this could be my last book. You have to risk everything now! If I don’t stand up for my vision my life is going to be over and it will be dull. I was trying to get a sacred space within myself within which I could work. And I pictured a sacred place where I could create beauty and only the higher part of people could go there. Young people, old people, women, men, children, and there were wonderful smells there and rays of light coming through. And this turned into the first illustration I did. There was no mention in the manuscript about this market scene, but I put it in there. Expecting that the editor would want me to take it out, but it seemed to work well. You wrote in the back matter about the food and the festivities and that you were standing on the roof and eating an orange, so I included a lot of orange in the illustrations, and I could just imagine the smell of orange blossoms! That’s why there’s also an orange vendor!

RK: Oh that’s hilarious! No wonder there’s such a tinge of orange through the illustrations! I loved that first illustration. You start on the ground and get to the roof! You’re going up!

RK: How many books have you published?

CK: This is my sixth book.

RK: Can you name the other books?

CK: The very first book I did was in 1994 called The Treehouse Children by Simon & Schuster
The second book was Flower Girl Butterflies by Harper Collins
The third book was for a Japanese publisher about a religion called Tenrikyo Cultural Institute and the book was *God the Parent’s Blessings*.

RK: So did you get to go to Japan?

CK: Three times they invited me.

The fourth book was *Anh’s Anger*, published by a Buddhist publisher called Plum Blossom Books.

The fifth book was *Steps and Stones*, the second book in the *Anh’s Anger* series.

And now *King for a Day*.

RK: Well I think you’ve done a fabulous job on *King for a Day*! And it’s been such a pleasure getting to know you Christiane and know more about your creative process!

**The Evolution of one of Christiane’s Illustrations:**

The beginning
Ta Da! Done!