**A Path Appears**
*Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity*

by Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn

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**Note to Teachers**
*A Path Appears* can be used in a variety of learning contexts. Its examination of development issues, the biology of hopelessness and altruism, and the sociological components of underdevelopment make it an ideal complement to courses in economics, sociology, anthropology, ethics, psychology, and current events. It is also an excellent choice for service learning curricula because it emphasizes the importance of activism and the way that individuals can make a difference in the world today. Although not specifically designed for use in high school classrooms, *A Path Appears* conforms to many of the Common Core State Standards for grades 9 through 12.

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**About the Book**
*A Path Appears* is the second book coauthored by Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn that examines development problems and the initiatives that aim to solve them. In *Half the Sky* (2009), Kristof and WuDunn focus exclusively on the challenges faced by women and girls in developing nations and on the individuals and institutions attempting to empower them. *A Path Appears* expands on Kristof and WuDunn's vision by identifying development problems around the globe and in the United States, focusing on the importance of data-driven research in developing effective programs, and examining the biological, economic, and moral dimensions of altruism. *A Path Appears* takes the reader on a national and international tour of successful initiatives aimed at alleviating poverty and all of the social ills that accompany it. Drawing on their extensive experience as journalists, Kristof and WuDunn present moving vignettes to illustrate the magnitude of the problems that plague the world’s poor. Arguing that altruism and happiness are reciprocal, Kristof and WuDunn provide down-to-earth recommendations to readers on how they can make the world a better place now and benefit themselves in the process.

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**About the Author**
NICHOLAS KRISTOF and SHERYL WuDUNN, husband and wife, have co-authored three previous books: *Half the Sky*, *Thunder from the East*, and *China Wakes*. They were awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 1990 for their coverage of China and the 2009 Dayton Literary Peace Prize. Now an op-ed columnist for *The New York Times*, Kristof was previously bureau chief in Hong Kong, Beijing, and Tokyo. He won his second
Teaching Ideas

The questions and activities in this guide are intended to help students better understand the arguments and data presented in *A Path Appears* as well as to stimulate discussion and critical analysis. Additional readings and extension activities are included to encourage further study and to allow students to explore in creative formats the information presented by the authors.

In addition, the questions and activities contained here in the Teacher’s Guide conform to many of the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards identified in the History/Social Studies strand. For example, many of the questions and activities ask students to:

- Use specific evidence from the text to support or critique the data and arguments presented in *A Path Appears* (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1) and to elucidate the meaning of the text as a whole (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.1)
- Identify main ideas and themes throughout the text (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2)
- Define the meaning of specialized vocabulary relating to the political, economic, and social dimensions of altruism and the problems caused by poverty in the world today (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.4)
- Compare and contrast multiple points of view and the strength of the evidence presented to support them (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.6, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.6)
- Integrate quantitative and qualitative analyses (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.7)
- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of arguments presented by the authors (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.8)
- Use multiple sources of information in varying formats and media to address a question or solve a problem (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7)

Discussion and Writing

Understanding the Concepts

Chapter 1: Introduction

1. What is the difference between talent and opportunity? What does Warren Buffett mean by the “ovarian lottery”? (p. 15)

2. Were you surprised that Americans are among the most giving people in the world? Why is it “striking” that those in the bottom 20 percent of incomes give away a higher percentage of their money (3.2 percent) than those in the top 20 percent (1.3 percent)? (p. 10)

3. Why is it easier and more effective today than ever before to make a difference through volunteering and charitable giving?
Chapter 2: A Drop in the Bucket

1. What does the connection between Rashida Yayé, a girl born to a poor family in Niger, and Shoshona Kline, a woman born to affluent parents in California, tell you about globalization in the world today? In which ways are the two families similar and different? Why are these similarities and differences important to understand in this age of globalization?

2. Why do Kristof and WuDunn call charity an “industry”? Is this a complimentary or derogatory term?

3. What are some of the shortcomings of the charity “industry” according to the authors?

4. Why did the authors title the chapter “A Drop in the Bucket”? How can one drop lead to a sea of change?

Chapter 3: From Anecdote to Evidence

1. Why did activists such as Hillary Clinton believe that clean cookstoves would have a positive effect on world peace, prosperity, human rights, democracy, and freedom? Why were they wrong? How do Kristof and WuDunn use this example to demonstrate the importance of research in designing programs to aid development?

2. Who is Esther Duflo? What are randomized controlled trials? How does Duflo’s work demonstrate the importance of experimental approaches in fighting poverty?

3. What are microfinance and microsavings? Why are they such important strategies for moving people out of poverty?

Chapter 4: The Land of Opportunity—If You Catch Them Early

1. Why is Pine Ridge Indian Reservation an “extreme but useful place to glimpse the challenges of poverty in America”? (p. 51)

2. What is “toxic stress,” and what are its causes? What are the implications of “toxic stress” on child and adult behavior? What are some strategies to prevent or reduce its impact? (p. 54)

3. What are the lessons to be learned from early intervention programs such as the Nurse-Family Partnership founded by Professor David Olds? Why is it important that these lessons are data driven?

Chapter 5: A Thirty-Million-Word Gap

1. What is the thirty-million-word gap referred to in the title? What are its implications for resolving the disparity between children raised in poor homes and those raised in middle class or wealthy homes?

2. Why is the achievement gap between poor and rich children increasing? Why is race becoming less of a factor in the disparity between high and low achievers?

3. What is “summer slide” and why are low-income children more adversely affected by it? (p. 84)

Chapter 6: Who Grabs the Marshmallow?

1. What is grit? Is grit an innate trait or can it be learned?
2. Many of the individuals profiled in *A Path Appears* exhibit grit, and the authors admire them for their perseverance and flexibility. Do you know someone personally who has exhibited grit? How did he or she demonstrate this trait? Do you admire him or her? Why?

3. What seems to be the connection between grit and the success of Jewish Americans, Asian Americans, and West Indian Americans?

4. Why do psychologists think grit is more important than IQ in determining success?

**Chapter 7: Coaching Troubled Teens**

1. What are some effective strategies to lift adolescents out of poverty? Why are they successful?

2. What did Ronald Reagan mean when he said that “the best social program is a job”? (p. 111) What evidence do Kristof and WuDunn present to support that this is especially true for at-risk teens?

3. Why are children in America most likely to live in poverty? In what ways is this more of a political and social problem than an economic one?

4. Both Great Britain and Mexico initiated government programs in the 1990s that successfully lessened child poverty. Why has the United States not been able to achieve similar results?

**Chapter 8: The Power of Hope**

1. Why is it tempting, although mistaken, to blame people for their poverty?

2. What effect does worrying, especially about economic problems, have on cognition and decision making?

3. What is “learned helplessness”? (p. 122) What is a “poverty trap”? (p. 124) How are the two phenomena linked? What role do programs that provide hope play in “unlearning” helplessness?

4. Why are aid programs that focus on “opening up the goodie bag” less effective than those that focus on “bringing hope to the children,” according to Bruce Wydick of the University of San Francisco? (p. 126)

**Chapter 9: A Doctor Who Treats Violence**

1. In what ways is urban violence similar to a disease epidemic, according to Dr. Gary Slutkin, founder of Cure Violence?

2. What did China Joe, a drug dealer turned activist, mean when he said, “That’s when the caterpillar made its metamorphosis, and I became a butterfly.” (p. 146)

3. What motivates Jim Oates to support programs that help children and teens who live in poverty or who are troubled?

**Chapter 10: Attacking Sex Trafficking**

1. Why are prostitutes in the United States more often prosecuted than their pimps or Johns? How is this inequity the legacy of sexism?

2. What are the major misconceptions about sex trafficking? What do you think are the origins of those misconceptions, and why are they so readily accepted by the public?
3. Clemmie Greenlee, a former prostitute and heroin addict who now runs programs to help prostitutes get off the streets, equates prostitution to slavery, stating “if you’re putting a whip on my back because I’m not picking enough cotton or if you’re beating me because I’m not earning my quota, it’s the same thing. It’s slavery.” (p. 158) Do you agree with her? What is Greenlee implying about the relationship between prostitution and racism in American society?

4. Compare legalization of prostitution to the Nordic model. What are the benefits and drawbacks to the two models as methods of addressing sex trafficking? What are the philosophical beliefs underlying the two approaches?

5. What is the model designed by Reverend Becca Stevens of the Magdalene program in Nashville? How does it compare to the legalization and Nordic models?

Chapter 11: Charity: In Search of a Revolution

1. Why are the methods employed by Dan Pallotta and Pallotta TeamWorks considered controversial? How do Kristof and WuDunn use Pallotta’s experiences to illustrate the flaws in the charity industry?

2. What is Charity Navigator? Why has its focus on overhead metrics crippled the charity industry?

3. How is the story of Paul and Janice Crouch a cautionary tale about what can go wrong when there is little accountability of nonprofits?

4. What are “chuggers”? (p. 178)

5. What is “effective altruism”? (p. 183) Does the term imply that there is “ineffective altruism”? If so, what distinguishes “effective altruism” from “ineffective altruism”?

Chapter 12: Madison Avenue Helps the Needy

1. What is the “identifiable victim effect”? (p. 193) How does it influence patterns of giving?

2. What lessons can the charity industry learn from the advertising and marketing industries?

3. What is the “God gulf” and how does it hinder the battle against poverty and injustice? (p. 201)

Chapter 13: Scaling Social Good

1. Identify various models of “muddling” for-profit and nonprofit endeavors to address social ills. In what ways are they more effective than traditional ways of addressing social problems?

2. What is “impact investing”? (p. 205) How is it a new way of looking at charity?

3. Why is “addressing poverty with enterprise . . . devilishly difficult”? (p. 205)

Chapter 14: Doing Good While Being Big

1. What does it mean that Grameen Danone Foods Ltd. is the “world’s first consciously designed multinational social business”? (p. 215)

2. What are the effects of malnutrition on children?

3. What are some strategies that big multinational corporations have used to address social problems? Why are these strategies effective?
Chapter 15: The Neuroscience of Giving: A Natural High

1. In the Bible, Jesus states, “it is more blessed to give than to receive.” Kristof and WuDunn claim that this statement is more than just a religious precept; rather, it is a prescription for a self-help route to greater happiness. What do they mean? Why has altruism always been so closely connected to religion?

2. What is the “Easterlin Paradox”? (p. 240) How did Betsey Stevenson and Justin Wolfers’s research refine the thesis?

3. What are micronutrients? How can investing in them as supplements alleviate poverty?

Chapter 16: When Social Networks Dig a Well

1. Why did Scott Harrison found charity:water? How was it the result of his personal quest to find meaning in his life?

2. In what ways did Harrison utilize social networks to make charity:water a success?

Chapter 17: Survival of the Kind

1. What is “competitive altruism”? (p. 264) To what degree is altruism a status symbol in American society today?

2. Thomas Jefferson stated: “When any original act of charity or of gratitude, for instance, is presented either to our sight or imagination, we are deeply impressed with its beauty and feel a strong desire in ourselves of doing charitable and grateful acts also.” (p. 270) Is altruism contagious? If so, is this a learned response or part of our innate biology?

Chapter 18: Healing Through Helping

1. Catalina Escobar’s story and her creation of the Juan Felipe Foundation are excellent examples of how good things can result from bad. Why is compassion such an effective way to heal?

2. What health benefits are associated with volunteering? Are they the result of biological and/or psychological factors?

Chapter 19: A Hundred Flowers Bloom

1. What is “do-it-yourself philanthropy” or “social entrepreneurship”? (p. 288)

2. What are some of the risks faced by do-it-yourself start-ups?

Chapter 20: A Giving Code

1. John Wood, a Microsoft executive who founded Room to Read, has based his philanthropy on this advice: “Think early on what you want your legacy to be, what you would like to be able to say on your deathbed. Then work backward from there.” (p. 302) Do you believe this is a good creed to live by? Why or why not?

2. What does it mean to “otherize” people? (p. 305) Why is this form of distancing so common among middle- and upper-class Americans? Why is it one of the most insurmountable obstacles to the development of a culture of giving?

3. Kristof and WuDunn offer the following advice to new philanthropists: “go where your heart directs you, but don’t forget to bring your head, too.” (p. 310) How does this quote illustrate the importance of research data and metrics in altruism?
Exploring the Themes

The Metrics of Altruism

1. Throughout *A Path Appears*, Kristof and WuDunn emphasize the importance of using research data to evaluate the effectiveness of charitable programs and to substantiate their worthiness for financial support. Why is the use of scientific data so important in reforming the charity industry?

2. What have studies shown about the importance of the uterine environment in later development outside the womb? What are the policy implications of this data? (Chap. 4)

3. What did the studies on laboratory rats conducted by Professor Michael Meaney show about the importance of parental nurturing in the first years of life? (Chap. 4)

4. What did neuroscientist Martha Farah mean when she said, “Growing up poor is bad for your brain”? (p. 55) What evidence do Kristof and WuDunn present that demonstrates the negative effects of poverty on brain development in young children?

5. Kristof and WuDunn argue that the criminal justice system would be more effective and less expensive if more funding targeted preventing children from turning to crime by improving early intervention programs and education. What types of evidence do they present to support this argument? Do you find it persuasive? Why or why not?

6. What did Professors Paul Slovic and Deborah Small discover about the psychology of giving? Who is most likely to respond to appeals and under what circumstances? What research data exists to create a profile of the “ideal” donor and the “perfect” cause?

The Biology of Altruism

1. What role does hopelessness play in encouraging self-destructive decision making? What role might biochemistry play in this relationship? (Chap. 8)

2. What are the scientific connections between good health, longevity, and altruism?

3. Is it more correct to claim that altruism causes happiness or happiness causes altruism? Are altruism and happiness merely correlated, or is there a causal relationship between the two?

4. What are the Darwinian origins of altruism according to biologist and anthropologist Christopher Boehm?

5. If human beings are “hard wired” to be altruistic, what does this tell us about Darwin’s theory of survival of the fittest?

6. If so much of altruism is biologically driven, what role do human beings make in deciding to be altruistic? In other words, is altruism merely the result of the interaction of “feel good” hormones, or is it the result of moral decision making?

7. Assistant Professor Sarina R. Saturn at Oregon State University has uncovered evidence that people who are more empathic have two copies of the G allele on their oxytocin receptors. These people tend to be not only more empathic and good at reading people’s emotions, but they are less stressed and more compassionate. However, evolutionary biologist Philip Lieberman at Brown University warns against attributing too much of a basis for moral behavior on genes. Rather, high levels of altruism must be taught and nurtured to build on the genetic base people inherit. Do you think altruism is inherited, or can people learn to be more empathic and, therefore, more altruistic? Is altruism more determined by nature or by nurture?
8. What is oxytocin? How is it related to generosity and willingness to donate money to the needy? What types of experiences trigger the release of oxytocin? How did Scott Harrison inadvertently take advantage of the effects of oxytocin in developing charity:water?

9. Jonathan Haidt, a professor at New York University’s Stern School of Business, believes that “human beings are in some ways like bees. We evolved to live in intensely social groups, and we don’t do as well when freed from hives.” (p. 258) How does this quote explain why giving communities or giving circles are especially effective?

The Economics of Altruism

1. Why is it more cost effective to invest in programs for infants and toddlers than for high school and college students? Should cost effectiveness be a major factor in determining which programs get funding from charities and the government?

2. What are the economic costs of murder in the United States today? What are the social costs for the families of victims and the children that live in high-violence inner cities?

3. Kristof and WuDunn argue that successful charities should be assessed by their impact not their overhead costs. What do they mean? Why are these economic measures so important?

4. Is it reasonable to expect nonprofits to pay their employees competitively? Why do so many Americans feel that it’s acceptable to pay workers in nonprofits less? Are “psychic” rewards the same as monetary rewards? What do people really think is the value of the work performed by nonprofits?

5. Kristof and WuDunn claim that “the nonprofit industry needs rethinking because it underperforms.” (p. 174) Is the charity industry a business like any other, or is it something else? Should donors expect nonprofits to be as economically viable as other industries that are driven by profits? Why is this an especially important question in the United States, which employs a mainly capitalist form of economic organization?

6. What should the role of businessmen and women be in the charity industry? Do corporate models work in the nonprofit sector? When they do, is this a good or bad thing?

7. Hybrids, sometimes called benefit corporations, venture philanthropy, or fourth sector, combine social goals with capitalist means. Why are these endeavors successful? How are they transforming the charity industry? Why are they often called “social businesses”?

8. Why is it difficult for companies with a double bottom line to optimize both profits and mission? Is it possible to achieve both goals—to run a profitable business while staying true to the initial social goal?

The Moral Dimensions of Altruism

1. The data presented in A Path Appears suggests that there is a tension between doing good for others for its own sake and doing good for yourself. Can anyone be a true philanthropist if he or she is motivated, in part, by self-interest? Are there ever any truly selfless acts, given what we now know about the brain chemistry behind altruism?
2. Evaluate the following quote from *A Path Appears*. “When a tycoon donates a building named after himself to a business school, all taxpayers are subsidizing it while the tycoon is saving on taxes, earning a public relations benefit, and ensuring his grandchildren’s admission. Is this really what charity is supposed to be about?” (p. 175) What are the moral dilemmas suggested by this quote?

3. Not one of the fifty biggest donations to charity in 2012 in the United States went to an organization that principally serves the poor. Why are so many charity dollars aimed at large universities and art museums?

4. Should for-profit businesses attempt to address social ills? Who benefits most, the businesses or the people in need of help? Are initiatives such as Grameen Danone Foods Ltd. socially conscience operations, or are they just another way for corporations to make more money?

5. Brian Mullaney, founder of Smile Train, claims that “the most selfish thing you can do is to help other people.” (p. 243) Why is this statement a paradox?

**In-Depth Discussion**

1. What was Kristof and WuDunn’s purpose in writing *A Path Appears*? Who is their intended audience? Why did they choose the title for the book? Do you think the title is effective? Why or why not?

2. Kristof and WuDunn begin each chapter in *A Path Appears* with an inspirational quote from a famous person. Why do they use this literary device? Is it an effective technique? Why or why not? Which quote was the most meaningful to you, and why? Did any of the quotes surprise you? Why?

3. Kristof and WuDunn argue that “success in life is a reflection not only of enterprise and willpower but also of chance and early upbringing, and that compassion isn’t a sign of weakness but a mark of civilization.” (p. 15) What do they mean, and do you agree?

4. Are government-funded early childhood interventions a welfare entitlement or an investment in the future? Prepare talking points for one side or the other that you will present in a classroom debate. Use the Internet to research your position and to substantiate your argument with solid data.

5. One of the themes of *A Path Appears* is that deeply troubled individuals who, with the help of strong individuals, overcome adversity, commit themselves to helping others just like they have been helped. Why do you think Kristof and WuDunn think this pattern is so important? Have you had any personal experiences in which you witnessed this pattern? Who helped whom and why?

6. Kristof and WuDunn suggest that “Bill Gates’s most important legacy may well be not software but the conquest of disease and hunger around the world.” (p. 176) What do they mean, and do you agree? Research Gates’s accomplishments and then write a tribute to Mr. Gates in which you identify what you think is his most important contribution to society.

7. Muhammad Yunus of Grameen Bank argues that “Charity is no solution to poverty. Charity only perpetuates poverty by taking initiative away from the poor” (p. 127) is one of the main themes of *A Path Appears*. What does he mean, and what evidence do Kristof and WuDunn provide to substantiate the argument? What implications does this argument have on the development of aid programs designed to reduce poverty?

8. Philosophers have long contended that there is a connection between altruism and happiness. Now modern scientific data seems to support that claim. Assess the data
presented by Kristof and WuDunn. Which data is quantitative and which is qualitative? Are you convinced?

9. According to Kristof and WuDunn, there is reason for great optimism in the world today. The number of children living in poverty has decreased dramatically, many deadly diseases are being eradicated, and more and more children have access to education. If this is an era of unprecedented promise, why do so many people living in industrialized countries such as the United States feel that the quest to end poverty is hopeless? Write an editorial for *The New York Times* in which you examine this paradox and make some recommendations for readers on how they personally can make a difference in their world.

10. Kristof and WuDunn suggest in the conclusion to *A Path Appears* that the antidote to the evil, terror, and tragedies in our world today is kindness, because it connects us to others and helps us to assert our humanity. Why were the authors motivated to write this book at this particular moment in time? Do you believe that kindness can overcome the world’s ills?

**Extension Activities**

1. Research the history of one of the following areas mentioned in *A Path Appears*: Niger, Uganda, Malawi, the Central African Republic, or Congo. What connections do you see between the political, economic, and social history of central Africa and the current political, economic, and social conditions in the country?

2. Kristof and WuDunn note that “much of the goodwill that the United States gains with public diplomacy it undoes with its visa policies.” (p. 134) Research current U.S. visa regulations. What is the policy, and why is it so infuriating? Is the policy overly bureaucratic and arbitrary? Is the State Department more to blame or Congress? Write a letter to your senator or your member of Congress, explaining the flaws in the current policy and proposing solutions.

3. Kristof and WuDunn argue in *A Path Appears* that many people are unaware of the problems facing their neighbors around the world or in their own communities, and when they are aware, feel too overwhelmed to act. Prepare an editorial for your local newspaper in which you address the following questions:
   - Which problem do you think is most significant?
   - What role, if any, should individuals play in solving this problem?
   - What role, if any, should the U.S. government play in solving this problem?
   - What factors incentivize or de-incentivize private and public sectors to address the problem?

4. Choose two chapters from *A Path Appears*. What is the main argument presented by the authors in each chapter? Research the author of the quote at the beginning of the chapters. How is the quote related to the chapter’s main argument, and why do you think Kristof and WuDunn selected it?

5. In the second part of *A Path Appears*, Kristof and WuDunn argue that there needs to be a revolution in the charity industry. What do they mean when they claim that charities and nonprofits “have one foot in the eighteenth-century preindustrial economy”? (p. 167) Research what charity was like in the eighteenth century. How is charity different today? How are the two models connected to the historical context?

6. Kristof and WuDunn argue that altruism has been and still is a precept of most religions. Research the role charity and altruism play in two of the following religious traditions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. If religion and altruism are so closely connected, what implications does this have for the future of altruism in modern secular societies?
8. Kristof and WuDunn argue that effective marketing is crucial to the success of a charitable organization and that many good lessons can be learned from for-profit organizations. Design a marketing or social media campaign for a real or imaginary charity. What will be your target audience? How will you motivate them to support your cause? Which marketing strategies will you use to accomplish your goals?

9. One of the themes of *A Path Appears* is the importance of partnerships in effecting change. Why do you think these partnerships and partnerships in general are so effective? Choose one of the six partnerships listed below and write an essay in which you analyze its effectiveness by answering the following questions:

   1. Why did the partnership form?
   2. What unique characteristic and/or skill did each partner contribute?
   3. Could either partner have been successful as a change agent without the other?

   **Choices:**
   - Kennedy Odede and Jessica Posner
   - Gary Slutkin and China Joe
   - Middle class volunteers and former prostitutes and drug addicts in Thistle Farms, Nashville, Tennessee
   - Dr. Hawa Abdi and Vital Voices
   - Franck Riboud and Muhammad Yunus
   - CARE and Danone

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**Further Reading**

*Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*, Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn

*Giving*, Bill Clinton

*Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa*, Dambisa Moyo

*The White Man’s Burden: Why the West’s Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good*, William Easterly

*The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time*, Jeffrey D. Sachs

*The Idealist: Jeffrey Sachs and the Quest to End Poverty*, Nina Munk

*Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, a Man Who Would Cure the World*, Tracy Kidder

*The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can Be Done About It*, Paul Collier

*How Can I Help?*, Ram Dass and Paul Gorman

*Living a Life That Matters*, Harold S. Kushner


*The Possibility of Altruism*, Thomas Nagel
ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE TEACHER’S GUIDE

Eva Abbamonte has over twenty-five years of experience teaching social studies and history in the New York Metropolitan area. Currently, she is the chair of the Middle Division History Department at the Horace Mann School in the Bronx and has served as the Educational Advisor for Mission US 3 and Past/Present, online history games developed for middle school learners.

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Da Chen, Colors of the Mountain
Sandra Cisneros, The House on Mango Street
Sandra Cisneros, La casa en Mango Street (Spanish edition)
Jill Ker Conway, The Road from Coorain
Karin Cook, What Girls Learn
Mark Dunn, Ella Minnow Pea
Ralph Ellison, Invisible Man
Ernest J. Gaines, A Lesson Before Dying
Kaye Gibbons, Ellen Foster
David Guterson, Snow Falling on Cedars
Lorraine Hansberry, A Raisin in the Sun
Latoya Hunter, The Diary of Latoya Hunter
Charlayne Hunter-Gault, In My Place
Franz Kafka, The Trial: A New Translation
Randall Kennedy, Nigger
William Maxwell, So Long, See You Tomorrow
Cormac McCarthy, All the Pretty Horses
Gloria Naylor, Mama Day
Art Spiegelman, Maus
Piri Thomas, Down These Mean Streets
Piri Thomas, Por estas calles bravas (Spanish edition)
Opal Whiteley, Opal: The Journal of an Understanding Heart

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