

Novel Series

Siddhartha

teacher resource



Siddhartha

Hermann Hesse

Curriculum Unit

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About the Cover

Siddhartha is not the Buddha, but he is proof that it is possible for more than one person to become an Enlightened One.

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Introduction

When Hermann Hesse received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1946, the committee lauded “his inspired writings which, while growing in boldness and penetration, exemplify the classical humanitarian ideals and high qualities of style.” During the 1950s and 1960s—and even into the 1970s—he was something of a cult hero in the United States, especially on college campuses and among people who saw themselves as members of or descendants of the Beat Generation. While that popularity has simmered down, *Siddhartha* remains a superb choice for high school students in world literature classes.

The novel reflects Hesse’s lifelong interest in India, a byproduct of the fact that his maternal grandfather worked as a missionary in India, as did his father and mother. He lived in a house that had Indian artifacts, and he listened to stories about life in India. Hesse’s parents firmly expected that he would follow in their Pietist tradition, but it is evident that he was a nonconformist from youth. His search for meaning and peace is profoundly evident in *Siddhartha*.

Set long ago in India, during the time of the Buddha, the novel tells the story of a young man born to the highest caste, to great wealth and to many privileges. Dissatisfied, he abandons home and family and joins a group of ascetics whose disciplines he masters, but he finds himself still unsatisfied. He then immerses himself in pleasure and prosperity, but still is not at peace. Even meeting the Buddha himself does not work—Siddhartha must make his own way. Finally he finds harmony and insight in a simple life by the river.

Through *Siddhartha*, students meet the work of one of Germany’s most popular writers. Students also encounter and respond to Asian culture and philosophy, including universal principles from both Hinduism and Buddhism. Western culture can do well to absorb attention to the unity of all things, to cycles of life, and to the importance of choosing the right way in all things.

The novel resonates with an understanding that conspicuous consumption, hedonism, and materialistic goals do not suffice to produce happiness. The theme of a search for identity appeals to young people because it parallels their own experience. This is a timeless theme in literature and a universal human necessity. Through *Siddhartha*, Hesse emphasizes each person’s responsibility to seek integrity, wisdom, and peace.

Teacher Notes

Siddhartha is appropriate for nearly all levels of high school students. Many American teenagers are quite uninformed about Hinduism and Buddhism, so this unit begins with activities to introduce the basics about these two important cultures, both of which differ in many ways from mainstream U.S. lifestyles. Subsequent lessons approach the novel sequentially and then consider the work as a whole.

Objectives and procedures in this unit interface with national and state standards that challenge students to read and understand a wide variety of texts and to derive from those texts insight into life and human nature. Procedures engage students in a variety of learning strategies and draw on personal experiences as means of understanding the novel. Students examine both literal and figurative expressions, and procedures lead to research using a variety of sources. The unit emphasizes students' responsible and informed participation in the classroom learning community.

The word *Om* has powerful significance both in the novel and in Eastern beliefs. Sometimes teenagers like to experiment with its powers, both seriously and in jest; you may want to caution against this for several reasons. Some Christian religious leaders object on the grounds that it appeals to the three great gods of Hinduism. Other people see God as God, regardless of name, so using *Om* in jest amounts to profanity. Finally, an attitude of multicultural respect makes joking about *Om* distasteful.

One measure of the powerful appeal of the novel is the number of English translations available, all of which aspire to render Hermann Hesse's elegant poetic style in English. The authors of this unit made primary use of the translations by Joachim Neugroschel, with occasional cross-references to others. Chapter titles will vary slightly depending on the translation in use.

Lessons use the following reading schedule.

Lessons 1 and 2	Prereading
Lesson 3	"The Brahmin's Son"
Lesson 4	"Among the Samanas"
Lesson 5	"Gautama" and "Awakening"
Lesson 6	"Kamala" and "Among the Child People"
Lesson 7	"Samsara"
Lesson 8	"By the River"
Lesson 9	"The Ferryman"
Lesson 10	"The Son" and "Om"
Lesson 11	"Govinda"
Lesson 12	The entire novel

The 1972 movie adaptation was filmed in India and provides spectacular scenery. It is not overly long (83 minutes), but is unrated and has received very mixed reviews. You will want to preview it carefully if you intend to show all or part of it to your students.

Lesson 1

Fascinating India

Objectives

- To learn about India and the culture of Indian people
- To explore India's history
- To plan a one-week vacation in India

Notes to the Teacher

Since *Siddhartha* takes place in ancient India, a country with which many American students are quite unfamiliar, it is helpful to precede a study of the novel with a look at Indian culture and history. Depending on the ethnography of your school and geographical area, you may wish to enhance the procedure with guest speakers of Indian background.

India is a very ancient country, sometimes referred to as the “cradle of civilization.” The country evokes many images, from the glory of the Taj Mahal to people suffering appalling poverty. The traditional dress (dhoti and sari) often seems either strange or exotic to U.S. teens. Coming from a nation with ideals of equality for all and belief in upward social mobility, students often have difficulty understanding the staying power of the ancient caste system.

In this lesson, students work in groups to complete Web searches and to prepare class presentations about various aspects of India, past and present. They also plan one-week experiences as tourists in India. In 2009, PBS and the BBC premiered the acclaimed six-part series, *The Story of India*. You may want to use it or clips from it to enhance the lesson.

Procedure

1. Explain that the class is about to begin reading a novel that takes place in India. Ask students where India is located and what they know about it. (India is in Asia near Pakistan and Nepal. During the age of imperialism, England took complete control of India. Students have probably heard of Gandhi and his philosophy of nonviolent resistance. They may have eaten at Indian restaurants, and they may have seen pictures of beautiful traditional saris. They may also know that many twenty-first-century businesses outsource work to companies in India.)
2. Divide the class into small groups, and assign each group one of the following topics: Indian geography and natural resources; timeline of the history of India; the caste system; Indian traditional dress and customs; life in India today. Direct the groups to conduct Web

searches on the topics and to prepare to present information to the rest of the class, including relevant visual images. Recommend the *CIA World Factbook* as a useful starting point. (Note: If the necessary software is available, you may want students to complete multimedia presentations.)

3. Distribute **Handout 1**, and have students use it to take notes during the presentations. Point out that the handout suggests topics, but the students may present information in any order they wish and with many additional details.

Suggested Responses

1. India is among the top ten largest countries in the world. The southern section is a large peninsula surrounded by the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal, and the Indian Ocean. The Himalayan Mountains in the northern area separate India from China. The western part of the country is desert. The Ganges River is surrounded by plains. Natural resources include extensive coal reserves, diamonds, limestone, and natural gas. Pakistan and Nepal both border on India.
2. India is an ancient country. Scholars see the Indus River Valley as the cradle of civilization, somewhere around 3000 BCE. Over the centuries there were many dynasties of rulers. The Upanishads were written around 600 BCE. The Buddha lived and taught near the beginning of the sixth century BCE. During the Age of Imperialism, England was the most powerful country in western Europe; in 1858 the English took control of India in what we call the Raj. Various nationalist groups ultimately arose, led by people like Gandhi. India finally achieved independence in 1947. Also in 1947, part of India was made into the separate country of Pakistan; since then there have been several wars between those two countries.
3. India is heavily class conscious. A person is born to a specific social class that largely determines his or her future. The system is hierarchical. At the top are the Brahmins, the religious leaders or priests. Second are the Kshatriya, powerful figures like rulers, warriors, and wealthy landowners. The Vaishya include middle-class people such as merchants. The Shudra include artisans and laborers, what we sometimes call blue-collar workers. At the bottom of society are the people once referred to as the Untouchables, now called Harijans, who have the dirtiest but also necessary jobs. Most Indians see the caste system as a way to maintain order and avoid chaos.

4. The traditional dress for women, the sari, consists of a long piece of cloth that is wrapped around the body and looped over the shoulder; a short blouse is worn underneath. The sari is a graceful and often very beautiful piece of attire. Traditional dress for men is the dhoti, a piece of cloth wrapped around the lower body and legs. Often an Indian woman will paint a beauty mark in the center of her forehead. Today in India one sees people in both traditional and contemporary dress.
 5. Fewer than one-third of the people in India are urban; the majority are Hindu. Most people do not complete twelve years of school; only about half of the females are literate. The caste system is still deeply entrenched, making upward social and economic mobility rare. Although poverty is a big problem, the situation is improving. The country's geographical position makes it vulnerable to terrorist attacks.
4. Point out that India is very diverse, and a tourist there would have many options. Some people love cities and would just want to visit the "hot spots" in places like Delhi and Jaipur. Others would want to visit major sites like the Taj Mahal. Still others prefer adventurous vacation and would opt for a camel safari in the desert area or choose to venture into the Himalayas. Distribute **Handout 2**, and ask students to complete the activity. (Note: This works really well with small group collaboration.)
 5. Have students share responses, and post itineraries around the classroom.

A Look at India, Past and Present

Directions: Use the following guide to take notes on the long history and rich culture of India.

1. Indian Geography and Natural Resources

- a. Border countries
- b. Terrain
- c. Topographical highlights

2. The History of India

- a. Beginnings
- b. The Raj
- c. Independence

3. The Caste System

- a. Brahmin
- b. Kshatriya
- c. Vaishya
- d. Shudra
- e. Harijans

4. Indian Traditional Dress and Customs

- a. Dhoti
- b. Sari

5. Life in India Today

- a. Urban vs. rural
- b. Religion
- c. Literacy
- d. Gender roles

Touring India

Directions: Imagine that you are going to spend a week as a tourist in India. Use the Internet and print resources to plan your visit, beginning with your arrival by air or by sea and ending with your departure.

Day	Place(s)	Activities
Sunday		
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		

Lesson 2

A Look at Hinduism and Buddhism

Objectives

- To become acquainted with the nature of Hinduism
- To understand the impact of the Buddha on Asia

Notes to the Teacher

Hinduism and Buddhism both figure prominently in *Siddhartha*, so it is helpful for students to begin the novel with some understanding of both, which stand among the world's great religions, along with Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

Some scholars argue that Hinduism is not so much a religion as a culture. It does not focus on a single deity, and it has no central authority figure. By far the majority of people in India (about eighty percent) practice Hinduism in one of its many forms. The main gods are Krishna, Shiva, and Vishnu, but there are also many minor gods. The religious texts are the Vedas, the Upanishads, and the Bhagavad Gita. For Hindus, religion permeates daily life. Their deep belief in natural cycles is reflected in the idea of reincarnation. Yoga, born in Hinduism and popular today in the West, reflects a commitment to discipline and meditation.

When the Buddha came on the scene in the sixth century BCE, he was born into the highest caste of Hinduism. He did not really found a new religion; he focused on how people can deal with the realities of suffering and death. The result was his teachings about the four noble truths and the eightfold path to peace and harmony. Buddhists do not see the Buddha as a god, but as a great and enlightened teacher. In fact, Buddhism worships no god at all. Today there are Buddhists in India, but the religion eventually became much more dominant in China and Japan.

In this lesson, students learn the basics about both Hindu and Buddhist beliefs and ways of life. They then research and share proverbs from both cultures. You will need several large sheets of art paper for the final procedure.

If there is a Buddhist temple or a Hindu temple in your area, a field trip might be possible, or you might be able to arrange for a guest speaker to help clarify concepts that Western students often find very difficult to understand.

Procedure

1. Remind students that the great majority of people in India practice the religion of Hinduism, and the priests of Hinduism come from the Brahmin caste. Explain that the main character in *Siddhartha* is the son of a Brahmin, and the time setting is the sixth century BCE. Tell students that to understand Siddhartha's experience, it is helpful to understand his culture and religion.
2. Distribute **Handout 3**, and allow time for students to use the Internet or print sources to complete the research.

Suggested Responses

1. The three form a kind of Hindu trinity. Brahma is the creator, Vishnu the preserver, and Shiva the destroyer. Together they represent the constant cycles of existence.
 2. The art often depicts myths about gods and goddesses; there are often surreal combinations of images. There are mystical and magical elements, including figures with many arms and humans with elephant trunks.
 3. There are numerous Hindu festivals connected with stories of the gods and agricultural cycles.
 4. Hinduism is basically vegetarian, with serious prohibitions on eating pork and beef.
 5. Yoga is a product of Hinduism; yoga has to do with self-discipline and control. There are many forms of yoga; hatha yoga, which involves various physical postures and stretches, is the most popular form in the West.
 6. The Hindu spirit seems to be closely tuned in to natural cycles and to an effort to be in harmony with what is, rather than in conflict. Belief in reincarnation is related to the emphasis on cycles. The value placed on the caste system reflects a desire for order. For Hindus, religion is an essential and pervasive aspect of life; every Hindu home includes an altar or shrine which is a constant reminder of the presence of divinity.
3. Explain that Buddhism emerged from Hinduism. Distribute **Handout 4**, and have small groups use research tools to answer the questions.

Suggested Responses

1. The Buddha was Siddhartha Gautama (there are variant spellings), who was born into the Brahmin caste in the sixth century BCE. He led a life of princely privilege and profound studies.

2. One day he came into contact with the realities of old age, suffering, and death. The experience led him to abandon the life of privilege and become an ascetic.
 3. Sitting under a tree, the Buddha had a mystical experience of enlightenment; he became “the enlightened one.”
 4. The Buddha spent his life teaching the four noble truths and the eightfold path. He had numerous followers.
 5. The four noble truths focus on the fact that life involves much suffering. The eight-fold path is concerned with transcending the suffering through right thinking and behavior.
 6. The Buddha’s face is never troubled; it is usually perfectly serene, sometimes smiling, sometimes even laughing. He is often shown in the lotus position.
 7. Buddhism is not concerned with a god or gods; it is concerned with acquisition of wisdom and harmony.
 8. Buddhism did not supplant Hinduism in India; it became very dominant in China and Japan. Today there are Buddhists around the world. Buddhist monks are easily recognizable from their yellowish-orange robes; they live very simple lives of meditation and begging to provide for basic needs.
4. Ask students how both Hinduism and Buddhism contrast with the culture in which most of them have been raised. (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are all monotheistic. American mass culture is focused on materialism, not meditation, and it tends more to action than to contemplation.)
 5. Point out that aphorisms and proverbs often communicate the values of the cultures that produce them. Examples include phrases from Ben Franklin, the golden rule, and the Beatitudes. Divide the class into two groups, one to locate Hindu proverbs, the other Buddhist sayings. Post large pieces of art paper for students to record the adages to share with the class as a whole. Follow with discussion. (Hindu proverbs include the following: among the blind, the squint rules; saints fly only in the eyes of their disciples; when an elephant is in trouble, even a frog will kick him. Buddhist proverbs include the following: when the student is ready, the teacher will appear; between meditations, treat everything as an illusion.)
 6. Assign students to read the first chapter of *Siddhartha*, “The Brahmin’s Son,” for Lesson 3.

The Mysteries of Hinduism

Directions: Use the following procedures to guide your research as you become acquainted with some basic beliefs and practices of Hinduism.

1. Hinduism is a polytheistic religion with numerous gods and goddesses. The three main deities are Brahma, Vishnu (Krishna), and Shiva. With what is each associated?
2. Look up some paintings and sculptures depicting Hindu gods and goddesses. What do you notice?
3. What can you learn about Hindu festivals and holy days?
4. Does Hinduism have any dietary restrictions? Why?
5. How does yoga relate to Hinduism?
6. How would you describe the spirit of Hinduism?

Some Basics of Buddhism

Directions: Use the Internet and/or print sources to learn about Buddhism.

1. Who was the Buddha? When and where did he live?
2. What prompted him to leave his family and go off on his own?
3. What happened to him under the tree?
4. How did the Buddha spend the rest of his life?
5. What were his main teachings?
6. Examine some artworks depicting the Buddha, and describe your impressions.
7. In what key way does Buddhism differ from Hinduism?
8. Where is Buddhism practiced today? How do Buddhist monks live?

Lesson 3

Siddhartha, the Brahmin's Son

Objectives

- To recognize elements of Hinduism and Brahmin life in the first chapter of *Siddhartha*
- To consider what it means to be born as a highly privileged member of society
- To begin to analyze the character of the novel's protagonist

Notes to the Teacher

Part 1 of the novel includes four short chapters that follow Siddhartha from his father's house to life with a group of ascetics to an encounter with the Buddha and, finally, to a decision to move on to a new life. In the first chapter, we discover that Siddhartha is one of those rare individuals who seem to have it all: wealth, a high social position, loving parents, good looks, keen intelligence, sound health, respect of both peers and elders, and potential for enormous future success. Despite all of this, he is unhappy and dissatisfied. Feeling that life as a Brahmin will never lead him to the perfect mystical experience, he determines to leave home and seek another way among the samanas, roaming ascetics who practice severe asceticism. The closing lines see him on his way, accompanied by his close friend, Govinda.

In this lesson, students focus on what they learn in the first chapter. They then consider what it means to be born to a life of privilege. Finally, they analyze Siddhartha's character as a young Brahmin.

Procedure

1. Ask students to describe their initial impressions of the novel. Point out that what they have already learned about India and Hinduism helps in understanding "The Brahmin's Son."
2. Distribute **Handout 5**, and have small groups answer the questions.

Suggested Responses

1. The chapter introduces Siddhartha as a son in the Brahmin caste. *Om* is a mantra used in meditation to absorb a person in the presence of the divine world; *Atman* is the universal soul from which all individual souls are derived. The *Upanishads* and *Vedas* are sacred writings. *Ablutions* are cleansings of the body as religious ceremonies.

2. Siddhartha recognizes that the average Brahmin tends to be lazy and greedy, to speak piously but to act for self-profit. Siddhartha, on the other hand, is an idealist.
 3. Govinda is Siddhartha's close friend. He admires Siddhartha's physical grace and keen intelligence. It is evident that Govinda desires to follow in Siddhartha's footsteps.
 4. Siddhartha is disillusioned about Brahmin life. He realizes that the ceremonial ablutions involve only water and cannot really wash away sin. He believes that all of the Brahmins he knows will never achieve their spiritual goals and that there is much they cannot teach him.
 5. Self is something beyond flesh and bone, even beyond thought and consciousness; it seems to be the Atman at the heart of every individual.
 6. The Upanishads teach that a person who is asleep becomes part of the universal soul. Siddhartha is puzzled about finding a way to transfer that experience to conscious life and thus to always be at peace.
 7. Siddhartha knows that his father is no ordinary Brahmin and deeply admires him. He also recognizes that his father is one who is always seeking and, even after all these years, has not found complete peace. Siddhartha is always respectful of his mother.
 8. His disillusionment is at the heart of his decision, along with the sense that being loved by his parents will not satisfy him forever. Siddhartha is a young man with a young man's desire for independence and new experiences.
 9. Siddhartha's father is upset about his decision and remains sleepless all night. He keeps going back to check on Siddhartha, only to find the young man standing stubbornly awaiting his father's permission to leave. Ultimately the father recognizes Siddhartha's sincerity and need to find his own way. He asks only that Siddhartha return to share whatever wisdom he may discover.
3. Distribute **Handout 6**, and ask students to complete it individually. Follow with whole class discussion. Lead students to see that Siddhartha is a very serious young man intent on reaching the ideals of his own culture. There is a certain amount of arrogance in his nature, and he seems focused on himself. He is quite unconcerned about any suffering he may cause his parents.
 4. Ask students what it means to be "born with a silver spoon in one's mouth." Lead them to see that the phrase is used to describe people who seem to have always had everything anyone could want. Point

out that Siddhartha is certainly one of those people and that the phrase has different meanings in different contexts. Ask students to brainstorm examples in our own culture. If necessary, provide examples: the beautiful and talented daughter of a popular, wealthy country western singer who lives in Nashville; the tall, handsome son of a wealthy Hollywood film producer. Ask students why these seemingly incredibly fortunate people sometimes leave everything behind and go in a totally different direction. (The beautiful young woman may have always known that her mother suffers from chronic ulcers, dreads going on the road for another series of performances, and regrets the failure of her marriage. The young man in Hollywood may know that his father is an alcoholic who has constant nightmares about cinema failures.)

5. Ask students to write original short stories that depict a modern Siddhartha who leaves everything behind to pursue his or her own way in life. Schedule time for peer conferencing and establish the final deadline.
6. Assign students to read chapter 2, “Among the Samanas,” for Lesson 4.

“The Brahmin’s Son”

Directions: Carefully read the first chapter of *Siddhartha*, and answer the following questions.

1. What information does the chapter convey about Brahmin life and beliefs?
2. How does Siddhartha see the average Brahmin?
3. Who is Govinda? Why does he admire Siddhartha?
4. Why is Siddhartha dissatisfied?
5. What do the wise men teach about the self?
6. What do the Upanishads teach about sleep? Why does this puzzle Siddhartha?
7. What are Siddhartha’s attitudes toward his parents?
8. Why does Siddhartha decide to leave everything behind and join the samanas?
9. How does his father react to the decision?

First Impressions of Siddhartha

Directions: The first chapter of the novel introduces the protagonist as a young man. Use the following chart to indicate whether or not the following traits seem to characterize him. Provide textual evidence to support your views.

Character Trait	Yes	No	Textual Evidence
1. Intelligence			
2. Honesty			
3. Insight			
4. Self-confidence			
5. Sense of humor			
6. Independence			

Character Trait	Yes	No	Textual Evidence
7. Loyalty			
8. Self-discipline			
9. Sincerity			
10. Respect			
11. Compassion			
12. Love			

Lesson 4

Siddhartha among the Ascetics

Objectives

- To describe the beliefs and lifestyle of the samanas
- To understand the first phase of Siddhartha's quest

Notes to the Teacher

When Siddhartha and Govinda join ascetic samanas in chapter 2, they enter into a lifestyle very different from the one in which they grew up. Instead of participating in daily ablutions, they become very dirty; they experience hunger, physical pain, and privations; the goals seem to be complete transcendence of bodily needs and desires and attainment of control. As with his life as the Brahmin's son, Siddhartha excels at everything the samanas teach and seems likely to become one of the great samanas of all time. Instead, he again experiences dissatisfaction and determines to set out on another as yet unspecified path.

It is sometimes difficult for twenty-first-century students in a dominantly materialistic society to understand why Siddhartha and Govinda would feel any attraction to the samana way of life. You may want to point out that the two young men are focused on a goal, and people focused on high goals often voluntarily undertake rigorous regimens that involve a lot of self-denial.

In this lesson, students begin with a discussion of the second chapter. They focus on the lives of the samanas and on Siddhartha's experiences and ultimate disillusionment with them. They then consider the role of asceticism over the ages.

Procedure

1. Distribute **Handout 7**, and have small groups answer the questions.

Suggested Responses

1. The Samanas are nomadic men who practice severe self-denial; they are ragged, thin, dirty, and sunburned.
2. Siddhartha and Govinda must give away all their clothes and learn to live on, at most, one uncooked meal a day. Their hair and nails must go untrimmed; they must view women and wealthy people with contempt.
3. Siddhartha concludes that life is pain and that he must die to the Self.

4. Siddhartha wants to know the total peace of an empty heart and to experience pure thought.
 5. Siddhartha learns to transcend thirst and pain; he can control his breath and his heartbeats. In meditation he can, for a time, empty his mind of all images.
 6. He realizes that, after meditation, he always cycles right back to himself.
 7. Siddhartha concludes that meditation and self-denial have only temporary results and do not lead to the permanent peace and blessedness of nirvana.
 8. Govinda is willing to accept learning from others; Siddhartha seems to have to learn for himself.
 9. The Buddha is a religious teacher who has ended his cycle of death and rebirth; he wears the yellow robe of a monk and travels around the country, drawing numerous disciples, including many from the Brahmin caste.
 10. The samana leader becomes angry at the idea that his best student wants to leave; Siddhartha uses what he has learned to subdue the old man.
 11. Govinda is, as always, impressed by Siddhartha.
 12. Siddhartha desires peace of mind, not the ability to astound others with sensational feats.
2. Introduce the term *asceticism*, and ask students if they know what it means. Explain that it comes from a Greek word for physical exercises, especially to prepare for athletic competitions. Point out that serious athletes often undertake rigorous regimens to be able to excel. Ask students to brainstorm examples. (Instead of sleeping to the last possible moment, an ice skater might report to the rink for two hours of practice before heading off to school. A football player might have to eschew carbonated beverages for the duration of the season and participate in lengthy, grueling practices.)
 3. Distribute **Handout 8**, and have students use the Internet or print materials to complete the exercise. Follow with discussion.

Suggested Responses

1. Related words include the following: *self-denial*, *austerity*, *self-mortification*, *self-discipline*.
2. Possible antonyms are *sensualism*, *self-indulgence*, and *hedonism*.
3. Asceticism is usually undertaken in an effort to reach some higher goal than physical satisfaction. Often this goal is linked to spiritual insight or achievement of perfection.

4. Asceticism reflects the idea that the body is antithetical to spirituality, that body and spirit are opposite forces rather than complementary parts of a unified whole.
 5. Practically all religious traditions have had ascetic elements—Judaism, Hinduism, Christianity, Islam. Sometimes groups become so extreme that they are seen as fanatical. Fasting and abstinence from some kinds of food are ascetic practices of mainstream groups.
 6. It is obvious that physical excesses are destructive, so people might think that the opposite, physical deprivation and punishment, are desirable.
 7. Asceticism can lead to pride, even arrogance in the conviction of one's superiority to ordinary people. It can also lead to show-off behavior. Anorexia is a dysfunctional form of asceticism, as a person refuses to eat.
4. Ask students why Siddhartha decides to abandon the samana lifestyle. (He recognizes that, despite his excellence as a student, he has not achieved his goal, nor have the samanas, even though they have been trying for many years. Siddhartha is seeking an ideal, one which may be unattainable.)
 5. Ask students whether Siddhartha seems to have changed very much during his time with the samanas. (The main change in Siddhartha's character is a growing cynicism. Otherwise, despite his shabby exterior, he is very much the same as he was when he left his father's house.)
 6. Assign students to read "Gautama" and "Awakening" for Lesson 5.

Siddhartha and the Samanas

Directions: Carefully read the second chapter of *Siddhartha*, and answer the following questions.

1. What are some characteristics of the lives of the Samanas?
2. What changes do Siddhartha and Govinda make in their lifestyles?
3. What conclusion does Siddhartha draw about life after seeing people from the samana point of view?
4. What becomes Siddhartha's main goal?
5. What are some of the things Siddhartha learns while he is with the samanas?
6. After some time with the samanas, what disappointment does he experience?

7. What conclusion does he draw about meditation and self-denial?
8. As students, how do Siddhartha and Govinda differ from each other?
9. What do they hear about the Buddha?
10. Describe the confrontation between the samana leader and Siddhartha.
11. How does Govinda react to Siddhartha's actions?
12. Why does Siddhartha see no reason to walk on water?

What Is Asceticism?

Directions: Use the Internet or print materials to discover the meaning and history of asceticism.

1. List some words that are synonyms or near-synonyms for *asceticism*.
2. List some antonyms of *asceticism*.
3. What are the main purposes of asceticism?
4. How does asceticism reflect a dualistic view of body and spirit?
5. What religions include elements of asceticism?
6. What might cause some people to think it is advisable to practice an ascetic lifestyle?
7. What are some dangers involved in an ascetic lifestyle?

Lesson 5

Learning from the Buddha

Objectives

- To understand the Buddha's effects on Govinda and Siddhartha
- To consider the nature of Siddhartha's awakening after his encounter with the Buddha

Notes to the Teacher

When Siddhartha and Govinda leave the samanas, they seek and find the Buddha, an extraordinary man who exudes an aura of spiritual perfection. The Buddha's message focuses on freedom from suffering, and people from all over gather to hear him speak. Govinda decides to don the robe of a Buddhist monk and is dismayed that Siddhartha will not join him. Siddhartha is deeply impressed by the Buddha and seeks out a conversation with the great man, but then strikes out on his own. The final chapter in Part 1 shows Siddhartha awakening to the beauty of the world around him. Suddenly he sees it not as a sphere of deception, but as a glowing reality, and he determines not to head back to his parents' home, but to move straight ahead into the future.

Hesse presents rather indirectly much of what students have already learned about Buddhism. We read of monks carrying on the activities of their faith, and we hear some of the teachings of the Buddha. There is, of course, much more to Buddhist belief and practice than one can find in *Siddhartha*; Hesse is not presenting a treatise on any one faith or philosophy; rather, he creates the story of a person who seeks to know himself and his place in the world.

In this lesson, students first discuss the final two chapters in part 1 of the novel. They then consider Siddhartha as he has the opportunity to talk personally with someone who seems to have achieved goals that have proven so elusive. Students are invited to create similar scenarios for life today.

Procedure

1. Distribute **Handout 9**, and have small groups answer the questions.

Suggested Responses

1. Govinda is very excited and enthusiastic about seeing the Buddha; Siddhartha is much more matter-of-fact, although he does recognize the man's greatness.

2. For as long as he remains a Buddhist monk, Govinda renounces home, family, property, friendships, and his own will. He will beg for his single daily meal, and he will spend much time in prayer and discussion.
 3. Siddhartha rather brashly finds fault with the Buddha's teaching about the great unity of everything. Siddhartha's objection is philosophical.
 4. The Buddha answers that the aim of his teaching is not to explain the world, but to enable people to rise above suffering.
 5. Siddhartha concludes that he cannot gain his goals by following the teachings of others, no matter how wise or holy. He must experience life and choose or reject what he learns from living.
 6. Siddhartha leaves behind his lifelong friend, but he has gained some understanding of himself.
 7. Siddhartha's goal is about to change dramatically. Instead of trying to get rid of himself, he now wants to discover exactly who and what he is. Siddhartha seems to be the kind of person who cannot learn from other people's experiences.
 8. Siddhartha has been practicing a way of life based on self-denial and renunciation of the world. Suddenly, he is intensely aware of the beauty of the world around him.
 9. Siddhartha seems to be prone to extremes. Allow students to conjecture freely about where Siddhartha's realization of the world's beauty might take him.
2. Distribute **Handout 10**, and review the directions. If necessary, provide examples. A student aiming for success in the computer industry might want to talk to someone like Bill Gates; someone looking for success as a singer would probably talk to a current star or a musical legend; a person hoping for a career in politics might want to speak to the president, a former president, or a presidential hopeful.
 3. Have students share responses to the handout in small groups; ask each group to select one to share with the class as a whole.
 4. Explain that the next lesson will begin with a quiz on part 1 of *Siddhartha*. (See the Supplementary Materials at the end of this unit. The quiz can be used as a formal grading tool or for informal review.)
 5. Assign students to read "Kamala" and "Among the Child People" for Lesson 6.

Siddhartha Meets the Buddha

Directions: Read the final two chapters of part 1 of *Siddhartha*, and answer the following questions.

1. How do Govinda and Siddhartha differ in their attitudes as they seek the Buddha?
2. What does Govinda renounce by choosing to become a Buddhist monk?
3. What does Siddhartha see as a flaw in the Buddha's teachings?
4. How does the Buddha reply to Siddhartha's objection?
5. What conclusion causes Siddhartha to leave the Buddha and Govinda?
6. What has Siddhartha gained and lost by his experience with the Buddhists?
7. Why is Siddhartha unable to become a student of the Buddha?
8. Siddhartha feels that he has awakened. How has his view of the world, his home, and himself changed?
9. Given everything you already know about Siddhartha's personality and character, where do you think his path will now take him?

In the Footsteps of Siddhartha

Directions: Siddhartha has the great opportunity to listen to and then speak privately with the Buddha, a man who seems to have achieved the goals that have long eluded Siddhartha both as a Brahmin and as a samana. Complete the following activities to recreate this situation in the modern world.

1. Identify a goal that you would really like to accomplish.
2. Identify a person who has accomplished or come near to accomplishing that goal.
3. Write out at least one paragraph of words of wisdom from that person. The words could come from a letter or essay, a speech, a song, or any other relevant source.
4. List questions you would like to ask the person.
5. Write answers the person would be likely to give to your questions. Try to be faithful to the person's typical style of speaking or writing.
6. Write a paragraph expressing your thoughts after talking with and listening to the person.

Lesson 6

A New Way of Life for Siddhartha

Objectives

- To understand Siddhartha's decision to immerse himself in pleasure and wealth
- To analyze the beginning of the relationship between Kamala and Siddhartha

Notes to the Teacher

It is often difficult for students to understand Kamala's true social position. She is not a prostitute in the sense of someone who would be the target of a vice squad. Courtesans were highly respected in many early cultures; men paid not just for sex, but for an encounter with beauty and culture.

After the disciplined life that Siddhartha has always led, his awakening to the beauty in the world around him almost inevitably leads to his awakening to sexual desire. In this, as in all other areas of his life, he is determined to have only the very best, and that is Kamala. The first three chapters of part 2 of the novel deal with his initial encounter with her, their long relationship, and his decision to leave.

In this lesson, students discuss characters and events in the first chapter of part 2. They then read the second chapter aloud in class and discuss it. You may want to begin by using the quiz on part 1 (see Supplementary Materials) as an evaluation tool or to review part 1.

Procedure

1. Ask students what major change Siddhartha makes in his life in the first chapter of part 2. (He carefully notes the rhythms in nature around him, and he determines to seek a mate.)
2. Explain that Kamala is not a prostitute in the derogatory sense that our culture usually associates with that word. She is a respected and wealthy person in her town.
3. Distribute **Handout 11**, and have students discuss it in small groups.

Suggested Responses

1. Siddhartha is again profoundly aware of the beauty of the world around him. He also notices mating patterns and hunters pursuing prey.

2. Siddhartha realizes that he must gain experience because the self cannot be discovered by thought alone.
 3. He dreams of Govinda, but in his dream his friend turns into a woman who nurses him. Siddhartha is awakening to sexual desire.
 4. The ferryman lives by the philosophy that everything comes back, that life is cyclical. The river has taught him that principle of life.
 5. The ferryman is certain that Siddhartha, who has no money with which to pay for passage over the river, will return.
 6. Although the girl seems more than willing, Siddhartha hears his inner voice say, "No." She is not good enough to be the teacher he desires.
 7. Kamala is intelligent, exquisitely beautiful, and very wealthy.
 8. Kamala's attitude seems to be a combination of amusement, fascination, and attraction. Of course, she will spend no time with Siddhartha if he has no money to spend on her.
 9. He will become a merchant so that he can get the money he needs in order to learn from Kamala.
 10. Siddhartha is not a cruel person, but he is totally focused on what Kamala can do for him.
4. Point out the extended simile near the end of the chapter in which Siddhartha talks about a stone. Have students reread it, and ask them what he means. (Siddhartha is single-minded and resolute in pursuit of a goal. Nothing can deter him.)
 5. Have students meet in small groups, and ask them to list five people that they consider successful. Then reconvene as a whole class and list names on the board. Brainstorm reasons why these people can be considered successful (money, popularity, personal happiness, good looks, etc.).
 6. Have students read the second chapter of part 2 aloud. When they have finished, ask students if Siddhartha becomes a success. (He becomes a wealthy merchant and has a stable life with Kamala, but the dying voice within him is a worry.)
 7. Distribute **Handout 12**, and have students complete it.

Suggested Responses

1. Kamaswami values fine possessions, rich food, and fine wine. He likes full warehouses and big accounts, and he tracks the prices of commodities; he keeps up on shipping and trade issues and processes big purchases quickly, knowing how much interest to charge. Siddhartha sees no value in possessions,

eats nourishing food once a day, and believes thinking, waiting, and fasting are more important than writing and business cleverness. Kamaswami is often harried; Siddhartha is always calm.

2. Siddhartha takes time with people, and that has good business results.
 3. Because he sets so little value on material things, Siddhartha sees business as a game rather than as a crucial venture. Winning is enjoyable, but an occasional loss is no problem.
 4. While Siddhartha's inner voice is never completely silenced, his dissipated lifestyle weakens it.
 5. It is evident that Siddhartha speaks often about the Buddha, whom he sees as one of the rare people who have a true course in life. Of all of the people Siddhartha has ever known, the Buddha is the most perfect.
 6. One could argue that Siddhartha does not really know what love is, so he does not know if he loves anyone. He seems to think that only ordinary people know how to love. Kamala loves Siddhartha enough to want to have his child one day.
8. Assign students to read "Samsara" for Lesson 7.

Siddhartha's Journey into the City

Directions: Read the first chapter of part 2 of *Siddhartha*, and answer the following questions.

1. As Siddhartha walks toward the river, what does he observe in the world around him?
2. What does he realize that he must do to find the self he is seeking?
3. What strange dream does he experience while sleeping in the ferryman's hut? What does it signify?
4. What is the ferryman's philosophy about life and about people? Where did he learn it?
5. Do you observe any foreshadowing in the ferryman's comments to Siddhartha?

Siddhartha and Kamaswami

Directions: Read the second chapter of part 2, and complete the following exercise.

1. Use the chart below to compare and contrast Kamaswami’s life and values with those of Siddhartha.

Kamaswami	Siddhartha

2. How do Siddhartha’s comments reveal his business acumen?
3. Why does he see business as a kind of game?
4. What is happening to the voice within him? Why?
5. What does Siddhartha tell Kamala about the Buddha? How does she react?
6. Is Siddhartha correct in his assertion that neither he nor Kamala can love? Explain.

Lesson 7

Time Passes and Siddhartha Changes

Objectives

- To understand the changes in Siddhartha during his years as a businessman
- To consider the symbolism of the little songbird

Notes to the Teacher

As time passes, Siddhartha becomes less and less a samana at heart. The fourth chapter of part 2 reveals a new Siddhartha, one who overindulges in food and wine and enjoys the presence of dancing girls. He has become very wealthy, and the years have passed quickly. As in his father's house and later with the samanas, he hears his inner voice calling him to move on, and he turns his back on Kamala, business, and his fine house and walks away.

It is often difficult for students to understand the discontent that seizes Siddhartha in this chapter and the despair he experiences in the next one. They are closer to his age when he first encountered Kamala, and at that age he certainly did not expect his choices to lead to this unhappiness and disgust with himself.

There is nothing adolescent about Siddhartha's experiences in these chapters. He is profoundly disappointed at what he has done with his life and at what he has made of himself—so disappointed that, for a time, he perceives no hope for the future.

In this lesson, students examine the chapter entitled “Samsara” and analyze the significance of the little bird in Siddhartha's dream.

Procedure

1. Ask students to summarize events in the chapter. (A significant amount of time passes; Siddhartha becomes enmeshed in a life of decadence, but eventually experiences discontent and decides once again to move in a different direction. At the end we know that Kamala is pregnant with Siddhartha's child.)
2. Distribute **Handout 13**, and have small groups answer the questions.

Suggested Responses

1. The habits of thinking and waiting are an undercurrent, even when Siddhartha immerses himself in wealth and pleasure.

2. Despite his self-indulgent lifestyle, Siddhartha is still aware of his earlier knowledge from the Brahmins and samanas.
 3. The mocking superiority Siddhartha has always felt for other people is falling away. He is sure that they feel sorrow, joy, and love more deeply than he does.
 4. Siddhartha enjoys the suspense involved in winning and losing.
 5. Siddhartha actually dreams of money.
 6. Siddhartha dreams that he finds the bird dead in its cage and throws it out, but then feels as if he has thrown away everything of value.
 7. The dream terrifies him, and he goes out to the garden to reflect, a decision that later leads him to leave everything behind. This dream parallels the one long ago in which Govinda transformed into a woman. Both dreams galvanize Siddhartha to choose a new path.
 8. He feels hollow, as if his life has been shallow and purposeless.
 9. The bird seems to symbolize Siddhartha. Kamala frees both.
 10. At the beginning of the chapter, Siddhartha is fixed on gaining wealth and absorbed in the excitement of the risk of gambling, as well as in sensual pleasures. By the end, he is nauseated by the things that have brought him transient pleasure and he once again sets out on a new path.
3. Point out that sometimes dreams we have at night just seem like silly combinations of people, objects, and events. At other times, they can reveal important things about our inner selves.
 4. Distribute **Handout 14**, and have small groups complete the exercise.

Suggested Responses

1. A dream that one's teeth are falling out is usually interpreted as a sign that the person feels a lack of power or, perhaps, a loss of physical attractiveness.
 2. The dream suggests feelings of vulnerability.
 3. The dream suggests that we have the power to control hostile forces around us.
 4. The dream in the ferryman's hut signifies Siddhartha waking from boyhood into manhood and physical desire for a woman.
 5. The songbird is kept in a cage, where it is certainly safe but, nonetheless, imprisoned. To Siddhartha it seems to symbolize everything that was once good about himself, but now seems dead or lost. To Kamala the bird seems to symbolize Siddhartha's spirit and his need for the freedom to seek his own way, regardless of possible dangers.
5. Assign students to read "By the River" for Lesson 8.

Samsara

Directions: Read the chapter carefully, and answer the following questions.

1. Even while Siddhartha gains wealth and lives a life of pleasure, what undercurrent causes him to be different from most other people?

2. What ways of thinking has he retained from his earlier life?

3. How has his attitude toward other people changed?

4. Why has he enjoyed gambling so much?

5. What makes him realize that he has succumbed to greed?

Dreams

Directions: Siddhartha has several dreams that have deep significance in his life. Use the following exercise to think about the potential importance of dreams.

1. Diane woke up one morning and remembered a really strange dream she had the night before. In her dream, her teeth started falling out, one by one. Was this just a silly nighttime imagination, or did her dream have significance?
2. Dan, a first-year teacher, keeps dreaming that he arrives at school in the morning only to discover that he forgot to put on a shirt, socks, and shoes. He finds this dream very annoying. Does it mean anything?
3. Delaney entertained friends at lunch with a story of a weird dream of being attacked by a gigantic robotic monster. Just as the robot raised a huge metallic fist for a killing downward blow, Delaney noticed an off/on button in the center of the robot's chest and pressed it to "off." The monster froze in position. Does the dream have any meaning?
4. Recall Siddhartha's dream the night he slept at the ferryman's hut. What did that dream signify?
5. In "Samsara," why does the dream about the little songbird have such a strong effect on Siddhartha? How does the bird serve as a symbol for both Siddhartha and Kamala?

Lesson 8

Despair and Hope

Objectives

- To understand Siddhartha's experiences of both despair and rebirth
- To visualize key moments in the novel

Notes to the Teacher

As Siddhartha travels away from his life as a successful businessman and lover, he experiences a moment of complete despair and nearly commits suicide in the river. Only the word *Om* saves him, and, exhausted, he falls into a deep sleep. A Buddhist monk comes upon him and keeps watch to make sure no harm comes to the sleeper. The monk, Govinda, does not realize the man is his old friend until Siddhartha identifies himself.

Later, as Siddhartha walks along, he reflects about his past life and feels that, once again, a new Siddhartha has come into existence. He finds that he loves the river in which he nearly drowned himself, and he determines to stay near it.

A note of caution: Some students may have experienced despair and the temptation to suicide either personally or through family or friends. It is best not to push them to identify with Siddhartha in this chapter.

In this lesson, students discuss events in the chapter. They then create visuals to interpret Siddhartha's journey so far in the novel. Students will need access to art materials.

Procedure

1. Ask students to summarize what happens to Siddhartha during this chapter. (At first he is so disgusted with himself that he considers suicide, but the sacred *Om* comes to him and, exhausted, he falls asleep. He sees his old friend Govinda again. By the end he feels joyful and determines to remain near the river.)
2. Distribute **Handout 15**, and have small groups discuss the questions.

Suggested Responses

1. Siddhartha sees clearly that he has involved himself in a lifestyle that contaminates his character. He just wants to end his life and be done with everything.
2. He is rescued by recalling the syllable *Om* and realizing that it connects him with the supreme spirit of the universe. This leads him to the further consciousness that life is indestructible and his death would not end the cycle; he would be reincarnated.

3. He is emotionally spent. The result is that he can sleep peacefully for the first time in a long time.
 4. When Siddhartha awakens, he finds a Buddhist monk sitting and watching over him. The monk is Govinda, who at first does not recognize his old friend. They talk a little about reasons why Siddhartha is dressed in the attire of a rich man. Then the two part, and Siddhartha comes to the realization that he can love.
 5. The realization that he can and does love is totally different from his previous assertions about being unable to really love anyone. He has become an ordinary person.
 6. Siddhartha thinks that as a boy he learned to practice the religion of his father; as a young man he practiced severe asceticism; he also learned the teachings of the Buddha. After that, he immersed himself in sensual pleasures and moneymaking.
 7. Remembering *Om* brought him freedom and peace; the sacred word ended his self-detestation and set him on a new path in which he will no longer feed his body to the neglect of his soul.
 8. He has developed a love for the river in which he nearly drowned himself, and he determines to stay near it. He feels on the brink of a new life, but the nature of that life is not yet clear.
3. Point out that students have now read and discussed the first eight chapters of the novel. Distribute **Handout 16**, and review directions. If necessary, provide examples: a profile of a person standing with his arms stubbornly folded across his chest; the Buddha; Kamala's luxurious chair; a caged bird; a face looking down into a river.
 4. Direct groups to create visuals to depict key events in Siddhartha's life and to prepare to explain their choices to the class as a whole. After the presentations, you may want to post visuals in chronological order around the classroom as a visual summary of what has happened so far in the novel.
 5. Assign students to read "The Ferryman" for Lesson 9.

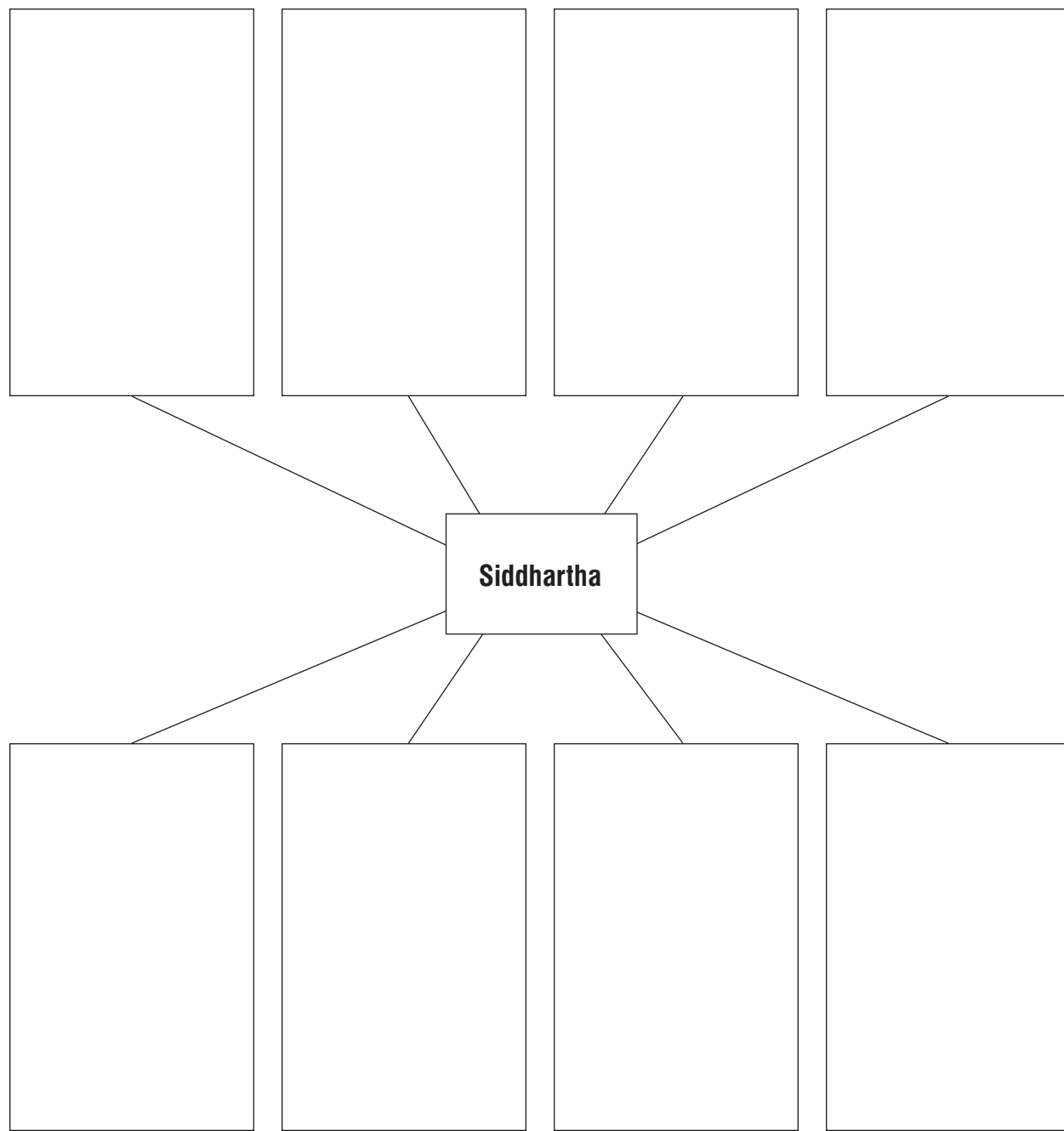
From Despair to Joy

Directions: Read the chapter that describes Siddhartha's experiences as he leaves the town behind, and answer the following questions.

1. At the beginning of the chapter, why is Siddhartha so disgusted with himself?
2. He comes very close to suicide. What stops him?
3. Why is he so exhausted?
4. Describe the interaction of Govinda and Siddhartha when they meet again after such a long time.
5. What surprising insight does Siddhartha have into himself?
6. What does Siddhartha think about as he reviews his past life?
7. What has repeating the sacred syllable *Om* done for him? How has he found satisfaction?
8. What sort of new life does Siddhartha seem to envision for himself?

Visualizing Siddhartha

Directions: Think about the first eight chapters of *Siddhartha*, and brainstorm specific images and scenes that could be used to visually depict Siddhartha's experiences from youth to his decision to remain near the river. Use the graphic organizer to record your ideas.



Lesson 9

Siddhartha, the Ferryman

Objectives

- To reflect on changes in Siddhartha's life once he joins Vasudeva, the ferryman
- To begin to consider the symbolic significance of the river

Notes to the Teacher

Siddhartha's decision to remain near the river takes him back to the ferryman who long ago went unpaid for a ride across the river. Siddhartha moves in with Vasudeva and learns to do all of the things that a ferryman must do. The two men talk about the mysteries of the river, and they spend much time in comfortable silence. Over the years, the two men acquire a reputation for sanctity.

Word comes that the Buddha is dying, and monks and pilgrims make their way to the deathbed of the Illustrious One. Siddhartha and Vasudeva ferry the people across the river. One of the pilgrims is Kamala, who is accompanied by her young son. Kamala is bitten by a snake and dies, leaving the son with Siddhartha and Vasudeva.

In this lesson, students first discuss characters and events in the chapter. They then focus on river symbolism. Students will need access to the Internet or to magazines that feature nature scenes.

Procedure

1. Distribute **Handout 17**, and have small groups answer the questions.

Suggested Responses

1. Siddhartha observes that the river is always flowing, but also always there.
2. The river has taught Vasudeva how to listen and how to meditate. When people really listen to the river, they take an inner journey. The journey led Vasudeva to find joy in hard work and to a mystical kind of peace.
3. Siddhartha and Vasudeva acquire a reputation for sanctity, and people actually travel to see what they are like. Most laugh when they find that the reputed saints are just two strange but friendly old men.
4. The Buddha is dying, so monks and pilgrims are hurrying toward his deathbed.

5. Kamala, along with her young son, is on her way to the Buddha. When she stops to rest, she is bitten by a snake and soon dies.
 6. It is evident that Siddhartha has learned to love unselfishly. Kamala sees the change in him and recognizes that he has finally found peace.
 7. Siddhartha spends the night listening to the river; Vasudeva observes that Siddhartha has experienced sorrow without becoming sad. Siddhartha says that he feels happy and rich because he has been given his son. He now defines riches in terms of human beings, not possessions.
 8. When the boy was traveling with Kamala, it was already evident that he is a spoiled and pampered child used to having his own way. He may not appreciate the austerity of the ferry-men's lives.
2. Ask for a show of hands about how many students have spent time on or near a river. Have volunteers share experiences. (These may range from a lovely cruise down the Mississippi to a terrible spring flood to a mosquito-infested fishing location to a gentle, rock-studded stream.)
 3. Distribute **Handout 18**, and have students complete it individually.

Suggested Responses

1. Pictures may include wilderness areas, mountain streams, and urban settings. Some rivers are wide and deep, others narrow or shallow. Many pictures include types of bridges.
 2. Feelings might include relief at escaping from the classroom, agitation at wanting to get other things done, enjoyment of the peace in a natural setting, awe at natural beauty.
 3. Rivers often seem serene; in drought, they can seem like desperate trickles; in flood, they can be terrifying.
 4. Many people find the sound of gently lapping water to be very soothing. Rivers can splash, gurgle, whisper, and roar in various circumstances. There might also be other sounds—insects, frogs, and water birds.
 5. The river seems to bring Siddhartha close to the *Om* that saved his life when he was near despair. It gives him a simple, hardworking life far different from that of a businessman pre-occupied with pleasure and profit. The river has become his teacher.
 6. The river can be seen as symbolic of many things: peace, wisdom, life cycles, patience, quiet listening, perseverance, freedom, rebirth.
4. Assign students to read “The Son” and “Om” for Lesson 10.

Siddhartha, the Ferryman

Directions: Carefully read the chapter in which Siddhartha joins the ferryman, and answer the following questions.

1. What at first amazes Siddhartha about the river?
2. What does Vasudeva say he has learned from the river?
3. Once Siddhartha acquires the art of listening, what happens in the ferrymen's relationship with each other and with other people?
4. Why are even more people than usual streaming toward the Buddha?
5. What happens to Kamala?
6. What do you notice about the interaction of Kamala and Siddhartha in the hut?
7. How does Kamala's death affect Siddhartha?
8. From what has already been revealed about the son, how well do you think he will adapt to life with the ferrymen?

The Symbolism of the River

Directions: Use the following exercise to reflect on the significance of the river in Siddhartha's life and in the novel.

1. Use the Internet or old magazines to find pictures of rivers. Select scenes in which you would like to spend a few hours just relaxing. Attach pictures to this handout.
2. Spend some time quietly looking at the pictures you have chosen. What feelings do you think you would experience if you could be in one of those scenes right now?
3. Rivers have many moods. Explain what this means.
4. Describe the various sounds of rivers. Why do some people like to go sleep with the sounds of rivers in the background?
5. Why does the river have such powerful appeal for Siddhartha?
6. What does the river symbolize?

Lesson 10

Siddhartha, the Father

Objectives

- To understand the conflict between Siddhartha and his young son
- To comprehend events and insights in “Om”

Notes to the Teacher

From the first view of Siddhartha’s son traveling with Kamala, the reader is aware that the boy is self-centered, spoiled, whiney, and demanding. These traits only become worse after his mother’s death. He does not like staying in the hut with two holy ferrymen; the result is conflict, and the boy leaves. Siddhartha, unwilling to let him go, heads off in pursuit, but in time realizes the folly of his action and returns to the hut. The loss of his son pains him terribly, but he goes on with life as a ferryman, listening to and learning from the river. Eventually he hears the river laughing at the troubles that give him so much grief, and finally he has a mystical experience of the oneness of all things, the river’s final lesson. Vasudeva, seeing that Siddhartha’s transformation is complete, is free to leave, presumably for his own death.

In this lesson, students first discuss the chapter that shows the ongoing problems caused by Siddhartha’s son. Students then dramatize scenarios of the generation gap at work in the twenty-first century. Finally, they read and discuss “Om.”

Procedure

1. Have small groups discuss the questions on **Handout 19**.

Suggested Responses

1. Siddhartha’s son has been spoiled and coddled all his life; he is unused to helping with household chores; he is used to ordering servants about. He has never met his father before, and has no desire to exchange his old life for this austere new one. Perhaps young Siddhartha has heard wonderful things about his father that seem in no way related to the reality of this old ferryman. What is peace for Siddhartha and Vasudeva is boredom for the boy.
2. Siddhartha loves his son unconditionally, without asking for anything in return; however, he feels incapable of loving unselfishly and does not want to let the boy go back to his old way of life.

3. Vasudeva sees that Siddhartha needs to be more firm and that the boy should go back home at least for a time to the house he and his mother shared. He also sees in the son the same stubborn rebelliousness Siddhartha had years ago in leaving his own father's house; furthermore, Siddhartha cannot spare his son the pain and hurt of the world.
 4. Siddhartha's love for his son, which gives him both pleasure and pain, makes him an ordinary person.
 5. Young Siddhartha finds his father boring; the boy feels small in comparison with his father's goodness. Eventually he bursts out that he hates his father.
 6. Siddhartha realizes that he once caused his own father this same type of pain. He also understands that pursuing his son is useless. Vasudeva is right; the boy must find out the truth for himself.
 7. Vasudeva seeks Siddhartha and takes him home; he checks on his welfare. He does not say, "I told you so."
2. Ask students to define the term *generation gap*. (The term usually refers to the way different age groups may contrast in values and beliefs and the fact that these differences can make mutual understanding difficult.)
 3. Distribute **Handout 20**, and have small groups of three (if necessary, a group of four can include two onlookers) prepare role-plays.
 4. Have groups dramatize scenarios for the class as a whole, and follow with discussion. Point out that conflict does not always lead to separation, the way it does in *Siddhartha*. Although Siddhartha loves his son, he played no role in the boy's early years and lives a lifestyle totally different from the one the boy is used to and wants.
 5. Have students read aloud the chapter entitled "Om."
 6. Follow the reading with discussion of the following questions.
 - What is the burning wound Siddhartha feels so keenly? (He keenly feels the loss of his son; the pain is not a feeling that fades or goes away.)
 - Why does Siddhartha hear the river laughing? (Siddhartha thinks the constant cycle of pain to be lamentable, but the river seems to laugh at it. The river does not struggle against reality. It just flows on.)
 - What is Vasudeva's last lesson for Siddhartha? (Siddhartha receives the river's message of the unity of all things, which is signified by the sacred *Om*, and the insight gives him the serenity of another Buddha.)
 - Why does Vasudeva leave? (He seems to feel that his mission has been accomplished and that it is time for him to achieve nirvana.)

7. Have students complete **Handout 21**.

Suggested Responses

Answers are likely to vary somewhat. Siddhartha cannot bear to lose his son, even when it is apparent that the boy is miserable and despises living with the two old ferrymen. Siddhartha is well past the point of erupting in anger, but his pursuit of the boy seems a kind of bargaining, as if he could somehow bring the boy back and make everything turn out “happily ever after.” He is very sad to have lost his son, and he experiences the loss as a wound that will not heal. Finally, listening to the river, he emerges into perfect peace.

8. Assign students to read “Govinda” for Lesson 11.

Father and Son

Directions: Read the chapter in *Siddhartha* that describes Siddhartha's son's behavior when he finds himself left to live with his father, and answer the following questions.

1. What are the most noticeable qualities of Siddhartha's son?
2. Describe Siddhartha's love for his son.
3. Vasudeva is able to view the situation objectively. What advice does he give Siddhartha?
4. Siddhartha once again recognizes himself as one of the ordinary people. Why?
5. How does young Siddhartha react to his father?
6. Siddhartha first pursues his son, but then changes his mind. Why?
7. How does Vasudeva once again prove himself to be a true friend?

Parents and Children: The Generation Gap

Directions: The unease between Siddhartha and his son is not unique. Sometimes children do find their parents' lives and wishes to be boring; parents do often want to spare their children the suffering that is inevitable in life. The result can be conflict. Often there is at least one outside observer who tries to help in the situation. Use the following steps to prepare to role-play such a situation today.

1. Use the graphic organizer to identify three topics that might cause conflict between a twenty-first-century parent and child.

Areas of Conflict

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2. Give the son or daughter a name and identity, and determine what he or she wants that is causing tension.
3. Give the parent a name and identity, and determine why he or she is resisting giving in to what the son or daughter wants.
4. Identify the onlooker, and decide the most effective way for him or her to provide constructive input.

The Phases of Grief

Directions: In her book *On Death and Dying*, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross describes states through which people go in dealing with grief. She did not invent the phases; rather, she observed and analyzed them as people have long been living them. It is interesting to note that these stages of grief are evident in Hermann Hesse's depiction of Siddhartha's bereavement. Read the description of the stages, and examine the novel to identify Siddhartha's experience of each stage.

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Denial | The person refuses to accept the fact that is certain to cause grief and pain. A patient might insist that the doctor read the wrong x-rays; a man might keep insisting that his wife will return even after the divorce and her remarriage. |
| Anger | Having faced the facts, the person feels rage and a deep sense that the situation is unfair. The person might feel the desire to punish someone for causing the painful problem. |
| Bargaining | The person tries to control the situation. "If you take away this cancer, I will never smoke again." "I'll be a perfect employee if you let me keep my job." |
| Depression | The person realizes his or her loss and experiences deep sadness and a sense that everything is futile. "Life is really not worth living." |
| Acceptance | The person finds peace in the situation and wishes to make the best of the future. "Everything happens for a purpose." |

Lesson 11

The End of the Journey

Objectives

- To analyze the conclusion of *Siddhartha*
- To reflect on Siddhartha's life journey as a whole

Notes to the Teacher

Students sometimes find the conclusion of *Siddhartha* to be strange and somewhat unsatisfactory. Instead of the usual tying together of loose plot strings, Hermann Hesse presents a kind of mystical experience. When one considers the novel as a whole, this actually serves as a clarification. Cycles are central to the novel, so it is fitting that Govinda and Siddhartha, who began their journey of discovery together, should end the novel that way, too.

Siddhartha was always the leader in the friendship, and he spent his life seeking peace. At the end it is evident that he has found it, and the novel ends with him showing Govinda the way, which has little to do with deep thinking and desperate seeking. The ending is quite philosophical, fitting for the thoughts of an old man whose complicated journey through life has led him to perfect peace in his position in the universe.

This closing chapter is somewhat esoteric, focusing as it does on philosophy and oriental mysticism. Most young people focus primarily on building relationships, having fun, and preparing for the future, either near-term or far-term, and can relate only partially to Siddhartha's experience near the close of his life. This lesson assists in some decoding of the novel's closing pages.

In this lesson, students discuss the closing chapter. They also learn a little about the life and work of Hermann Hesse; to do this, students will need access to the Internet.

Procedure

1. Distribute **Handout 22**, and have small groups discuss the questions.

Suggested Responses

1. The novel emphasizes cycles. Govinda and Siddhartha started the journey of discovery together; they parted and took different paths. Now they are both old, and life has come full circle, bringing them back together.
2. Govinda, a Buddhist monk, is still seeking; Siddhartha, a ferryman, has found complete peace.

3. Siddhartha says that perhaps Govinda has been too focused on seeking.
 4. Neither the river nor Vasudeva propounds a philosophy; both continue in a steady, even flow of existence.
 5. Teachers can pass on knowledge, but wisdom must be gained by observation, reflection, and experience.
 6. Reality does not consist of polar opposites; time is not real; perfection is everywhere.
 7. Siddhartha feels that all the steps of his journey were necessary. He had to experience asceticism, love, pleasure, and wealth before he could realize their impermanence and their inability to create satisfaction and peace. Leaving wealth behind made him ready to learn harmony with the river, the essence of which is unchangeable.
 8. Words are inadequate for full communication. Their meaning can be misunderstood or distorted.
 9. Siddhartha says that the most important thing is love. This confuses Govinda because it seems to contradict the teaching of the Buddha, but Siddhartha explains that there is no contradiction.
 10. Govinda sees that Siddhartha radiates peace just as the Buddha did. When Govinda kisses Siddhartha's forehead, he too has a vision that leads him to understand the underlying unity of all things.
2. Explain that students have just finished a novel by a man who received the Nobel Prize in Literature and who lived through two world wars. A German by birth, he became a citizen of Switzerland. He was an inspiration for poets of the Beat Generation, and for a while was so popular that he became somewhat of a cult idol on college campuses.
 3. Distribute **Handout 23**, and have students use the Internet to answer the questions.

Suggested Responses

1. Hesse was born in 1877 in the Black Forest in Germany; he died in 1962 in Switzerland, where he lived.
2. His parents were Pietists (a branch of the Lutherans), and both of them had experience as missionaries in India. It was expected that Hermann Hesse would go to the seminary and walk in their religious footsteps.
3. Hesse worked in book stores, among other jobs.
4. Hesse tried both faith healing and psychoanalysis; he also traveled to Asia, what is sometimes referred to as his trip to India.

5. Hesse traveled to Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and Sumatra.
6. Hesse always resisted the nationalism characteristic of Germany during both wars; his choice for citizenship in Switzerland was no accident. Because of this, many Germans considered him a traitor.
7. Characteristic thematic concerns include the search for one's true identity, the importance of self-realization, and humanity's role in the world.
8. Among Hesse's major works are the novels *Demian*, *Magister Ludi*, and *Steppenwolf*.
9. In 1946, the Nobel Committee recognized Hermann Hesse "for his inspired writings which, while growing in boldness and penetration, exemplify the classical humanitarian ideals and high qualities of style."
10. The pictures seem to show a handsome, serious, dignified man with a look of great intensity. His comments show honesty and display no arrogance; he seems to accept the ailments of old age and to be calmly happy to receive this great award.

The Conclusion of *Siddhartha*

Directions: Carefully read the closing chapter of *Siddhartha*, and answer the following questions.

1. Why does it seem appropriate for Govinda, not Vasudeva, to be the person Siddhartha converses with at the end?
2. How do Govinda and Siddhartha differ at this point in time?
3. How does Siddhartha explain why, after so much seeking, Govinda has still not achieved his quest?
4. Why is it important that Siddhartha found his peace from the river and from Vasudeva?
5. According to the novel, what is the difference between knowledge and wisdom?

Who Was Hermann Hesse?

Directions: Use the Internet and print sources to answer the following questions about the author of *Siddhartha*.

1. Where and when was Hermann Hesse born, and where and when did he die?
2. What career did his family expect him to choose? Why?
3. After leaving school, what kinds of work did he do?
4. Like Siddhartha, Hesse seems to have undertaken a lifelong search for peace. Where did his search take place?
5. Where did he journey in 1911? Why?

6. What role did he play in World War I and World War II?
7. What are some recurring themes in Hesse's work?
8. What are some of his other major works?
9. When did Hesse receive the Nobel Prize in Literature? For what did the committee praise him?
10. Look at photographs of Hesse, and read the short autobiography he wrote for the Nobel Committee. What are your impressions of the man?

Lesson 12

The Relevance of *Siddhartha* Today

Objectives

- To recognize the book's dominant themes
- To relate the story of *Siddhartha* to people's lives today

Notes to the Teacher

During the 1950s and 1960s, and even into the 1970s, *Siddhartha* was an extremely important book in America and elsewhere. Siddhartha's individualism and his search for peace segued naturally with the values of the Beat Generation and the hippie movement. High school and college students purchased, read, and discussed the book because they wanted to, not because it was an assignment.

Even in today's culture, dominated by increasingly advanced technology and instant communication, young people can usually connect with Siddhartha's search for his own path in life. Few would give up everything for an austere life with the samanas, but that is equally true in Siddhartha's experience; as he observes in the first chapter, many of the Brahmins are content to settle into laziness and greed. People in the novel flock to hear words of wisdom from the Buddha; the same phenomenon occurs today when someone emerges as truly holy. Students can usually identify strongly with the first steps in Siddhartha's life journey. If they find his mystical experiences in old age to be baffling, that is to be expected; they are not yet old enough to fully understand.

The novel's thematic concerns have a timeless appeal: search for self-understanding; the imperative to make one's own way in life; desire for a peaceful mind; the primacy of love; inevitable suffering and loss; the cyclical nature of reality.

In this lesson, students begin by responding to opinion questions about the novel. They then discuss themes. Finally, they write essays in which they connect life today with Hermann Hesse's novel.

Procedure

1. Distribute **Handout 24**, and have students complete the activity individually. Follow with general discussion.

Suggested Responses

Opinions will vary. Use the following information to guide discussion.

1. Siddhartha is simply doing what young people are meant to do; he is leaving his parents' home to make his own life. He does this in a respectful way, but with no real evidence of gratitude, affection, or love.
 2. Siddhartha learns great physical discipline, as young military recruits usually do.
 3. Siddhartha has a keen mind, and he knows it. He is totally respectful to the Buddha, but quite brash in voicing his objection to the Buddha's teaching. The Buddha, completely unruffled by this, clarifies that he has only one subject: transcendence of suffering.
 4. For Govinda, this is a breakthrough moment; he seeks his own way instead of just following Siddhartha. One cannot imagine Govinda following Siddhartha into Kamala's garden.
 5. At this point in his life, Siddhartha has no concept of acting for anyone but himself. Kamala teaches the behaviors of erotic love, and he seeks her instruction.
 6. At first Kamala seems to find Siddhartha intriguing and attractive as a customer; in time, this attitude seems to turn to love, as symbolized when she releases the little bird.
 7. This would be a hedonistic perspective—the idea that one finds fulfillment in physical pleasures. In fact, as Siddhartha discovers, in time those pleasures may come to seem cloying and distasteful.
 8. Siddhartha's son, like Siddhartha himself, must choose his own path.
 9. The novel seems to indicate that the Buddha is not the only one who reaches perfect peace and understanding.
 10. Siddhartha and Govinda are both now old men, probably near death. Would Govinda continue roaming and begging as a Buddhist monk, or would he remain with his old friend, reflecting life's cyclical nature?
 11. In some ways Siddhartha is an Everyman, starting off with idealistic goals, derailed by temptations, and discovering goodness at the end of his life.
 12. In all ages, few people are as capable, attractive, and prone to extremes as Siddhartha.
2. If necessary, define the term *theme*, and distinguish themes from *topics*. Provide examples. (For example, *literacy* is a topic; *literacy enhances life* is a theme.)

3. Distribute **Handout 25**, and have small groups complete the exercise. Follow with general discussion. Emphasize that there are many different ways to express themes.

Suggested Responses

1. In *Siddhartha*, the search for meaning is a search for the kind of enlightenment epitomized by the Buddha. Siddhartha leaves home and the discipline and meditation of the Brahmins to join the samanas, where he practices extreme asceticism. He meets the Buddha and moves on to become Kamala's lover and a successful businessman, only to find himself full of despair and self-disgust. Finally, from the river and from Vasudeva, he learns the value of silence and comes to understand the primacy of love and the essential unity of all things. By the end of the novel, Siddhartha is in perfect harmony and peace. The novel suggests that the search for meaning is not simple and may include many detours along the way; to find meaning one needs a simple lifestyle with plenty of silence and close contact with nature.
2. The first stages of Siddhartha's life are dominated by physical discipline and by an intellectual search for perfect peace. Then he immerses himself in physical pleasures and material wealth, but finds that the desire for both is insatiable. Finally, by the river with Vasudeva, he achieves a perfect peace that has nothing to do with ascetical practices or tortuous logic; he sees oneness and harmony in everything—body and spirit are no longer opposites. The novel suggests that body, intellect, and spirit need to be integrated into a harmonious whole.
3. Siddhartha has two important friendships. Govinda and Siddhartha have much in common, but from the beginning Govinda is less self-centered, less arrogant, and more capable of love. Even after long separations when their paths go in different directions, their friendship remains, and in the end Siddhartha does all he can to share his discovery of perfect peace with Govinda. The friendship with Vasudeva begins when Siddhartha is already middle-aged, and the two share work, silence, conversation, and meditative closeness to the river until Vasudeva sees that Siddhartha has learned the full truth taught by the river and goes away into the forest. The novel suggests that strong friendships survive the passage of time and friends' choices of different paths in life; true friends respect each other's right to make choices and act on them, with or without companionship.

4. In a way *Siddhartha* is a *bildungsroman*, telling the story of a boy's journey from childhood to maturity. In the beginning Siddhartha is an innocent young man who has led a very sheltered life; this innocence is protected in his experiences with the samanas. Then he plunges into the world of physical experiences and material success; eventually he is immersed in a life of dissipation. He then experiences a dark night of the soul during which he comes precariously close to suicide. He chooses life near the river and becomes a simple ferryman, ultimately finding salvation and peace. The novel presents an essential journey from innocence to experience in which a person can discover perfect wholeness. Siddhartha himself believes that the path he took through life was essential for him.
5. As a young man Siddhartha prides himself on his ability to think, to wait, and to fast; he prides himself on being the best at everything he tries to do. He is certainly arrogant and self-preoccupied. Then he comes to value sexuality and material pleasures, only to find them inadequate. Finally, he learns a lasting code of values: love for everyone and everything; spiritual wholeness; and an uncomplicated life with plenty of silence.
6. Siddhartha learns from teachers—the Brahmins, the samanas, the Buddha—but he finds that learning inadequate and decides that he must learn from experiences. Govinda tries to take the road of learning from others, especially the Buddha, but finds himself as an old man still seeking something he has never found. The novel suggests that true wisdom and serenity cannot be imparted by teachers, but when found, result from following one's own complicated path through life.

In My Opinion . . .

Directions: Indicate whether you agree (A), disagree (D), or are undecided (U) about each of the following statements. Be ready to explain your ideas.

- _____ 1. Siddhartha's treatment of his parents at the beginning of the novel is offensive.
- _____ 2. Living with the samanas back then probably had the same effect as going into the Marines does today.
- _____ 3. In his conversation with the Buddha, Siddhartha reveals intellectual arrogance.
- _____ 4. Govinda makes the right decision when he decides to stay with the Buddha.
- _____ 5. Siddhartha simply uses Kamala for his own purposes; he is a taker, not a giver.
- _____ 6. Kamala genuinely loves Siddhartha.
- _____ 7. Siddhartha should have been satisfied as a wealthy businessman with a glamorous lover.
- _____ 8. Siddhartha should have prevented his son from going back to living as a spoiled little rich boy.
- _____ 9. By the end of the novel, Siddhartha is as holy as the Buddha was.
- _____ 10. If there were a sequel to the novel, it would probably show Govinda learning to be a ferryman.
- _____ 11. A story like *Siddhartha* could take place today.
- _____ 12. People like Siddhartha are very rare.

Themes in *Siddhartha*

Directions: Use the graphic organizer to analyze themes in the novel. First, record examples from the text. Then, articulate the theme.

Topic	Textual Evidence	Theme Statement
1. Searching for meaning		
2. Duality of flesh and spirit		
3. Friendship		

Topic	Textual Evidence	Theme Statement
4. Innocence/ experience		
5. Developing a code of values		
6. Teachings vs. experience		

Culminating Activities

Directions: Choose one or more of the following projects to complete your study of *Siddhartha*.

1. Research the life and teachings of the Buddha, and present your findings to the class.
2. Research the lifestyles of Buddhist monks today, and present your findings to the class.
3. Research Hindu deities or holy days, and present your findings to the class.
4. Read Paul Laurence Dunbar's poem entitled "Sympathy," and relate it to Hermann Hesse's treatment of Kamala's songbird.
5. Analyze the relationship and interactions of Siddhartha and Govinda throughout the novel.
6. Read Hermann Hesse's *Demian*, and write a review for a teenage audience.
7. Research the life and teachings of the Dalai Lama, and compare them to events and ideas in *Siddhartha*.
8. Analyze the character of Kamala, focusing on her motivations.
9. Write an essay in which you analyze the significance of the river in the novel.
10. Write a sequel chapter about the life of Siddhartha's son.
11. Write a prequel about Siddhartha's life as a young boy.
12. Research Hermann Hesse's life, and write an essay relating it to *Siddhartha*.
13. Create a one-act play based on a section of *Siddhartha*, and assemble an acting troupe to present it.
14. Create a sound track for a film adaptation of the novel, and briefly explain your choices.
15. Compare and contrast editions of *Siddhartha* by different translators.

Quiz on Part 1 of *Siddhartha*

Directions: Select the best answers.

- _____ 1. Govinda is Siddhartha's
- a. best friend.
 - b. father.
 - c. cousin.
 - d. teacher.
- _____ 2. Siddhartha demonstrates his determination to leave his father's house by
- a. swearing an oath to Vishnu.
 - b. kneeling at his father's feet and pleading for permission.
 - c. explaining that this is what his mother wishes.
 - d. standing all night.
- _____ 3. Siddhartha's father tells Siddhartha to say goodbye to
- a. all of his friends.
 - b. his mother.
 - c. his teachers.
 - d. all of the privileges of being in the Brahmin caste.
- _____ 4. With the samanas, Siddhartha learns to
- a. fast for extended periods.
 - b. control his breathing.
 - c. control his heartbeat.
 - d. all of the above.
- _____ 5. Govinda decides to
- a. stay with the samanas.
 - b. return to the Brahmins.
 - c. become a Buddhist monk.
 - d. follow Siddhartha wherever he goes.

- _____ 6. Gotama explains that his main purpose is to teach people
- a. how to cope with suffering.
 - b. the importance of devotion to the gods.
 - c. deep philosophical truths.
 - d. to avoid material wealth.
- _____ 7. By the end of the section, Siddhartha is awakened to
- a. the importance of returning home to his parents.
 - b. the humor in his choice to join the samanas.
 - c. the beauty of the world around him.
 - d. the futility of life.
- _____ 8. The Brahmin caste consists of
- a. priests.
 - b. shopkeepers.
 - c. magistrates.
 - d. artists.
- _____ 9. Unlike Siddhartha, Govinda
- a. lacks intelligence and motivation.
 - b. is willing to learn from teachers.
 - c. desires to return home to his family.
 - d. wishes to marry and have a family.
- _____ 10. Which of the following traits is least important in motivating Siddhartha's decisions in part 1?
- a. pride
 - b. love
 - c. sincerity
 - d. truthfulness

Quiz on Part 2 of *Siddhartha*

Directions: Choose the best answers.

- _____ 1. For Kamala, Siddhartha
- a. paints a portrait.
 - b. writes a poem.
 - c. writes a song.
 - d. buys a songbird.
- _____ 2. Siddhartha tends to see business as
- a. a war.
 - b. a torture.
 - c. a game.
 - d. a folly.
- _____ 3. Kamaswami is
- a. a doctor.
 - b. a Brahmin.
 - c. a merchant.
 - d. a beggar.
- _____ 4. Siddhartha says that neither Kamala nor he is capable of
- a. love.
 - b. hatred.
 - c. sloth.
 - d. greed.
- _____ 5. As a businessman, Siddhartha enjoys the excitement of
- a. horseracing.
 - b. riding elephants.
 - c. fireworks displays.
 - d. gambling.

- _____ 6. Siddhartha is terrified when he dreams about a bird
- a. escaping from a cage.
 - b. being placed in a cage.
 - c. dying in a cage.
 - d. falling from a nest.
- _____ 7. Siddhartha is stopped from committing suicide when he
- a. sees Govinda.
 - b. says the word *Om*.
 - c. thinks of his son.
 - d. thinks of his business success.
- _____ 8. Kamala dies after she
- a. is bitten by a snake.
 - b. is attacked by a robber.
 - c. is placed in prison.
 - d. has a baby.
- _____ 9. Siddhartha's son's attitude toward the life of a ferryman is
- a. appreciation.
 - b. admiration.
 - c. disdain.
 - d. indifference.
- _____ 10. At the end of the novel, it seems as if Siddhartha
- a. once again will set off to start a new life.
 - b. will return to the samanas with Govinda.
 - c. has died.
 - d. has become another Buddha.

***Siddhartha* Final Test**

Directions: Answer each of the following questions in a well-written paragraph. Be sure to include supportive evidence from the text.

1. How does the novel reflect basic teachings of both Hinduism and Buddhism?
2. Trace Siddhartha's influence on Govinda throughout the novel.
3. Compare and contrast Siddhartha's first encounter with Kamala with his last moments with her.
4. Compare and contrast Siddhartha's aspirations at the beginning of the novel with what he has become by the end.
5. State and explain one major theme of the novel.

Answer Keys

Quiz on Part 1

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. a | 6. a |
| 2. d | 7. c |
| 3. b | 8. a |
| 4. d | 9. b |
| 5. c | 10. b |

Quiz on Part 2

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. b | 6. c |
| 2. c | 7. b |
| 3. c | 8. a |
| 4. a | 9. c |
| 5. d | 10. d |

Final Test

1. At the beginning, the novel shows Siddhartha living the life of the Brahmin class. Throughout the story he is aware of Hindu concepts of divinity, and he believes in cycles of reincarnation, as Hindus do. As a samana, he practices a particularly austere form of Hinduism. The meeting with the Buddha introduces concepts and practices of Buddhism and leaves an important memory in Siddhartha's mind. By the end of the novel, it is evident that Siddhartha has become a kind of Buddha, serenely transcending all of life's troubles.
2. In the first part of the novel, Govinda is Siddhartha's loyal friend and ardent admirer. Govinda is content to follow in Siddhartha's footsteps, both at home among the Brahmins and with the samanas. Then Govinda experiences the Buddha and decides to go his own way as a Buddhist monk; he can hardly believe Siddhartha does not also plan to do this. Many years later Govinda comes upon a wealthy man asleep near the river; knowing that this is dangerous, Govinda remains on watch until the man awakens; the man turns out to be Siddhartha, and Govinda learns a little of Siddhartha's more recent experiences before once again heading off for his roaming as a monk. Still more years later, he comes upon Siddhartha the aged ferryman and explains that even after all this time of seeking he remains unsatisfied; once again the leader, Siddhartha bids Govinda to kiss him on the forehead and shares a mystical experience of the oneness of all things.
3. When Siddhartha first sees Kamala, he is a filthy and ill-clad samana and she is a beautiful and pampered courtesan surrounded by wealth. He admires her and wants her to teach him the art of sexual pleasure; she finds him intriguing. Siddhartha's attitude is totally self-centered on what Kamala can do for him. His last moments with Kamala come when she is dying from a snake bite; he looks on her with compassion and love and helps her to die peacefully. He focuses not on himself but on her well-being.
4. At the beginning of the novel, Siddhartha is both spiritually and intellectually ambitious; he is totally immersed in the ideals of Hinduism and wants to reach the level known as nirvana. There is a certain amount of arrogance to him, and he considers himself to be above just about everybody else. By the end he is in total harmony with the river and really has no aspirations; he simply is.
5. Answers can vary. See Lesson 12. Students often choose to focus on the novel's portrayal of the journey from innocence to experience and the necessity of finding one's own way through life.

Living in the Buddhist Community

Part A.

Directions: Read the following information about Buddhism.

The United States is not a predominantly Buddhist community, but most major cities include Buddhist centers and temples. On city streets, Buddhist monks in their saffron-colored robes are impossible to miss. They still practice the disciplines taught long ago by the Buddha himself. Less visible are ordinary men and women who practice Buddhism in their own homes, where an area is set up with an image of the Buddha for quiet meditation.

Buddhists greet each other with a gesture in which they hold both hands together, as if in prayer, close to the face and bow slightly. This is a graceful and respectful gesture used by both men and women.

Unlike other religions, Buddhism does not focus on or worship a deity or multiple deities; thus it does not have worship services in the sense that Christianity, Judaism, and Islam do. Buddhists focus instead on meditation and attainment of wisdom, peace, and transcendence of suffering.

Images of the Buddha are very important. He is often, although not always, depicted in the full lotus position; most often his face has a serene smile. Statues and other images are placed in high places, as a person's head should never be higher than the Buddha's.

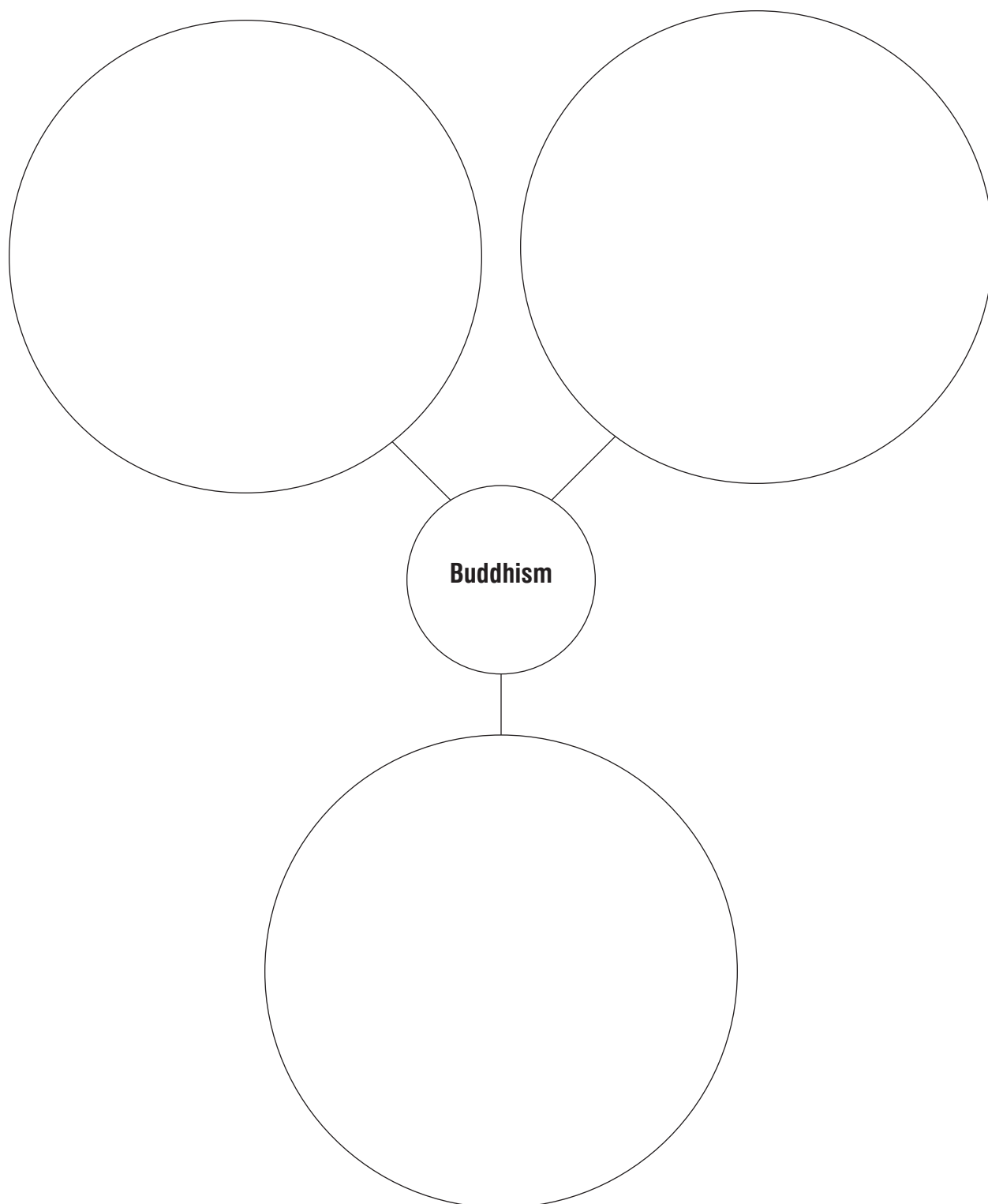
Both men and women can spend time as Buddhist monks, some for a very short time, others for life. As a monk, a person lives a very simple life focused on study and meditation. Monks use bowls to beg for food in the morning and eat their only meals at noon. Monks live in poverty in the sense that they do not buy the things they need; everything is a gift.

If you are not Buddhist and you pass Buddhist monks on the street, nod respectfully, but do not show off your knowledge of Buddhist practices. The result might be that people think you are making a mockery of their culture and beliefs.

Buddhism is a major religion in Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Japan; if your area has had many immigrants from those countries, you may be able to interview practicing Buddhists about their beliefs and practices. They are usually willing to explain to people who are genuinely interested. You may also be able to interview people who have lived in or spent extended time visiting a country in which Buddhism is a dominant religion.

Part B.

Directions: Use the graphic organizer to record your three most important questions about Buddhism.



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Siddhartha

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Entire Unit

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|------------|---|
| RL.11-12.1 | Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain. |
| RL.11-12.3 | Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed). |
| RI.9-10.1 | Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. |

Source

Common Core State Standards (Washington, D.C.: National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010)

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