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Advanced Placement in
English Literature and Composition

Teaching Unit
Individual Learning Packet

Siddhartha

by Herman Hesse

Written by Chris Curtis

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Siddhartha

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. analyze the characters of Govinda, Kamala, and Vasudeva and explain how these supporting characters help develop the protagonist.
2. trace the development of Siddhartha's character, making note of how and why he changes in his journey toward Nirvana.
3. analyze the structure of the story and how it influences the plot.
4. analyze the story from a Jungian perspective—identifying the influence of Jungian theory on the text.
5. discuss the symbols in the story.
6. identify autobiographical elements in the text.
7. analyze the text as a Quest novel.
8. identify and analyze water as a major theme and extended metaphor.
9. analyze how the elements of the Hindu religion affect the development of the story.
10. analyze how the elements of Buddhism affect the development of the story.
11. analyze the literary elements in the story and how they affect the story.
12. respond to multiple-choice questions similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition exam.
13. respond to writing prompts similar to those that will appear on the Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition exam.
14. offer a close reading of *Siddhartha* and support all assertions and interpretations with direct evidence from the text, from authoritative critical knowledge of the genre, or from authoritative criticism of the play.

Siddhartha

Lecture Notes

I. Hermann Hesse

Hermann Hesse was born in the town of Calw in Württemberg, Germany on July 2, 1877. Hesse's parents were both missionaries with a Basel, Switzerland Mission to India. Hermann's father, Johannes Hess, was born the son of a doctor. His mother, Marie Gundert, was the daughter of a missionary as well.

Hesse's formal education began at the Latin School in Göppingen, where he first showed promise. His second boarding school was the Evangelical Theological Seminary in 1891. It was in March of 1892 that Hesse ran away from the Seminary. Similar to characters in his books, Hesse rebelled against traditional education and his parents' strict religious upbringing. Hesse's book *Beneath the Wheel* is an autobiographical novel about a young man coming to terms with the artist inside him. As the struggles of the story unfold, the protagonist runs away from the seminary school he is attending. In the less autobiographical, more allegorical *Siddhartha*, our protagonist is fully aware of his intentions, and his departure is symbolic and contrived rather than characterized by frustration. Many of Hesse's works contain autobiographical elements, and the events of his early life can be recognized in works such as *Beneath the Wheel*, *Siddhartha*, *Demian*, and *Steppenwolf*.

Due to the death of his father and other pressures, Hesse underwent psychoanalysis in 1915 with a student of Carl Jung, Dr. Josef Lang. This was Hesse's introduction to psychoanalysis, which led to an interest that strongly influenced his writing.

The writing of *Siddhartha* began on the same incredibly prolific summer that Hesse wrote *Klingsor's letzter Sommer* (*Klingsor's Last Summer*), which is a collection of short stories. *Siddhartha* was completed the following year, in May 1922.

Biographical information relevant to *Siddhartha*

All of Hesse's books are autobiographical to some extent, and *Siddhartha* is no exception. Both *Siddhartha* and Hesse avoided a parental dictate putting them into the priesthood. The writing of *Siddhartha* also coincided with a personal preoccupation with Indian culture, and began at the end of one very prolific summer. The first eight chapters were written rapidly, and then Hesse stopped writing, unsure of how to finish. This period lasted for eighteen months, during which Hesse did his own searching, similar to his character, *Siddhartha*. Hesse spent much of the time reading from *The Upanishads*, *The Bhagavad-Gita*, and Buddhist scriptures.

At this stage in Hesse's life and at this stage in the book's development, Hesse looked to a comrade and growing influence, Carl Jung. Ever since his treatment by Jung's student, Dr. Josef Lang, Hesse had developed an interest in Jung's theories. Hesse corresponded with Jung for years, and during the writing of *Siddhartha*, he called on his friend for counsel.

II. Carl Jung

The work of Dr. Carl Gustav Jung was very influential to Hermann Hesse. Jung was an exceptional student of famed psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud. After making a split with Freud, Jung established himself with his own version of analytic psychology.

After the death of his father, Hesse was treated by a student of Jung, Dr. Josef Lang, and through the association became acquainted with Dr. Jung himself. Jung's theories of the *collective unconscious* and *archetypes* had a significant influence on Hesse's writing. *Siddhartha* was written during a time while Hesse was actually receiving treatment from Dr. Jung; therefore, the temptation to analyze *Siddhartha* through a "Jungian" lens is natural.

Archetypes are symbols and patterns with which we come into contact through art and literature. The meanings of these symbols are hidden in our *collective unconscious*—which is a type of primal memory. Jung believed that we experienced archetypes as symbols in our dreams, and that by analyzing dreams we could uncover the workings of our unconscious minds.

In literature, we see these connections through *archetypal patterns* such as "The Quest." Writers have created stories over centuries about topics as diverse as humanity itself, but these stories often fall into some familiar patterns. We each define "good" or "bad" on the basis of how it affects us. Each person's definition is unique, and each individual finds topics or patterns that *speak to him or her* on some level. Good literature can affect us on a level that is almost primal. These same stories have similar affects on people all over the world. Sometimes we don't even know why we are affected by a story, only that we are moved. Jung would identify this "effect" as our response to *archetypal* patterns in our *collective unconscious*.

In Jung's work, there are three most basic archetypal figures: *the shadow*, *the persona*, and *the anima*. All *archetypal characters* (as mentioned later) are merely a manifestation of one or more of these basic figures in varying degrees, just as the three primary colors of red, blue, and yellow combine to make all known colors.

The shadow can be defined as the darkness inside all of us. It is the darker desires that we seek to suppress. In literature, the most common manifestation of this archetype would be the devil. In *Siddhartha*, the main character has to experience the dark side of himself in order to become whole.

The anima is the life force in us. In men, the anima takes on a feminine quality and likewise a masculine quality in women (known as the "animus"). Your "anima/animus" is your image of the ideal person of the opposite sex. According to Jung, these characteristics of the opposite sex within us are typically unconscious. In *Siddhartha's* dream in "Awakening," Govinda clearly is a projection by *Siddhartha* of the feminine within himself. Later on in the story, he meets Kamala, and as she mirrors those aspects within himself, she is his perfect match.

The persona is the mask we wear in society. It mediates between the ego and the outside world. It is the anima and the persona that make up the ego. Both the anima and the ego supply energy that the persona must reconcile with the outside world. In a sense, Siddhartha is trying to obliterate his persona, giving him access to his deeper life-force energy (his *anima*). In doing so, however, he had never realized the anima within himself nor the shadow. He was unable to find the anima because he had always sought to suppress such drives, and his understanding of it was lacking.

In Jungian terms, to become individuated, you must recognize all aspects of the individual within yourself that distinguish you from others. When your **persona** is in harmony with this “individuated” self, you are self-actualized and on the road to perfection or Nirvana.

In Chapter Four, “Awakening,” Siddhartha claims that, for all this time, he has been running away from himself, and that the thing he knows least about is himself, this “Siddhartha.” When Siddhartha embraces his shadow (he becomes a merchant, a gambler, and a womanizer) and becomes familiar with his anima (Kamala is as like him as anyone could be), he is then able to begin his true path to perfection.

If we look closely, we can find *archetypal* characters from stories throughout human history. Tarot cards offer some of these familiar *archetypal* characters: The Knight, The Fool, The Hermit, The Wizard, and others. Siddhartha plays some of these roles during the course of the novel. There are many familiar archetypal characters in literature: the king or the prince, the artist, the athlete, the warrior, the explorer, the child, the mother, the damsel, the Femme Fatale, the queen, the seductress, the destroyer, the Don Juan, the priest, the hermit, the slave, the student, the thief, and magical creatures. Several of these overlap in characteristics, but each represents a common figure that has been repeated many times in art and literature.

III. Hinduism

Hinduism is possibly the oldest religion in the world. There are many books the Hindus lay claim to as doctrines of their faith. A few of the better-known texts are *The Bhagavad Gita*, *The Upanishads*, *The Brahmanas*, and *The Vedas*. Some of the oldest texts date back as far as 1500 BCE. Due to multiple texts and the great variety of interpretations, many sects have developed within the religion, but they hold many beliefs in common.

The concept of “perfection” can be related to the idea of *reincarnation*, which according to Hinduism is a series of births and deaths. During these successive lives, you accumulate good *karma* by leading a good life and doing good for others. Being hurtful and selfish accumulates bad *karma*. Your *karma* determines your “placement” in the next life. Upon reincarnation, you will be higher or lower on the karmic ladder. The farther up the karmic ladder, the closer you are to perfection or Nirvana.

Hinduism has many gods, but adherents also believe in one supreme god who can take any form of energy or matter. One aspect of this supreme god is the universal soul (also known as *Brahman*), which enters mankind as *atman*.

One of the structures of Hinduism is the caste system. The caste system divides people into social classes. These castes are very strict and hereditary. People are born into a caste and remain there throughout their lives. There are five classes:

1. Brahmin—the priest class
2. Nobility—royalty
3. Merchants—those who engage in trade
4. Servants
5. Untouchables—those who deal with any type of human waste, disposal of carcasses, etc.

Buddhism does not recognize the caste system and is held in contempt by many “traditional” Hindu groups as a result.

The Four Life Stages

- the student – this stage is characterized by the individual being engaged in learning.
- the householder – this stage is characterized by the individual being engaged in the domestic duties of maintaining a household.
- the retired person – this stage occurs when an individual is at or near the end of his life. He has already been a householder and a student.
- the ascetic – this is a stage wherein the individual dedicates all his energy to spiritual goals and rejects worldly pleasures.

The Four Life Goals

- *Dharma* is the practice of virtue. What is virtuous depends most specifically on your caste and your stage in life.
- *Artha* is the goal of success and achieving success. This is also relative to caste. It is spiritually significant for you to be successful at your craft or trade.
- *Kama* is the pursuit of pleasure. Siddhartha pursues this goal with “Kamala.” Clearly, he is also working at the goal of *Artha* in his work with Kamaswami.
- *Moksha* is a rejection of all the life-affirming goals and a pursuit of release from life.

Like the first three life stages, the first three life goals are life-affirming goals, and the last in both groups is life-negating. In other words, the first three (in both sets) celebrate life and confirm the participation in certain basic life duties as necessary to spiritual development. The last item in each set, the life-negating item, typically is a rejection of worldly pleasures and goals. All the goals and the stages are ideals in Hinduism. Individuals may pass through one or more stages or goals in their life’s journey, but may also miss several. Perfection is not dependant on passing through every stage or reaching every goal. Should an individual find himself in a certain stage, however, Hinduism prescribes how best to conduct yourself, based on the stage of life you are experiencing. For example, Dharma is practiced in every stage, but (as mentioned above) the specifics depend on which stage you are at and what caste you belong to.

IV. The Buddha and Buddhism

Life of the Buddha

The story of Hesse's Siddhartha is similar in some aspects to what is known about Siddhartha Gotama, the man who came to be known as the Buddha. The real man was born an Indian prince in approximately 623 BCE. He was born a Hindu, and many of his teachings have their roots in that religion. Certainly, it is clear that freedom of interpretation is a strong aspect of Hinduism that led the way for Buddhism to grow up alongside it.

Near or at the age of twenty-nine, Siddhartha Gotama left his family and the comforts of wealth and walked the world for six years as an ascetic. During this time, he practiced extreme austerity and self-mortification. After almost dying of starvation and sickness, he concluded that he would not find salvation in this manner. He decided that there were no *known* ways that could lead him to himself. He then began his own individual path that avoided both extremes of self-mortification and self-indulgence, often referred to as *the middle way*. Siddhartha Gotama found enlightenment while meditating under the fabled Banyan tree. While there, legend has it that Mara, the destroyer, attempted to divert Siddhartha Gotama from his goal. Mara sent his daughters (Desire, Pleasure, and Delight) to seduce him, but Siddhartha overcame these and all of Mara's other attempts at distraction from his goal of enlightenment.

Teachings

In *Siddhartha*, there is only a brief mention of the four main doctrines (or the four Noble Truths) and the Eightfold Path. The book is divided into 12 chapters, and, as a result, some readers contend that the protagonist's development by chapter follows a parallel with the 12 steps of the Buddhist teaching. Each chapter, the theory contends, matches the equivalent step in the Noble Truths or the Eightfold Path. Regardless of the actual applicability of this theory, it is helpful to be aware of the basic tenants of Buddha's teachings. This allows the reader to support or deny the connection based on a true knowledge of the items being compared.

The Four Noble Truths

1. existence is suffering
2. suffering arises from desire
3. suffering ends when desire ends
4. the way to end desire is to follow the Eight-Fold path

The **Eight-Fold Path** to Nirvana consists of the following:

1. right belief
2. right resolve
3. right speech
4. right conduct
5. right occupation
6. right effort
7. right contemplation
8. right ecstasy

Relevance to the story:

Hesse's Siddhartha shares his name with the Buddha, and they both grow up in comfort and privilege. The name, "Siddhartha," means, "one who reaches his goal." Both leave home seeking a religious goal and both spent years with the ascetics in search of that goal. Hesse's protagonist then takes a divergent path from what is known of the Buddha's life. Hesse's character has to find a balance within himself, and he has to experience both the "good" and the "bad" in life in order to find that balance.

Hesse's Siddhartha has to do a great deal of self-searching in order to find his own peace. Hesse named his protagonist Siddhartha most likely with the intention of making connections with the historical Buddha, but in having his character meet and move on from the Buddha, Hesse's character establishes his own individuality.

V. The Structure of *Siddhartha*

The book is physically divided into two sections, parts one and two, but this division is superficial and almost misleading. The first four chapters are, rightly, the first section. They follow Siddhartha at home, with the Samanas, and as he takes his departure from the Buddha. There is an additional division at Chapter Eight, and both are accompanied by the following themes:

The Awakening and Rebirth

The first and most obvious indication of this structural division is Siddhartha's "Awakening" in Chapter Four that no one can teach him the way to himself. Siddhartha feels "like a new-born baby," and he sees the world as if for the first time.

In Chapter Eight, in a suicidal act of desperation, Siddhartha lets himself fall into the river just as he hears the word, "Om." As a result, he becomes "awakened" and is like "a little child."

Both events mark significant turning points in Siddhartha's development. Siddhartha experiences an "awakening" and is symbolically young again in both instances.

The River

The next consistent structure within the story is the physical and symbolic presence of the river in Chapter Four. Siddhartha was born "in the sun of the riverbank." He leaves home and joins the Samanas, representing an extreme in religious asceticism. In Chapter Four, Siddhartha crosses the river at another turning point in his life. He has just left his best friend and the best teacher with the best teaching (the Buddha). He then experiences the physical world of "maya," representing another extreme in the physical world. At Chapter Eight, Siddhartha returns to the river and begins to lead a modest life in which he avoids both extremes.

The river also supports the extended water metaphor that runs strongly throughout the book.

Govinda

In Chapter Four, Govinda and Siddhartha part, and in Chapter Eight, Govinda finds Siddhartha by the river. Govinda returns again in Chapter Twelve to confirm Siddhartha's ascent to perfection. Therefore, Govinda serves a structural reminder, returning every four chapters to acknowledge Siddhartha's attainment of a new level.

VI. Setting

The setting is India, and though Siddhartha encounters the Buddha (563 BCE – 483 BCE), it appears as though Hesse intended the story to reach beyond that time period and into the modern day. The caste system in India has kept social changes to a minimum, making this story as possible today as it was almost 2000 years ago.

VII. The Characters

Govinda

Hesse's use of Govinda as a character foil for Siddhartha is a very important literary device. Through Govinda, we get a sense of perspective. The character of Govinda is intended to be an "everyman," a character who is accessible to the reader. Through Govinda, we see Siddhartha's extremism, his passion, his intelligence, and his detachment.

We are introduced to Govinda as Siddhartha's most loyal follower. Govinda, as Siddhartha's closest friend, knows that Siddhartha is extraordinary, and Govinda aspires to follow him to greatness and to be his "friend, his escort, his servant, his spear-carrier, and his shadow" (p. 14). Govinda is also meek, which is something that Siddhartha comes to learn through the course of the story.

When Govinda learns of Siddhartha's decision to join the Samanas, he "paled like the peel of a dry banana" (p. 17). Through Govinda, we realize that this decision is a dramatic one. Govinda returns with, "Will your father allow you to do that?" which is probably the foremost issue on his own mind. It is also rightly the greatest barrier to Siddhartha's plans as well. Siddhartha "read Govinda's soul; he read the anxiety and the devotion there" (p. 17). Govinda knows he will follow Siddhartha, but the difficulties in doing so may be numerous.

In addition to benefits of the character foil Govinda provides, he also serves a structural reminder when Siddhartha is at significant points in his development toward perfection. See **The Structure of *Siddhartha*** for more information on how Govinda accomplishes this.

Kamala

The name, Kamala, is most often associated with the Goddess Lakshmi, being the consort of the god Vishnu. According to Hindu texts, on one of the several incarnations of the pair, Lakshmi took the name Kamala. Goddess Lakshmi represents prosperity, beauty, and purity. The name itself may have been derived from the Sanskrit word, "Lakshya," which means—aim or goal. When Lakshmi is pictured, she is shown holding fully bloomed lotus buds, which represent beauty, purity, and fertility.

"She understood him better than Govinda used to understand him; she was more similar to him." (p. 60)

Though Kamala was more Siddhartha's equal, she is still a relatively flat character. Her purpose is to further the development of the protagonist's character and serves as another character foil to Siddhartha.

Vasudeva

The name 's most common connection is with the father of Krishna, though the name itself has the least interesting connotations. Vasudeva acts as Siddhartha's Guru in the last portion of the story. He is a simple man who has found enlightenment by listening to the river. He hints at this during his first meeting with Siddhartha, but when Siddhartha rejoins Vasudeva, Siddhartha is then ready to listen and learn from the river. Vasudeva's occupation is a ferryman, who helps people across the river. As many people see the river merely as an obstacle, symbolically the ferryman can be a Guru as he helps people with their obstacles. He encourages Siddhartha to see past the "apparent obstacle" and listen to the river and learn from it.

VIII. The Quest

The Quest in literature

There are many examples of the quest in literature, but the common origin of them all is the classic “knight’s quest,” in the tradition of King Arthur’s quest for the Holy Grail. In this series of stories, we have several variations of the same quest as well as examples of success and failure.

Frodo Baggins’ quest to destroy the ring of power in *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien is a more recent example of a quest story. In history, Lewis and Clark’s expedition to explore the newly-acquired Louisiana Purchase can also be considered a quest. All throughout human history, writers have been writing about questing heroes.

For a closer explanation, we can look to analytic psychologist, Carl Jung. Jung theorized that the quest is an *archetypal phenomenon*. Literature and art that fall into typical identifiable patterns are based in *archetypal phenomenon*. Some examples would be the quest, the rite of passage, utopia, rebirth, and the hero.

The quest itself may date back to human origins and man’s desire to seek out and explore new lands. Mythologist, Joseph Campbell’s *MonoMyth cycle* is based heavily in the psychological theories of Carl Jung. The *MonoMyth cycle* identifies three common elements in Mythological quest literature: the Departure, the Initiation, and the Return.

1. There is a quester or questers who are in need of achieving a goal. The goal may be to reach a destination (as in the *Lord of the Rings* and Lewis and Clark’s trip), to retrieve some treasure (*The Holy Grail*), or to fulfill some command or task (as in *The Odyssey*).
2. The quester(s) will encounter difficulty along the way and there is usually some final test when the destination is reached.
3. There is a return home.

Knowing this definition allows the reader to analyze literature from this particular viewpoint. It is not how well a story fits the pattern; merely, it offers a starting point for analysis whereby we may be able to better understand how and why a story affects us.

Free Response (Essay) Items

Practice Free Response Item 1

The excerpts below were taken from Chapter Five, entitled *Kamala*, of Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha*. At this point in the novel, the main character, Siddhartha, has experienced something like a rebirth. He feels new to the world. In a well-developed essay, identify how Hesse's use of figurative and rhetorical devices conveys the child-like perspective that the protagonist is experiencing.

Siddhartha learned something new on every step of his path, for the world was transformed, and his heart was enchanted. He saw the sun rising over the forest-covered mountains and setting over the distant palm beaches. At night, he saw the stars in the sky in their fixed positions and the crescent of the moon floating like a boat in the deep blue. He saw trees, stars, animals, clouds, rainbows, rocks, herbs, flowers, stream and river, the glistening dew in the bushes in the morning, distant high mountains pale and blue, singing birds and the bees, wind wafting like silver through the rice fields. All of these thousands of colorful things had always been there; the sun and the moon had always shone, rivers had always roared and bees had always buzzed, but in former times all of this had been nothing more to Siddhartha than a fleeting, deceptive veil before his eyes...

The moon and the stars were beautiful, as were the stream and the riverbanks, the forest and the rocks, the goat and the gold beetle, the flower and the butterfly. It was lovely and beautiful to walk through the world like this, childlike and fully awake, open to what is near and without mistrust. The sun shone differently upon the head, the shade of the forest cooled him differently, the stream and the cistern were different, the pumpkin and the banana tasted different. The days were short, the nights also short; every hour sped swiftly away like a sail on the sea, and under the sail was a ship full of treasures and joy.

Practice Free Response Item 2

Though appearances may change over time, according to the book, *Siddhartha* by Hermann Hesse, inner peace is something that is outwardly evident. Read the following excerpts from throughout the novel and identify how inner peace is revealed through the author's use of figurative language and poetic and rhetorical devices.

Do not merely summarize the passages.

The Buddha went on his way, modestly and deep in his thoughts, his calm face was neither happy nor sad, it seemed to smile quietly and inwardly. With his hidden smile, the Buddha strolled on quietly, calmly, and not unlike a healthy child. He wore his robe and placed his feet much like all the other monks did, according to an exact rule. But his face and his gait, his gaze lowered quietly, his motionless hands hanging down, and even every finger of his dangling hands bespoke peace, expressed perfection--they did not search, or imitate—as they breathed softly with a calm that did not wither, with a light that did not fade, and with a peace that was intangible. (p. 30).

They heard his voice and it was also perfected, wholly calm and full of peace. (p. 31)

Vasudeva 's smile was shining brightly, and floating radiantly over all the wrinkles of his old face just as the Om was floating in the air over all the voices of the river. His smile was shining brightly when he looked at this friend, and the same smile now started to shine brightly on Siddhartha's face as well. His wound now blossomed, and his suffering was radiant; his self had taken flight into the unity. (p. 103)

Siddhartha watched him leave with deep joy and intense solemnity; he saw that Vasudeva's steps were full of peace, that his head was filled with radiance, and that his whole body was filled with light. (p. 104)

Govinda thinks about Siddhartha in Chapter Twelve:

His teachings may be strange and his words may sound foolish, but a purity, calmness, mirth, mildness, and holiness that I have found in no one else since our exalted teacher's death shines out of his gaze, hands, skin, and hair. (p. 111)

And Govinda saw that the smile of this mask, the smile of unity on the flowing forms, the smile of coexistence in the thousand births and deaths, the smile of Siddhartha, was exactly the same type of smile as the quiet, delicate, impenetrable, wise, sometimes-benevolent, sometimes-mocking, thousand-fold smile of Gotama, the Buddha, as he himself had looked upon it with reverence a hundred times. Govinda knew that perfected ones smiled like this." (p. 112)

Practice Free Response Item 3

According to E.M. Forster, a “round” character is dynamic and changing, and may even be contradictory. A “flat” character is familiar and unchanging. Choose a supporting or secondary character from *Siddhartha* and write a well-organized essay in which you show the character to be either round or flat.

Practice Free Response Item 4

A foil is a character in literature who highlights certain traits of the main character by contrasting them. For example, a coward helps to show the hero’s bravery in a stronger light. Choose either Govinda or Kamala and write a well-developed essay in which you show how he or she serves in the novel as a foil for Siddhartha.

Do not merely summarize the plot or provide a character study.

Practice Free Response Item 5

The Quest is a common literary motif and provides a structure for the hero’s emergence or the youthful protagonist’s coming of age. In a well-written essay, analyze *Siddhartha* as a Quest novel.

Do not merely summarize the plot.

Practice Free Response Item 6

Bodies of water are common archetypes in literature, representing the origin of life, a source of purification or rebirth, and the natural border between one state of being and another. Write a well-organized essay in which you explain how Hesse used water as a structural and metaphoric foundation for the development of *Siddhartha*.

Practice Free Response Item 7

Siddhartha tells Govinda: “I needed lust, the desire for possessions, vanity, and the most shameful despair in order to learn how to surrender all resistance, love the world, and stop comparing it to some kind of world that I imagined or wished for—a perfection that I had dreamed up. I had to learn how to leave the world as it is, to love it, and to enjoy being a part of it.” (p. 108)

In a well-developed essay, explain how Siddhartha came by this wisdom, and why this advice is appropriate for Govinda. Avoid plot summary.

Multiple Choice Questions

Practice Multiple Choice Questions 1-5

Read the following passage from Chapter One of *Siddhartha* carefully before you choose your answers. In the passage, Siddhartha ponders his father 's dedication as a Brahmin and he questions his own path following in his father 's footsteps.

Did not he, who had thirst, have to receive a holy quenching of this thirst by drinking time and time again at the sacrifices, at the books, at the conversations of the Brahmins? Why did he, who was irreproachable, have to wash out his sins every day, have to expend great effort once more to attain purification each and every day? Wasn't Atman in him; didn't the ancient spring flow in his heart? The ancient spring must be found in one's own self; one must own it! Everything else was just a search, a detour; it was to go astray.

Thus went Siddhartha's thoughts; this was his thirst, his sorrow.

He often spoke to himself out of the Chandogya-Upanishad: "Verily, the name of the Brahman is Satyam—in truth, one who knows this enters daily into the heavenly world." This heavenly world often appeared close, but he had never totally reached it; never had he quenched the ultimate thirst. Furthermore, among all the wise ones whom he knew whose teaching he had savored—even the wisest among them all there were none who had totally reached the heavenly world, who had completely quenched the eternal thirst.

"Govinda," said Siddhartha to his friend, "Govinda, beloved, come with me among the Banyan trees, and we will practice meditating."

They went to the Banyan trees and sat down: here Siddhartha, and Govinda twenty paces further. When Siddhartha sat down, ready to speak the Om, he murmured and repeated the verse:

"Om is the bow; the arrow is the soul,
The Brahman is the arrow's goal
That one should continuously hit."

When the usual time for practicing meditation had passed, Govinda rose up. The twilight had come and it was time to perform the cleansing of the evening hour. He called Siddhartha's name. Siddhartha gave no answer. Siddhartha sat with his eyes open, immersed, staring with his eyes fixed upon a very far goal; the tip of his tongue stuck out a little between his teeth and he didn't appear to be breathing. Thus he sat, shrouded in meditation, thinking Om, his soul sent out like an arrow after the Brahman.

Once, the Samanas pulled through Siddhartha's town. They were pilgrims and ascetics: three scraggly, worn-out men who were neither old nor young, with dusty and bloody shoulders. They were nearly naked, singed by the sun, given over to loneliness, strangers and enemies of the world, and estranged, gaunt jackals in the domain of mankind. From behind them wafted a hot scent of quiet passion, of a duty that destroys, of a merciless self-effacing.

1. In this passage, the metaphor of quenching “the eternal thirst” means most closely
 - (A) performing the ablutions.
 - (B) escape from the cycle of rebirths.
 - (C) reincarnation.
 - (D) self castigation.
 - (E) sacrifice.
2. Siddhartha’s father is to the Samanas as
 - (A) moderation is to extremity.
 - (B) dedication is to laziness.
 - (C) Hinduism is to Buddhism.
 - (D) Apollonian is to Dionysian.
 - (E) reincarnation is to Samsara.
3. The Samanas as an archetype in Western literature would most closely resemble the
 - (A) beggar.
 - (B) hermit.
 - (C) priest.
 - (D) thief.
 - (E) wizard.
4. From the context and other clues available, the word, “Satyam” most likely means
 - (A) Brahmin.
 - (B) Om.
 - (C) Asceticism.
 - (D) Truth.
 - (E) Atman.
5. Which of the following quotations best gives the main idea of the passage?
 - (A) “Among them all there were none who had totally reached the heavenly world.”
 - (B) “He called Siddhartha ‘s name. Siddhartha gave no answer.”
 - (C) “This heavenly world often appeared close, but he had never totally reached it.”
 - (D) “Why did he, who was irreproachable, have to wash out his sins every day.”
 - (E) “His soul sent out like an arrow after the Brahman.”

Practice Multiple Choice Questions 6-10

Read the following passage from Chapter Three of *Siddhartha* carefully before you choose your answers:

“Let me warn you, however, oh seeker of knowledge, of the thicket of opinions and of arguing about words. Opinions are insubstantial: they may be beautiful or ugly, smart or foolish; everyone can support them or discard them. But the teachings you’ve heard from me are not my opinions, and their goal is not to explain the world to those who seek knowledge. They have a different goal; their goal is salvation from suffering. This is that which Gotama teaches, and nothing else.”

“May you, oh exalted one, not scorn me,” said the young man. “I have not spoken to you like this to quarrel with you, to argue about words. You are truly right: opinions are insubstantial. But let me say this one more thing: I have not doubted in you for single moment. I have not doubted for a single moment that you are Buddha who has reached the goal, the highest goal towards which so many thousands of Brahmins and sons of Brahmins are on their way. You have found salvation from death. It has come to you in the course of your own search, on your own path, through thoughts, through meditation, through realization, through enlightenment. It has not come to you by means of teachings! And--so are my thoughts, oh exalted one,—nobody will partake in salvation through teachings! You will not be able to convey and share with anyone, oh venerable one, in words and through teachings what has happened to you in the hour of enlightenment! The teachings of the enlightened Buddha contain much. They teach many to live righteously and avoid evil. But there is one thing which these lucid and honorable teachings do not contain: they do not contain the mystery of what the exalted one alone among hundreds of thousands has experienced for himself....This is why I am continuing my travels—not to seek other, better teachings, for I know there aren’t any, but to depart from all teachings and all teachers and either to reach my goal on my own or to die. But I’ll often think of this day, oh exalted one, and of this hour, when my eyes beheld a saint.”

6. In the passage, identify the epithet for Buddha
 - (A) enlightened
 - (B) exalted
 - (C) teacher
 - (D) lucid
 - (E) saint
7. The passage above would most accurately be called a(n)
 - (A) parable.
 - (B) quotation.
 - (C) synecdoche
 - (D) roman à clef.
 - (E) diatribe.

8. According to the passage, Buddha's teaching offers
- (A) salvation from death.
 - (B) a path to Nirvana.
 - (C) to ease the pain of existence.
 - (D) knowledge of the mysteries of enlightenment.
 - (E) release from the cycle of existence.
9. What may be inferred by the Buddha calling Siddhartha, "oh seeker of knowledge"?
- (A) that seeking will lead to finding
 - (B) that seeking knowledge is contrary to seeking enlightenment
 - (C) Siddhartha should seek salvation from suffering
 - (D) Siddhartha may be seeking too much
 - (E) Siddhartha has confused seeking with finding
10. Siddhartha's tone with the Buddha may best be described as
- (A) deprecating.
 - (B) sardonic.
 - (C) unpretentious.
 - (D) intrepid.
 - (E) reticent.

Practice Multiple Choice Questions 11-14

Read the following passage from Chapter Five of *Siddhartha* carefully before you choose your answers:

“When the day began, Siddhartha asked his host, the ferryman, to get him across the river. The ferryman got him across the river on his bamboo-raft while the wide water had a reddish sheen in the morning light.

“This is a beautiful river,” he said to his companion.

“Yes,” said the ferryman, “a very beautiful river, I love it more than anything. Often I have listened to it, often I have looked into its eyes, and always I have learned from it. One can learn much from a river.”

“I thank you, my benefactor,” spoke Siddhartha, disembarking on the other side of the river. “I have no gift I could give you for your hospitality, good sir, and also no payment for your work. I am a man without a home, a son of a Brahmin and a Samana.”

“I did see it,” spoke the ferryman, “and I expected no payment from you and no gift in exchange for hospitality. You will give me the gift another time.”

“Do you think so?” asked Siddhartha amusedly.

“Surely. This too, I have learned from the river: everything comes again! You too, Samana, will come again. Now farewell! Let your friendship be my reward. May you think of me when you make offerings to the gods.”

Smiling, they parted. Smiling, Siddhartha was happy about the friendship and the kindness of the ferryman. “He is like Govinda,” he thought with a smile, “all I meet on my path are like Govinda. All are thankful, though they are the ones who would have a right to receive thanks. They are all submissive; they all want to be friends, happily obeying and not thinking much. People are all like children.”

11. The ferryman’s statement of personification explicates
 - (A) the river.
 - (B) the hut.
 - (C) the bamboo raft.
 - (D) their future meeting.
 - (E) the path to perfection.
12. What future relationship between the two men is foreshadowed in the passage above?
 - (A) Siddhartha will bring the ferryman a gift.
 - (B) Siddhartha will return to learn from the river.
 - (C) Siddhartha will return to the Samanas.
 - (D) Siddhartha will return home.
 - (E) Siddhartha will be the ferryman’s mentor.

13. Siddhartha's attitude toward the ferryman could best be described as
- (A) distant.
 - (B) estranged.
 - (C) dismissive.
 - (D) blasé.
 - (E) sentimental.
14. Siddhartha states, "They are all submissive, they all want to be friends, happily obeying and not thinking much. People are all like children." This passage contains an example of what type of figurative language?
- (A) analogy
 - (B) simile
 - (C) metaphor
 - (D) hyperbole
 - (E) allusion

Practice Multiple Choice Questions 15-20

Read the following passage from Chapter Eight of *Siddhartha* carefully before you choose your answers:

“I know you, oh Govinda, from your father’s hut and from the school of the Brahmins; I know you from the sacrifices and our walk to the Samanas, and from that hour when you took your refuge with the exalted one in the grove Jetavana.”

“You’re Siddhartha!” exclaimed Govinda loudly. “I now recognize you, and I don’t understand how I hadn’t recognized you immediately. Be welcome, Siddhartha; it is my great joy to see you again.”

“It also gives me joy to see you again. You’ve been the guardian of my sleep; again I thank you for this, although I wouldn’t have required any guardian. Where are you going, oh friend?”

“I’m going nowhere. We monks always travel when it is not the rainy season; we always move from one place to another, always live according to the teachings passed on to us, accept alms, and then move on. It’s always like this. But Siddhartha—where are you going?”

Siddhartha spoke: “It is the same with me, friend, as it is with you. I’m going nowhere. I’m just traveling. I’m on a pilgrimage.”

Govinda spoke: “You say you’re on a pilgrimage, and I believe you. But forgive me, oh Siddhartha, you do not look like a pilgrim. You’re wearing a wealthy man’s clothes and the shoes of a distinguished gentleman, and your hair, which has the fragrance of perfume, is not a pilgrim’s hair nor the hair of a Samana.”

“Exactly, my good man; you have observed well and your keen eyes see everything. But I didn’t say to you that I was a Samana. I said: I’m on a pilgrimage. And so it is: I’m on a pilgrimage.”

“You’re on a pilgrimage,” said Govinda, “but few would go on a pilgrimage in such clothes, such shoes, and such hair. Never have I met such a pilgrim, having been a pilgrim myself for many years.”

“I believe you, dear Govinda. Today, however, you’ve met a pilgrim just like this, wearing such shoes and such garments.”

15. What is significant about the fact that Govinda does not immediately recognize Siddhartha?
- (A) Siddhartha has changed greatly, both physically and spiritually.
 - (B) It is many years since Govinda has seen Siddhartha.
 - (C) Govinda’s life of deprivation has affected his sight.
 - (D) Siddhartha appears no different from any other pilgrim.
 - (E) The men are now so different that they can no longer be friends.
16. What can be inferred from Govinda’s repetition of the word “always”?
- (A) Govinda travels a great deal as a Buddhist.
 - (B) Govinda is happy.
 - (C) Govinda is stale.
 - (D) Govinda is a revered Buddhist.
 - (E) Govinda cannot wait to see Buddha again.

17. Siddhartha says to Govinda, "Exactly, my good man; you have observed well and your keen eyes see everything." In comparison with the earlier part of the passage, the above statement is
- (A) a paradox.
 - (B) a conceit.
 - (C) an epigram.
 - (D) observant.
 - (E) ironic.
18. The main idea expressed in the passage is
- (A) Govinda and Siddhartha are both pilgrims.
 - (B) appearances are illusory.
 - (C) Buddha's monks are observant.
 - (D) clothing is deceiving.
 - (E) Siddhartha is glad to see Govinda.
19. Siddhartha's tone in the passage may best be characterized as
- (A) caustic.
 - (B) sarcastic.
 - (C) mordant.
 - (D) pedantic
 - (E) critical.
20. In the passage above, Govinda could be described as
- (A) obdurate.
 - (B) ignorant.
 - (C) imperceptive.
 - (D) furtive.
 - (E) archaic.

Multiple Choice Answers and Explanations

1. In this passage, the metaphor of quenching “the eternal thirst” means most closely
- (A) performing the ablutions.
 - (B) escape from the cycle of rebirths.**
 - (C) reincarnation.
 - (D) self castigation.
 - (E) sacrifice.

(A) and (D) mean essentially the same thing, and they name what Hesse calls “the eternal thirst.” To quench it would be to eliminate desire and escape the cycle of reincarnation (B), thus attaining Nirvana.

2. Siddhartha’s father is to the Samanas as
- (A) moderation is to extremity**
 - (B) dedication is to laziness
 - (C) Hinduism is to Buddhism
 - (D) Apollonian is to Dionysian
 - (E) reincarnation is to samsara

Siddhartha’s father is a good and honest Brahmin, but the Samanas are extreme - even in a religious sense. Apollonian to Dionysian would be a close second, but represent, more closely, enlightenment through hard work and enlightenment through excess - whereby the Samanas, though perhaps excessive, work very hard at their path.

3. The Samanas as an archetype in Western literature would most closely resemble the
- (A) beggar.
 - (B) hermit.**
 - (C) priest.
 - (D) thief.
 - (E) wizard.

The Samanas are described as “pilgrims and ascetics,” not beggars. While the archetypal hermit is exclusively religious, the beggar is not.

4. From the context and other clues available, the word, “Satyam” most likely means
- (A) Brahmin - a man of the priest caste - different than “Brahman”
 - (B) Om - completion; perfection
 - (C) Asceticism - this is an extreme religious practice of austerity and, often, self-mortification
 - (D) Truth**
 - (E) Atman - the name for Brahman in mankind

5. Which of the following quotations best gives the main idea of the passage?
- (A) “among them all there were none who had totally reached the heavenly world.”
 - (B) “He called Siddhartha’s name. Siddhartha gave no answer.”
 - (C) “This heavenly world often appeared close, but he had never totally reached it.”
 - (D) “Why did he, who was irreproachable, have to wash out his sins every day.”
 - (E) **“His soul sent out like an arrow after the Brahman.”**

Selection (E) is the correct choice, as the other choices each presented the conditions that led to (E).

6. In the passage, identify the epithet for Buddha
- (A) enlightened
 - (B) **exalted**
 - (C) teacher
 - (D) lucid and honorable
 - (E) saint

An epithet is adjective or phrase that expresses an important characteristic or quality about an object or individual.

7. The passage above would most accurately be called a(n)
- (A) **parable** - a story from which a moral or spiritual truth may be discerned. In this sense, Siddhartha is exploring/discovering his own spiritual truth.
 - (B) quotation - a short excerpt of someone’s speech
 - (C) synecdoche – use of a whole to represent a part
 - (D) roman à clef. - a French term for a novel in which real people or events appear in a work of fiction. Though the Buddha is a historical figure, the passage pertains more to Siddhartha’s spiritual observations.
 - (E) diatribe - a prolonged speech; usually bitter
8. According to the passage, Buddha’s teaching offers
- (A) salvation from death.
 - (B) a path to Nirvana.
 - (C) **to ease the pain of existence.**
 - (D) knowledge of the mysteries of enlightenment.
 - (E) release from the cycle of existence.

Buddha’s actual words were “salvation from suffering.” Choice (C) offers the closest match.

9. What may be inferred by the Buddha calling Siddhartha, “oh seeker of knowledge”?
- (A) that seeking will lead to finding
 - (B) that seeking knowledge is contrary to seeking enlightenment
 - (C) Siddhartha should seek salvation from suffering
 - (D) Siddhartha may be seeking too much**
 - (E) Siddhartha has confused seeking with finding

This theme is reoccurring in the book. By “seeking,” Siddhartha is unable to “find.” For example, Siddhartha crossed the river that eventually helped lead him to perfection, but, because he was still seeking, he wasn’t ready to “find” the river.

10. Siddhartha’s tone with the Buddha may best be described as
- (A) deprecating.
 - (B) sardonic.
 - (C) unpretentious.**
 - (D) intrepid.
 - (E) reticent.

Siddhartha is respectful but probing. Unpretentious suggests, without pride, which best fits Siddhartha’s demeanor when speaking with the Buddha.

11. The ferryman’s statement of personification explicates
- (A) the river.**
 - (B) the hut.
 - (C) the bamboo raft.
 - (D) their future meeting.
 - (E) the path to perfection.

Vasudeva states, “A very beautiful river, I love it more than anything. Often I have listened to it, often I have looked into its eyes.”

12. What future relationship between the two men is foreshadowed in the passage above?
- (A) Siddhartha will bring the ferryman a gift.
 - (B) Siddhartha will return to learn from the river.**
 - (C) Siddhartha will return to the Samanas.
 - (D) Siddhartha will return home.
 - (E) Siddhartha will be the ferryman’s mentor.

Vasudeva mentions repeatedly that he has learned from the river, and he also foreshadows Siddhartha’s return.

13. Siddhartha's attitude toward the ferryman could be described as
- (A) distant.
 - (B) estranged.
 - (C) **dismissive.**
 - (D) blasé.
 - (E) sentimental.

After he leaves the ferryman, Siddhartha dismisses him, by saying to himself, "He is like Govinda,...thankful, though [he is]the one who would have a right to receive thanks... submissive...happily obeying and not thinking much...like children."

14. Siddhartha states, "They are all submissive, they all want to be friends, happily obeying and not thinking much. People are all like children." The passage contains an example of what type of figurative language?
- (A) analogy
 - (B) simile
 - (C) metaphor
 - (D) **hyperbole**
 - (E) allusion

Siddhartha says, "People are all like children." This is a great exaggeration, otherwise known as hyperbole.

15. What is significant about the fact that Govinda does not immediately recognize Siddhartha?
- (A) **Siddhartha has changed greatly, both physically and spiritually.**
 - (B) It is many years since Govinda has seen Siddhartha.
 - (C) Govinda's life of deprivation has affected his sight.
 - (D) Siddhartha appears no different from any other pilgrim.
 - (E) The men are now so different that they can no longer be friends.

(D) is contradicted by the passage, and it is not the fact that Siddhartha is on a pilgrimage that confuses Siddhartha. (B) is tempting, but Govinda would have changed as well. There is no support in the passage for (C), and (E) has nothing to do with Govinda's not recognizing his friend.

16. What can be inferred from Govinda's repetition of the word "always"?
- (A) Govinda travels a lot as a Buddhist.
 - (B) Govinda is happy.
 - (C) **Govinda is stale.**
 - (D) Govinda is a revered Buddhist.
 - (E) Govinda cannot wait to see Buddha again.

Govinda is feeling the repetition in his own life. He is feeling "stale" and uninspired. Choice (A) is stated outright; therefore, cannot be inferred. There is not enough support for any of the other choices.

17. Siddhartha says to Govinds, “Exactly, my good man; you have observed well and your keen eyes see everything.” In comparison with the earlier part of the passage, the above statement is
- (A) a paradox.
 - (B) a conceit.
 - (C) an epigram.
 - (D) observant.
 - (E) **ironic.**

The statement is ironic, because earlier in the passage, Govinda looked directly on his childhood friend and did not “see” him.

18. The main idea expressed in the passage is
- (A) Govinda and Siddhartha are both pilgrims.
 - (B) **appearances are illusory.**
 - (C) Buddha’s monks are observant.
 - (D) clothing is deceiving.
 - (E) Siddhartha is glad to see Govinda.

Siddhartha is very patient in convincing Govinda that many things, particularly appearances, change with time.

19. Siddhartha’s tone in the passage may best be characterized as
- (A) caustic.
 - (B) sarcastic.
 - (C) mordant.
 - (D) **pedantic.**
 - (E) critical.

In his explanation, Siddhartha is patient and non-critical. He speaks to Govinda as if he were teaching a small child.

20. In the passage above, Govinda could be described as
- (A) **obdurate.**
 - (B) ignorant.
 - (C) imperceptive.
 - (D) furtive.
 - (E) archaic.

Obdurate - means stubborn or unyielding. Govinda, only with difficulty, accepts that Siddhartha is a pilgrim. He stubbornly held onto his previous notions of what he expected a pilgrim to be.

Siddhartha

Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition Teaching Unit

Study Guide Teacher's Copy

Chapter One

1. Find the epithet for Siddhartha. What does it suggest?

“The young falcon” The falcon is a fierce and proud bird of prey. These characteristics are being applied to the young Siddhartha.

2. “Atman” is described as something that is “within this inner essence of his that was indestructible and one with the universe” (p. 13). Is there anything that is roughly equivalent to “Atman” in other world religions?

Christian and Jewish religions recognize the “soul” as the “indestructible” part within each human and the part that is most closely tied to God or infinity. The religion of Islam also recognizes the existence of the “soul,” which has a place in all living things.

3. How old do you believe Siddhartha is from all information given in Chapter One?

Siddhartha is approximately in his teens. He is not yet a man as he first asks his father’s permission to leave home. A good estimate would put Siddhartha at about 16 or 17 years of age. We find out later on that he spends three years with the Samanas, after which he considers himself barely a man (so approximately in his 20s).

4. What is the significance of Siddhartha’s name?

Siddhartha is also the name of Siddhartha Gotama, The Buddha. This is important because it makes a direct connection with the Buddha. Until Siddhartha encounters the Buddha himself, the story could have been a biography of The Buddha. The only significant exception is that the real Siddhartha Gotama was already married with at least one child before he left home to join the ascetics.

5. What is Govinda's opinion of "ordinary Brahmins"? What is it about real Hindu society that leads to this possibility?

Govinda feels that ordinary Brahmins are too often lazy, money-grubbing merchants. This is contributed to by the fact that in Hindu society the Brahmin priest class is a sizable group, and there are far too many for what is necessary to perform official priestly functions.

6. How is the restlessness that Siddhartha feels similar to that experienced by many young people? How is Siddhartha different?

Typically, this restlessness would be explained as sexual maturation or puberty and the subsequent newfound interest in the opposite sex that ensues. Siddhartha appears to have no interest in the sexual urges that would be typical in young man his age.

7. What is the setting of the story?

The setting is India. Siddhartha's father is a Brahmin, which is the highest level in the Hindu caste system.

8. What kinds of epithets are offered for Govinda? How do they characterize Govinda? What does this tell us about Govinda's literary function in the novel?

Govinda wanted to follow Siddhartha into the radiance as "his friend, his escort, his servant, his spear-carrier, and his shadow" (p. 14). Govinda sees himself as second to Siddhartha, as a follower. As a literary function, this puts Govinda in a secondary character position, which is meant to enlighten our understanding of the main character or protagonist.

9. Interpret the sentence: "Siddhartha had started to cultivate the seed of discontent within himself" (p. 14). Why is Siddhartha discontented?

For his young age, Siddhartha is extremely focused on the goal of penetrating into Atman or as Govinda sees it, "entering into radiance." Siddhartha looks around him and doesn't see anyone who has attained the goal. He feels that the Brahmins had shared the majority and the best of their wisdom with him, and he still isn't satisfied. The Samanas intrigue him, and Siddhartha feels that a new path and new teachers may offer him something that he lacks.

10. Why does Govinda ask Siddhartha whether his father will allow him to join the Samanas? What kind of life does Siddhartha live? Is it a hard or an easy life? Why would Siddhartha's father be opposed to such a wish?

Presumably, Siddhartha enjoys a good life as the son of a Brahmin. Brahmins are the highest caste in the Hindu caste system. Despite Govinda's assessment of the "ordinary Brahmin," Siddhartha's father is "pure, scholarly, and highly esteemed," (p. 16) indicating he takes his position seriously. Siddhartha's father wishes to save his son from the pain and difficulty that life as a Samana would entail.

11. Identify the paradox in the description of the Samanas and interpret its intended meaning. How does this description characterize the Samanas?

The Samanas are described as neither old nor young. This suggests a detachment from time. This is an alienating description that places the Samanas at the fringe of human existence—an extreme even for the religious.

12. Hesse describes the Samanas as “jackals in the domain of mankind” (p. 17). What effect does this characterization have?

Jackals live on the fringes of animal existence. They are fearful and shunned by other animals. “Jackals in the domain of mankind” is a particularly alienating description and suggests that the Samanas should be looked upon with fear and mistrust.

13. What figurative language is used repeatedly in the several paragraphs following the “Om is the bow” (p. 16) verse that Siddhartha repeats to himself? What effect does it have on the reader?

Hesse almost overuses comparisons with the word “arrow.” It only becomes repetitive because it occurs so frequently in just about six paragraphs. The first is the metaphor offered in the “Om” verse – “the arrow is the soul.” The second is in the following paragraph, “his soul sent out like an arrow after the Brahman.” Then, “like the swiftest arrow let loose from the bow” and “as quickly as the arrow flies” p. 17). The effect on the reader is one of continuity. It’s as if, learning from the verse, Siddhartha sets his soul up as the arrow and shot it out toward his goal.

14. Siddhartha tells Govinda his plans to join the Samanas. He states, “Siddhartha will go to the Samanas. He will become a Samana” (p. 17). Siddhartha is speaking about himself in the third person. How is this related to the practice of traditional Buddhism?

In traditional Buddhism, there is a focus on learning the true self that is unchanging and unaffected by time and the world of cause and effect. In this sense there is a distinction between the “true self” and the self of appearances. In Jungian terms, this can be seen as the “Self” in comparison to the “Persona”; the “Self” is the true self and the Persona is the figurative “mask” we wear in public.

15. Is Siddhartha’s estimate of his father as “a mere seeker, one who had thirst,” (p. 16) accurate? Is there any indication from the text that supports this assertion?

Yes, Siddhartha’s father had to drink “time and again at the sacrifices, at the books, at the conversations of the Brahmins” (p.16). The father later says to Siddhartha, “if you have found blessedness in the woods, then come and teach me how to be blessed” (p. 19).

16. What reaction do you suppose Govinda received at home when he announced his intent to join the Samanas? How significant is it that Govinda accompanies Siddhartha, and what does this reveal about his character?

When Siddhartha announced his intent to join the Samanas, “Govinda paled when he heard these words” (p. 17). We know that he was concerned about a negative reaction at home from his question, “Will your father allow you to do that?” (p. 17). We can assume that Govinda was not only concerned about the reaction in Siddhartha’s house but the reaction in his own home. Seeing that Govinda went with Siddhartha anyhow reveals how devoted Govinda is to Siddhartha.

17. In Indian culture, it is typically the mother who passes on the spiritual knowledge in the family. Why do you think Hesse chose to emphasize the father in the story?

According to the author, all of his writing was autobiographical to some extent. Therefore, perhaps Hesse was writing about some aspect of his relationship with his own father. Another possibility is that he was writing for an audience that was more familiar and comfortable with paternal lineage.

Chapter Two

1. “His goal was to stand open to the wonder of thoughts conceived in self-dissolution” (p. 21). How does Siddhartha’s goal of “self dissolution” relate to traditional Hinduism?

In traditional Hinduism, there are four main stages and four main goals in life. Three are life-affirming or life-loving and one is life-negating or life-hating. As a Samana, Siddhartha’s goal is to reject life in all its forms. The stage is known as ascetic (the goal being Moksha—or release).

2. Why does Siddhartha fast, abstain from women, and withdraw completely from anything that provides him with comfort?

He wanted to become “empty of thirst, of wishing, of dreams—empty of all joy and pain...to find peace with an empty heart” (p. 21). The Samanas believe that by destroying the physical self, the infinite self (Atman) will be exposed.

3. How does Siddhartha experience the “hazy intoxication of the cycle of existence” (p. 22) and to what end?

He experiences the “cycle of existence” by becoming a heron and dying a heron’s death. He became a dead jackal, and a stone, wood, and water. He hopes that by experiencing this cycle, he will be able to escape it, “where causality ended and an eternity free of sorrow began” (p. 22).

4. One of the criticisms offered about the Buddha was that he had no knowledge of the caste system. Explain how Buddha's disregard for the caste system might be a point of criticism. Who might offer such criticism?

In India, the caste system is firmly supported by Hinduism. The people who would likely criticize someone's disregard for the caste system would be those on top of the caste system socially.

5. Why is learning Atman's enemy?

In the sense that Siddhartha describes it, Atman is in us, and the way to find the Atman within us is to study the self. Learning, on the other hand, typically tells us other people's thoughts. We can, at times, learn about ourselves by following another's journey, but on Siddhartha's journey, there have been few travelers before him. Siddhartha is convinced that each must find his own way.

6. Why is Siddhartha convinced that no one can teach him the way to perfection even before he meets the Buddha?

Siddhartha believes that even the wisest and oldest Samanas and Brahmins will not find the way. He believes that the way to perfection can be only found within the self and by studying the self.

Chapter Three

1. What is suggested by Siddhartha's recognition of the Buddha while he has to be pointed out to Govinda?

Siddhartha's easy recognition of the Buddha suggests that he is further along the path to enlightenment than is Govinda.

2. Upon reaching the town where the Buddha resided, what understatement does Govinda make regarding enlightenment? What does this reveal about the character?

Upon hearing of the Buddha's location in the garden of Jetavana, Govinda exclaims, "Well then, our goal has been reached and our path has come to an end!" (p. 29). This reveals Govinda's naiveté regarding enlightenment and suggests that he is far from that goal.

3. What information is given about the structures of Buddhism early in Chapter Three?

We know that the disciples of the Buddha wear the robe of the ascetic, and they beg for sustenance. In the lesson of the evening, Gotama taught the "four main doctrines" and the eightfold path.

4. It is mentioned that Siddhartha had never loved a person as much as the Buddha. This is the first mention of Siddhartha loving anyone or anything. Why is it significant that Siddhartha feels more love for this person than either of his parents or Govinda?

Siddhartha has always been intent on enlightenment. In a sense, this is his first love. Seeing the Buddha, a perfected being, gives Siddhartha hope that he may also attain perfection. The significance of this love becomes more apparent as the story unfolds, but at this point, it is significant because it appears that Siddhartha loves his goal more than anything else.

5. Why does Hesse tell us about the Buddha's eating habits?

Moderate living is a key tenant in Buddhist teachings. This is in contrast to the Samana's stark way of life. Later on in the text, an additional contrast is made by Siddhartha's life as a merchant.

6. Why is the parting of Govinda and Siddhartha so painful for Govinda?

In the first chapter, we learned that Govinda had planned to follow Siddhartha when he became a god. Govinda incorrectly believed that Siddhartha would join the Buddha, and they would seek enlightenment together under his guidance.

7. Before he leaves, Siddhartha takes the opportunity to speak with the Buddha and to share with him some of his thoughts on his (the Buddha's) doctrine. Siddhartha praises him for connecting everything in a perfect chain of related events (of cause and effect), but points out one exception. Explain Siddhartha's exception.

Siddhartha points out that in the perfectly explained world the Buddha has mapped out, the one thing that doesn't fit is the Buddha's own breaking from the cycle of existences. Siddhartha argues that the Buddha will not be able to "teach" anyone what happened to him in his hour of enlightenment.

8. During their brief discussion, the Buddha mentions knowledge or wisdom twice to Siddhartha. The first time is in reference to the four noble truths and the eightfold path, "their goal is not to explain the world to those who seek knowledge" (p. 34). The second, "You know how to talk wisely, my friend. Be wary of too much wisdom!" (p. 34). What is the theme of the Buddha's advice to Siddhartha?

Siddhartha is doing too much seeking. He can't find because he's looking too hard. He doesn't know what Nirvana is, so it could be right in front of him and he wouldn't see it because it doesn't fit his image of what he thinks he's looking for.

9. How has the Buddha given Siddhartha "himself"?

Siddhartha has seen and heard the best of teachers and teachings and he knows that even this one (Buddha) can't lead him to that most vital knowledge or experience that he seeks. In a sense, the Buddha has confirmed for Siddhartha what he had already suspected: he will need to find his own way from this point, because no one can teach what it is he seeks to learn.

Chapter Four

1. In Siddhartha's pursuit of "the self" and salvation, how does "not knowing himself" act as a barrier to this goal?

In order to separate the self from Atman, it is necessary to know the self. All through Siddhartha's years to date, he has done nothing but run away or hide from the self or seek ways to diminish or deny it. In reality, what he realizes must be done is that he has to embrace the self to learn it thoroughly; that way he can distinguish it from the Atman in himself.

2. In Chapter Four, Awakening, Siddhartha experiences "a profound feeling of awakening from long dreams" (p.38). In contrast to his time as a Samana, how is he "awakened" now?

The Samana experience is, in Hindu terms, an attempt to reach Moksha or release. This experience is brought about by the negation of life. In this sense, Siddhartha has lived the past three years not living, and for practical purposes, in a "dream" type existence where he was communing with his innermost self.

3. What is Siddhartha's epiphany during this chapter?

Siddhartha realizes that he has been reborn. He is entering the world anew with a new view. Instead of seeing the world as Maya (an illusion and distraction), he will embrace it and consume it, with the ultimate goal of better understanding himself.

4. In the first chapter, Siddhartha's father told him, "If you find blessedness in the woods, then come and teach me how to be blessed. If you find disappointment, then return once more and let us once again sacrifice to the gods together" (p. 19). Siddhartha considers returning but does not. Why?

Siddhartha is listening to his inner voice now, and it tells him that the old part of his life is finished. He is no longer a Brahmin: "Now, he was nothing but Siddhartha, the awoken one; nothing else was left" (p. 39).

5. "For many years, he had been without home and had felt nothing. Now he felt it" (p.39). Why? What has he lost?

He has lost the society of the Samanas, but more than that, he is alone in the world of people as never before. With the Samanas, he held people in disdain and the world in contempt. Now, as he seeks to learn himself he must enter the world of regular society.

6. Hesse makes use of the snake image repeatedly in this chapter. In literature, the snake often represents some foreboding or treachery. What possible foreboding or treachery can we anticipate in Siddhartha's future as indicated in Chapter Four?

As a Christian symbol, the serpent symbolized the fall from grace. As Siddhartha is leaving the ascetic world and entering the world of Maya (or the physical world), we can expect that Siddhartha will experience a similar fall.

If Siddhartha immerses himself in the physical world the way he has immersed himself in the ascetic, he may be faced with the trappings of the physical world (i.e., gluttony, lust, greed, addiction, etc.). These things are all equally powerful in their ability to enslave.

Chapter Five

1. In the beginning of the chapter, Siddhartha is experiencing the world of Maya for the first time. According to Hinduism, what is Maya and how is it a barrier to salvation?

According to the Hindu faith, Maya is the physical world of experience and sensation. Maya, according to the faith, is a distraction and deception from Brahman and Atman. Siddhartha's time as a Samana was spent entirely in the renunciation of the natural world of Maya.

2. What realization does Siddhartha experience regarding the world of thought and the world of the senses?

Siddhartha realizes that both must be listened to. Siddhartha had attempted to capture the self in "the snare of thought" but thought and the senses are both of this world—neither is Atman nor Brahman; both must be listened to in order to find the innermost self that was Atman.

3. Describe the dream Siddhartha has while staying the night at the ferryman's hut. Interpret its literal and implied meaning as well as its possible symbolic meaning.

Siddhartha dreams of Govinda. Govinda asks him in the dream, "Why have you forsaken me?" (p. 47) As Siddhartha embraces him, he turns into a woman, and from the woman's breast, a fountain of milk pours. Siddhartha drinks from the breast and it tastes of man and woman and every desire. It makes him drunk and unconscious.

On a literal level, Siddhartha is feeling guilty over leaving behind his lifelong friend, Govinda. In addition, Siddhartha's physical self is awakening. His sexuality, which has been sublimated through his early years, is finally being allowed to awaken and stir. In addition, the dream could also be considered a foreshadowing of Siddhartha's relationship with Kamala, who, in many ways, replaces Govinda as Siddhartha's companion.

On a symbolic level, Govinda's turning into a woman represents what Jung would call the Anima. According to Jung, the persona, the shadow and the animus are the most primal and basic of archetypes. All other archetypes grow out of some combination of differing amounts of these basic archetypes. The anima is the power source within us and is defined by Jung as the feminine within a male and the masculine in a female (the masculine aspect in women is called the animus). The anima is our mental image of the ideal opposite sex. These characteristics may even be hidden from our conscious minds. On a symbolic level, then, this might suggest that perhaps Siddhartha is getting closer to his inner self.

4. On his way into town, Siddhartha encounters a young woman who offers him sex. Why does Siddhartha refuse her advances and instead seek out a prostitute? What is the difference between the two, and how is this interaction symbolic?

Siddhartha refuses sex with the young woman because his inner voice tells him to. He seeks out Kamala, also, because his inner voice guides him to her. It is Siddhartha's goal to learn about the physical world of Maya, and if he had assented to the young woman's advances, it may have developed into a relationship, whereas with a prostitute, Siddhartha can learn from her and not be distracted by a relationship.

Symbolically this event is similar to the temptations experienced by the Buddha. Some accounts tell of Mara, the destroyer or the evil one, offering a variety of temptations to the Buddha to distract him from his goal of enlightenment. One such temptation was in the form of Mara's daughters Pleasure, Desire, and Delight, who unsuccessfully attempted to seduce the Buddha.

5. What is the significance of the names Kamala and Kamaswami?

Kama is the root of each name. Kama is the Hindu god of desire. In Buddhism, Kama is referred to as Mara, the destroyer. These names emphasize Siddhartha's immersion in the physical world of senses and his entrapment in Samsara.

6. When Siddhartha left the Buddha, he was adamant about his desire to leave behind teachers and teachings, but he almost immediately enlists two new teachers, Kamala and Kamaswami. How do you suppose Siddhartha would explain this apparent contradiction?

Siddhartha's greatest desire now is to learn himself. In all the years of asceticism Siddhartha had been hiding from his true self. By learning about the physical side of himself, Siddhartha is learning how to become a whole person.

7. When Siddhartha takes leave of the ferryman, he concludes that the ferryman is like Govinda: "They are all submissive, they all want to be friends, happily obeying and not thinking much. People are all like children" (p. 48). Is there any indication that Siddhartha is underestimating the ferryman?

In his newly awakened state, Siddhartha doesn't seem to recognize the significance of the ferryman's statement about the river, "Often I have listened to it, often I have looked into its eyes, and always I have learned from it. One can learn much from a river" (p. 47). This certainly suggests some mysticism on the ferryman's part. The ferryman is also perceptive in observing that Siddhartha is without money and unable to pay him. Siddhartha dismisses the ferryman's prediction that, "You too, Samana, will come again" (p. 47).

8. What is the "charming omen" with which Siddhartha enters the city, and how does it influence his next steps?

Siddhartha witnesses Kamala being carried into her pleasure garden, and she smiles upon him for a moment before disappearing into the grove. As a result, Siddhartha decides to enter the grove and meet Kamala—this becomes his goal.

9. What word does Siddhartha use repeatedly in his description of Kamala that may suggest a future relationship as his teacher? Where else in the book has there been another physical description of a character in such detail? Why is it significant again here?

Siddhartha uses the adjective "intelligent" twice while describing Kamala, subtly suggesting that she is someone he could learn from. The only other person described in such physical detail has been Siddhartha himself. This description of Kamala helps establish Kamala as a foil for Siddhartha.

10. Why, when Siddhartha first attempts to meet Kamala, does he direct the servant to introduce him as a "young Brahmin?"

When Siddhartha first came into the city and saw Kamala, he became aware of how the servants looked at him: "with scorn, with mistrust, with rejection" (p. 49). According to the caste system in India, his status as a Brahmin would most certainly have given him entrance into the grove, whereas the Samana would be received with mistrust.

Chapter Six

1. Kamala tells Siddhartha, “You’ve remained a Samana. You still don’t love me; you love nobody.” Siddhartha, in turn, tells Kamala, “You also do not love—how else could you practice love as a craft?” (p. 61). What is it that Siddhartha and Kamala lack or have that makes them unable to love? What is it about the child-like people that allow them to love?

The answer is related to the “inner refuge” Siddhartha mentions in the chapter. Siddhartha and Kamala do not attach consequences to the things in their lives and, as a result, are able to exist without the passion with which the child people carry on their lives.

2. In Chapter Six, Siddhartha visits a village to buy grain, only to arrive and find the grain bought and sold to another merchant. Instead of doing what Kamaswami would have wished and come straight back, Siddhartha stays and visits with the people of the town. In this sense, how is Siddhartha conducting “better business” than Kamaswami?

Siddhartha’s strength is in his social manner. He meets and befriends people on a genuine, human level. Kamaswami, on the other hand, merely sees the people as a means to an end. In this sense, if and when Siddhartha returns to the village, he will be greeted as a friend and treated better than a mere businessman.

3. Siddhartha tells Kamala that, like him, she has an inner peace and refuge to which she can go at any time. Kamala incorrectly states that this is “cleverness,” but as Siddhartha points out, cleverness has nothing to do with it. Kamaswami is clever, but has no refuge inside himself. What is this inner refuge?

In Jungian terms, this is the Self as compared to the Persona. The Self is the self-actualized self, the true self. The Persona is our public “mask” or the image of ourselves that we show to the world. The more accurate the Persona is to the Self, the more self-actualized the individual.

4. Even though Siddhartha, according to Kamaswami, “is no proper merchant and will never be one” (p. 57), he is, nonetheless, successful. Likewise, Kamala comments that he is “the best lover” she “ever saw” (p. 61). Why is this significant in relation to traditional Hinduism?

In a parallel sense, Siddhartha excels at the “skills” of his physical life just as he was exceptional in his study of Brahminism and his studies with the ascetics. This is another aspect that remains consistent with Hinduism’s four main goals. The goal of “Artha” means success and the goal of “Kama” means pleasure. According to these goals, being successful in whatever work you do (Artha) is spiritually significant. Enjoying life and all its pleasures (Kama) is also a worthy goal—provided these pleasures are enjoyed within the domain of Dharma (virtue) or in a virtuous manner.

5. What is the “dying voice which admonished him with whispers, lamented softly” (p. 60)? Why is the dying of this voice significant?

This is Siddhartha's inner voice. This is significant because Siddhartha's inner voice is growing silent. He is getting farther and farther away from his goal of enlightenment and becoming caught up in the physical world of Maya.

Chapter Seven

1. What is Siddhartha's inner voice? Is it the same as, or similar to, his conscience? Compare and contrast the two.

Answers may vary. Siddhartha's inner voice is Atman. It is the unchanging and eternal part of him that isn't affected by the world around him. The Greeks argued that our conscience was closest to divinity. Conscience seems more specific to issues of right or wrong (dealing more strictly with questions of morality), whereas the Atman is all encompassing.

2. What is the “disease of the soul which rich people have” (p. 65)?

It is saturation with the pleasures of the world. It is gluttony, lust, and over-consumption of physical pleasures to the point of poisoning. When Siddhartha had reached this point he yearned to “vomit” it all out.

3. Even though Siddhartha had “gradually assumed something of the child-like people's ways for his own,” (p. 64) he is more miserable than ever before. Why?

Siddhartha is still unable to love. He has acquired the worst qualities of the child-like people without their greatest attribute.

4. Why did Kamaswami send out searchers for Siddhartha, while Kamala did not have anyone look for him? Why did Kamala expect him to disappear?

It appears that Kamaswami looks on the world with some suspicion. Kamaswami was firmly in the grasp of Samsara, and Siddhartha's disappearance caused him to be suspicious of the situation. Kamala, on the other hand, felt that he had always remained a Samana—who would one day return to the woods.

5. How is Siddhartha's addiction to gambling ironic?

Siddhartha gambles to show his disdain for his wealth, but at the same time this addiction causes him to seek wealth more aggressively. It was gambling that entrapped him more than any of the other vices he dealt with.

6. Siddhartha's dream of the songbird and Kamala's later release of the bird are both highly symbolic. Explain the meaning of the dream and the release.

Siddhartha dreamed that the songbird had died. He "felt death in his heart and horror in his chest" (p. 67). It might be a natural assumption that the songbird represented Siddhartha's inner voice, but that wouldn't be completely accurate as we later find Siddhartha's inner voice speaks to him again at the river's edge. We gain a hint at the broader meaning of the dream when Kamala releases the bird after learning Siddhartha has gone. She releases the bird as she also, in her heart, bids farewell to Siddhartha. The life of the songbird, then, represented Siddhartha's life in the physical world (Maya) with Kamala. This part of his life has come to an end.

7. Explain the concept of Samsara as demonstrated by the book. How did it affect Siddhartha?

Samsara refers to the cycle of births and deaths that the individual is destined to repeat until he attains perfection. The child-like people are stuck in this cycle of births and deaths without any apparent regard to the metaphysical questions that would lead them to release. They are caught up in a cycle of simple cares, immediate pleasures, and love for many things: others, themselves, praise, money, etc. Siddhartha considers this cycle a silly "game" that children (child-like people) play over and over. Nonetheless, he got caught up in it himself through his desire for wealth and possessions.

8. Siddhartha observes the signs of Kamala's aging: "under her eyes and next to the corners of the mouth he read . . . a horrible inscription of small lines, slight grooves" (p. 66). "With a sigh, he said farewell to her while his soul was full of hesitation and hidden anxiety" (p. 66). Some mistakenly attribute Siddhartha's departure to the dream of the songbird, but Siddhartha had already decided to leave Kamala before he had the dream. Why? Was he afraid of death? Explain your answer.

Even though Siddhartha was thoroughly entrapped in Samsara, there remained some part of him that realized this. Siddhartha's attention to the aging Kamala is symbolic of death, but not physical death; Siddhartha was experiencing a type of spiritual death that was leading him to his next "awakening" or rebirth (already a similar experience in Chapter Four). The dream of the songbird was an attempt by his subconscious to alert him to this dying within him. As Siddhartha was so thoroughly entrenched in Samsara, however, he was unable to read the signs of the dream. Siddhartha's next steps are confused as he struggles to understand this knowledge.

Chapter Eight

1. At this point in the book, Siddhartha “was full of disgust, full of suffering, full of death, until nothing in the world allured him, gave him joy, or comforted him” (p. 71). Compare this with the description of life with the Samanas. “Everything was a lie, everything stank, everything stank of lies, everything feigned meaning and happiness and beauty, and yet everything was decaying while nobody acknowledged the fact. The world tasted bitter; life was agony” (p. 21) Both seem quite similar, yet Siddhartha hadn’t considered suicide after leaving the Samanas. How is Siddhartha’s attitude and situation different now from before?

Siddhartha has lost the guidance of his inner voice. After leaving the Samanas, he felt as if he had been reborn. He looked forward to experiencing the world for the first time with his new perspective. Now he feels saturated and sick. He allowed himself to become entrapped by Samsara and he mistakenly feels that death will release him. More accurately such a move would return him to the cycle of existences through reincarnation. Therefore, he would really have succumbed to Samsara.

2. How did the “Om” save Siddhartha from suicide? What would have happened if his suicide attempt had been successful?

At Siddhartha’s blackest moment, as he lets himself fall into the water, his inner voice says “Om.” In this moment Siddhartha remembered the cycle of existences, and he realized the futility of his actions. If Siddhartha had succeeded in killing himself, he would have been thrust back into the cycle of rebirths with an amount of bad Karma to account for in the next life.

3. How did the meeting between Siddhartha and Govinda by the river serve a structural purpose within the novel? What do we learn of Govinda?

The last time Siddhartha and Govinda were together near this river, they had just parted. Siddhartha was at a significant point in his development toward perfection, and again, is at a significant time in his development.

Govinda is apparently fully enmeshed in his life as a follower of the Buddha. He expresses his concern for the “unknown” traveler, sees that he is safe, and then he quickly rejoins his brothers. We find that Govinda has remained a compassionate and caring person, and he is dedicated to his life as a follower of the Buddha.

4. After Siddhartha’s long sleep by the river, he awoke with a new outlook and feeling about the world. What was this feeling and why was he feeling it now?

Siddhartha’s sleep by the river brought him two things: an incredibly rejuvenating sleep that refreshed his soul and healed his aching body AND he got to see his childhood friend again. Siddhartha awoke with love for the world around him. The feeling was partly inspired by Govinda’s selfless act of kindness. Govinda, interestingly, has always appeared capable of love whereas Siddhartha is just now learning it.

5. How does Siddhartha's decision to stay by the river foreshadow the character of his future days?

On the other side of the river, Siddhartha had practiced asceticism with the Samanas. It was an extreme religious practice that involved extreme fasting and self-mortification. When Siddhartha left that life, he crossed the river and began another extreme as he lost himself in the world of Maya (the physical world). Now he returns to the river and decides to stay, suggesting he will begin a life of moderation and avoiding extremes.

Chapter Nine

1. This chapter is entitled, *The Ferryman*. How is the title of the chapter and Vasudeva's occupation symbolic to Siddhartha at this point in his journey?

In the chapter, the river is identified as an obstacle to many. From a symbolic perspective, a ferryman is someone who helps people overcome their obstacles. There is much to be learned from obstacles, however, as Vasudeva encourages Siddhartha to listen to the river and learn from it.

2. Why do some people mistake Siddhartha and Vasudeva for brothers?

It is the inner peace they share that causes them to resemble one another.

3. Explain the metaphor, "I looked at my life and found that it also was a river" (p. 84). What insight did Siddhartha gain from this realization?

Siddhartha was comparing his life to the river. The river is in front of him, in the sea, in the clouds, and in the mountains all at once. Siddhartha is his father's son the Brahmin, he is the Samana; he is the merchant, the lover, and the ferryman all at once. All of these things contribute to make Siddhartha who he is. He realized that these things were separated only in his mind and not by anything real. The insight Siddhartha gains from this realization is that time does not exist.

4. Explain the theme of the passage below:

"No, there were no teachings that a person who truly sought and wanted to find could accept. But the one who had already found could approve of any teachings, every path and goal" (p. 86).

Siddhartha was a "seeker" for many years, but this was his problem. By "seeking" Nirvana, he had an idea in his mind of what he expected to find, when in reality, it was all around him. Therefore, there were no teachings that the "seeker" could accept—none of it fit his concept of what he expected to find. The person who had already found, however, could approve of any teachings because the enlightened person realizes that all life offers the lessons necessary. It is being open to the things in front of you that allow you to learn from anything.

5. Explain how Siddhartha's observations of Kamala as she lay dying reinforced his belief that time does not exist.

Siddhartha saw Kamala as she is now, "her old, tired mouth, with those lips that had become thin" (p. 88) and at the same time he also saw his and her face "as they were young, with red lips, fiery eyes" (p. 89). All of this filled him with the feeling of eternity, "that every moment was eternity" (p. 89).

6. Vasudeva observes, "You have experienced suffering...but I see that no sadness has entered your heart" (p. 89). Why has no sadness entered Siddhartha's heart?

He has accepted Kamala's death. It is a choice to look on the positive side of events even in tragedy. Rather than bemoan the loss of Kamala, Siddhartha rejoices at the presence of his son.

7. Approximately how old is Siddhartha as he begins his life as a ferryman, and which of the Four Life Stages of Hinduism would Siddhartha now be entering?

Siddhartha is approximately 45 years old. Siddhartha was likely in his late teens when he left home, and in his early twenties when he left the Samanas three years later. Vasudeva remembers ferrying Siddhartha across the river "possibly more than twenty years ago" (p. 82).

Siddhartha would be entering the "householder" stage. Some may argue, justifiably, that Siddhartha has also emerged in the "retirement" stage of life. The correct answer, however, would be "householder" as this is the stage that Siddhartha is just now entering.

Chapter Ten

1. Why does Siddhartha prefer "the suffering and worries of love over happiness and joy without the boy" (p. 92)? Is this the "right effort" for Siddhartha or is he wasting his time? Explain your answer.

In this sense, Siddhartha has finally acquired the trait of the child-like people. He has learned to love a selfless love that is unconditional. One of the steps of the eightfold path is "right effort." Siddhartha's efforts to father his son are absolutely the "right effort" for him at this stage. In the past, Siddhartha's pride and ego would not allow him to give himself to another person.

2. Vasudeva asks the river what to do about Siddhartha's son. In response, the river laughs. What is the river laughing at? What realization must Siddhartha come to? Why is this situation ironic?

Siddhartha realizes his son's heart is "hard and proud" and he attempts to, through "love and kind patience," win him over and to spare him some of the pain of life. However, Vasudeva tells him "water wants to join water, youth wants to join youth" (p. 92). Siddhartha has to realize eventually that his son must live his own life. All his love will not be able to spare his son the slightest bit of pain. The irony of the situation is that it is reminiscent of Siddhartha's dealings with his own father.

3. Explain Vasudeva's statement about Siddhartha and his son: "Don't you shackle him with your love? Don't you, every day, make him feel inferior, and make it harder on him with your kindness and patience?" (pp. 92-93).

Siddhartha's son has come from a very different life. The shock of losing his mother is enough to alienate him, but in addition the boy is forced into a life without servants and a meager, almost austere, existence.

4. After all of Siddhartha's efforts, his son runs away in the end. What does Siddhartha gain/lose through the whole experience?

Siddhartha has to experience love of this kind in order to become closer to the child-like people. As a result he realizes that he is no different. He now views the child-like people with understanding rather than disdain. Siddhartha gained humility.

5. What did Siddhartha accomplish by following his son back to Kamala's pleasure garden?

Siddhartha realized that, by leaving, his son had done what he had failed to do. The son must be in his own world. He must lead his own life. Siddhartha now realizes that the pain over his loss is a wound that he must bear.

6. What is the state of Siddhartha's "wound" at the close of the chapter? What are the possible outcomes and what are the consequences of each outcome?

Siddhartha's wound is still a wound that eventually must heal and "blossom" if he is to continue on his path to perfection. Siddhartha also acknowledges the possibility that the wound may not heal and will destroy him.

7. At the end of the chapter, how does Vasudeva act as Siddhartha's "guru"?

Vasudeva comes to Siddhartha outside Kamala's pleasure garden and motivates a change in focus. By his actions, Vasudeva encourages Siddhartha to come back to the river and meditate on his son.

Chapter Eleven

1. How does the river serve as the vehicle that helps bring Siddhartha to enlightenment?

Siddhartha listens to the river; and by meditating on it, he hears all of the voices of the world

2. Siddhartha loved his son so much that he wanted to “keep him from suffering, pain, and disappointment” (p. 93). In the process Siddhartha makes himself and his son miserable. Why wasn’t this working?

Vasudeva asked Siddhartha, “Do you think...that anyone is spared from this path?”(p. 93) The son must find his own way and make his own mistakes. Nothing, not even the love of his father, can save him from his own destiny. Vasudeva also told Siddhartha that his son’s “heart is hard and proud, and people like this have to suffer quite a bit, make many mistakes, do a great deal of injustice, and burden themselves with a lot of sin” (p. 92)

3. Vasudeva tells Siddhartha that his son is not in a “place where he can prosper” (p. 92). Why can’t he prosper there?

“Water wants to join water, youth wants to join youth” (p. 92). Vasudeva explains that the boy didn’t willingly leave his life; he was forced to stay by the river with two old men. Vasudeva advises Siddhartha to bring the boy to a teacher “so that he will be among other boys and girls in a world that is his own” (p. 93).

4. How has Siddhartha become like the child-like people? How is he different?

Through most of Siddhartha’s story, he has remained a Samana; he looked at the child-like people and saw them “toiling, suffering, and becoming gray-haired for the sake of things which seemed to him entirely unworthy of this price” (p. 59). But now, Siddhartha has also suffered for things (the love of his son) that a Samana would consider unworthy of the price. The difference is that Siddhartha retains the knowledge of the unity of all life.

5. Under what circumstances does Siddhartha’s wound eventually heal?

While listening the river, and under the guidance of Vasudeva, Siddhartha hears the voices of the river merge into “Om.” Siddhartha stops “fighting his fate” and “his wound now blossom[s], and his suffering [is] radiant; his self ha[s] taken flight into the unity” (p. 103).

6. How does Vasudeva continue to act as guru for Siddhartha in this chapter?

Vasudeva listens to Siddhartha as he lays bare his wound; he confesses everything. “Showing his wound to this listener was just like bathing it in the river until it had cooled and become one with the river” (p. 101) Afterward, Vasudeva leads him to the river saying, “You’ve heard it laugh...But you haven’t heard everything. Let’s listen. You’ll hear more” (p. 102). At this prompting, Siddhartha heard the voices of the river merged into “Om.”

Chapter Twelve

1. How is Siddhartha's advice to Govinda reminiscent of Gotama Buddha's advice to Siddhartha? What is the significance of these similarities?

Both mention the misleading quality of words. Both warn against "seeking" in the sense that you don't see what's in front of you. Govinda, on two occasions, did not recognize Siddhartha. Both speak of knowledge—Siddhartha says that knowledge can be communicated but wisdom cannot, while Buddha emphasizes that his teachings are not meant to explain the world to "those who seek knowledge" (p. 34). The significance of these similarities is that Siddhartha has become like the Buddha; he understands the deceptive quality of words and that "seeking" is not finding.

2. Even though the Buddha forbade his followers from binding their hearts "to earthly things with love" (p. 110), Siddhartha says that love seems to be "the most important thing" (p. 110). How does Siddhartha explain the apparent contradiction? Interpret Siddhartha's explanation in your own words.

Siddhartha states, "I can't deny that my words about love seem to contradict Gotama's words. It's for this very reason that I mistrust words so much, because I know this contradiction is a deception" (p. 110).

In this sense, Siddhartha is referring to the way we individually experience the world and how it shapes our view of reality. For example, the word "hope" conjures different connotations in different people. Siddhartha's experience as a Samana caused him to view deprivation differently than other people. Everyone sees the world through his own particular lens, and that lens has been ground by individual experiences.

3. According to the novel, in what ways might inner peace be outwardly apparent? What do Govinda and Kamala both recognize in Siddhartha that was apparent in Vasudeva and the Buddha?

Govinda observes Siddhartha in Chapter 12: "a purity, a calmness, mirth, mildness, and holiness...shines out of his gaze, hands, skin, and hair" (p. 111).

Siddhartha observes Vasudeva end of Chapter 11: "Vasudeva's steps were full of peace . . . his head was filled with radiance . . . his whole body was filled with light" (p. 104)

Siddhartha observes the Buddha in Chapter 3: Every part of his body "bespoke peace, expressed perfection . . . with a light that did not fade, and with a peace that was intangible" (p. 30). "They heard his voice and it was also perfected, wholly calm and full of peace" (p. 31).

According to the story, inner peace can be identified by a peaceful radiance.

Siddhartha

Advanced Placement in English Literature and Composition Teaching Unit

Study Guide Student Copy

Chapter One

1. Find the epithet for Siddhartha. What does it suggest?
2. “Atman” is described as something that is “within this inner essence of his that was indestructible and one with the universe” (p. 13). Is there anything that is roughly equivalent to “Atman” in other world religions?
3. How old do you believe Siddhartha is from all information given in Chapter One?
4. What is the significance of Siddhartha’s name?
5. What is Govinda’s opinion of “ordinary Brahmins”? What is it about real Hindu society that leads to this possibility?
6. How is the restlessness that Siddhartha feels similar to that experienced by many young people? How is Siddhartha different?

7. What is the setting of the story?
8. What kinds of epithets are offered for Govinda? How do they characterize Govinda? What does this tell us about Govinda's literary function in the novel?
9. Interpret the sentence: "Siddhartha had started to cultivate the seed of discontent within himself" (p. 14). Why is Siddhartha discontented?
10. Why does Govinda ask Siddhartha whether his father will allow him to join the Samanas? What kind of life does Siddhartha live? Is it a hard or an easy life? Why would Siddhartha's father be opposed to such a wish?
11. Identify the paradox in the description of the Samanas and interpret its intended meaning. How does this description characterize the Samanas?
12. Hesse describes the Samanas as "jackals in the domain of mankind" (p. 17). What effect does this characterization have?

13. What figurative language is used repeatedly in the several paragraphs following the “Om is the bow” (p. 16) verse that Siddhartha repeats to himself? What effect does it have on the reader?
14. Siddhartha tells Govinda his plans to join the Samanas. He states, “Siddhartha will go to the Samanas. He will become a Samana” (p. 17). Siddhartha is speaking about himself in the third person. How is this related to the practice of traditional Buddhism?
15. Is Siddhartha’s estimate of his father as “a mere seeker, one who had thirst,” (p. 16) accurate? Is there any indication from the text that supports this assertion?
16. What reaction do you suppose Govinda received at home when he announced his intent to join the Samanas? How significant is it that Govinda accompanies Siddhartha, and what does this reveal about his character?
17. In Indian culture, it is typically the mother who passes on the spiritual knowledge in the family. Why do you think Hesse chose to emphasize the father in the story?

Chapter Two

1. “His goal was to stand open to the wonder of thoughts conceived in self-dissolution” (p. 21). How does Siddhartha’s goal of “self dissolution” relate to traditional Hinduism?
2. Why does Siddhartha fast, abstain from women, and withdraw completely from anything that provides him with comfort?
3. How does Siddhartha experience the “hazy intoxication of the cycle of existence” (p. 22) and to what end?
4. One of the criticisms offered about the Buddha was that he had no knowledge of the caste system. Explain how Buddha’s disregard for the caste system might be a point of criticism. Who might offer such criticism?
5. Why is learning Atman’s enemy?
6. Why is Siddhartha convinced that no one can teach him the way to perfection even before he meets the Buddha?

Chapter Three

1. What is suggested by Siddhartha's recognition of the Buddha while he has to be pointed out to Govinda?
2. Upon reaching the town where the Buddha resided, what understatement does Govinda make regarding enlightenment? What does this reveal about the character?
3. What information is given about the structures of Buddhism early in Chapter Three?
4. It is mentioned that Siddhartha had never loved a person as much as the Buddha. This is the first mention of Siddhartha loving anyone or anything. Why is it significant that Siddhartha feels more love for this person than either of his parents or Govinda?
5. Why does Hesse tell us about the Buddha's eating habits?

6. Why is the parting of Govinda and Siddhartha so painful for Govinda?
7. Before he leaves, Siddhartha takes the opportunity to speak with the Buddha and to share with him some of his thoughts on his (the Buddha's) doctrine. Siddhartha praises him for connecting everything in a perfect chain of related events (of cause and effect), but points out one exception. Explain Siddhartha's exception.
8. During their brief discussion, the Buddha mentions knowledge or wisdom twice to Siddhartha. The first time is in reference to the four noble truths and the eightfold path, "their goal is not to explain the world to those who seek knowledge" (p. 34). The second, "You know how to talk wisely, my friend. Be wary of too much wisdom!" (p. 34). What is the theme of the Buddha's advice to Siddhartha?
9. How has the Buddha given Siddhartha "himself"?

Chapter Four

1. In Siddhartha's pursuit of "the self" and salvation, how does "not knowing himself" act as a barrier to this goal?
2. In Chapter Four, Awakening, Siddhartha experiences "a profound feeling of awakening from long dreams" (p.38). In contrast to his time as a Samana, how is he "awakened" now?
3. What is Siddhartha's epiphany during this chapter?
4. In the first chapter, Siddhartha's father told him, "If you find blessedness in the woods, then come and teach me how to be blessed. If you find disappointment, then return once more and let us once again sacrifice to the gods together" (p. 19). Siddhartha considers returning but does not. Why?
5. "For many years, he had been without home and had felt nothing. Now he felt it" (p.39). Why? What has he lost?
6. Hesse makes use of the snake image repeatedly in this chapter. In literature, the snake often represents some foreboding or treachery. What possible foreboding or treachery can we anticipate in Siddhartha's future as indicated in Chapter Four?

Chapter Five

1. In the beginning of the chapter, Siddhartha is experiencing the world of Maya for the first time. According to Hinduism, what is Maya and how is it a barrier to salvation?
2. What realization does Siddhartha experience regarding the world of thought and the world of the senses?
3. Describe the dream Siddhartha has while staying the night at the ferryman's hut. Interpret its literal and implied meaning as well as its possible symbolic meaning.
4. On his way into town, Siddhartha encounters a young woman who offers him sex. Why does Siddhartha refuse her advances and instead seek out a prostitute? What is the difference between the two, and how is this interaction symbolic?
5. What is the significance of the names Kamala and Kamaswami?

6. When Siddhartha left the Buddha, he was adamant about his desire to leave behind teachers and teachings, but he almost immediately enlists two new teachers, Kamala and Kamaswami. How do you suppose Siddhartha would explain this apparent contradiction?
7. When Siddhartha takes leave of the ferryman, he concludes that the ferryman is like Govinda: “They are all submissive, they all want to be friends, happily obeying and not thinking much. People are all like children” (p. 48). Is there any indication that Siddhartha is underestimating the ferryman?
8. What is the “charming omen” with which Siddhartha enters the city, and how does it influence his next steps?
9. What word does Siddhartha use repeatedly in his description of Kamala that may suggest a future relationship as his teacher? Where else in the book has there been another physical description of a character in such detail? Why is it significant again here?
10. Why, when Siddhartha first attempts to meet Kamala, does he direct the servant to introduce him as a “young Brahmin?”

Chapter Six

1. Kamala tells Siddhartha, “You’ve remained a Samana. You still don’t love me; you love nobody.” Siddhartha, in turn, tells Kamala, “You also do not love—how else could you practice love as a craft?” (p. 61). What is it that Siddhartha and Kamala lack or have that makes them unable to love? What is it about the child-like people that allow them to love?
2. In Chapter Six, Siddhartha visits a village to buy grain, only to arrive and find the grain bought and sold to another merchant. Instead of doing what Kamaswami would have wished and come straight back, Siddhartha stays and visits with the people of the town. In this sense, how is Siddhartha conducting “better business” than Kamaswami?
3. Siddhartha tells Kamala that, like him, she has an inner peace and refuge to which she can go at any time. Kamala incorrectly states that this is “cleverness,” but as Siddhartha points out, cleverness has nothing to do with it. Kamaswami is clever, but has no refuge inside himself. What is this inner refuge?
4. Even though Siddhartha, according to Kamaswami, “is no proper merchant and will never be one” (p. 57), he is, nonetheless, successful. Likewise, Kamala comments that he is “the best lover” she “ever saw” (p. 61). Why is this significant in relation to traditional Hinduism?
5. What is the “dying voice which admonished him with whispers, lamented softly” (p. 60)? Why is the dying of this voice significant?

Chapter Seven

1. What is Siddhartha's inner voice? Is it the same as, or similar to, his conscience? Compare and contrast the two.

2. What is the "disease of the soul which rich people have" (p. 65)?

3. Even though Siddhartha had "gradually assumed something of the child-like people's ways for his own," (p. 64) he is more miserable than ever before. Why?

4. Why did Kamaswami send out searchers for Siddhartha, while Kamala did not have anyone look for him? Why did Kamala expect him to disappear?

5. How is Siddhartha's addiction to gambling ironic?
6. Siddhartha's dream of the songbird and Kamala's later release of the bird are both highly symbolic. Explain the meaning of the dream and the release.
7. Explain the concept of Samsara as demonstrated by the book. How did it affect Siddhartha?
8. Siddhartha observes the signs of Kamala's aging: "under her eyes and next to the corners of the mouth he read . . . a horrible inscription of small lines, slight grooves" (p. 66). "With a sigh, he said farewell to her while his soul was full of hesitation and hidden anxiety" (p. 66). Some mistakenly attribute Siddhartha's departure to the dream of the songbird, but Siddhartha had already decided to leave Kamala before he had the dream. Why? Was he afraid of death? Explain your answer.

Chapter Eight

1. At this point in the book, Siddhartha “was full of disgust, full of suffering, full of death, until nothing in the world allured him, gave him joy, or comforted him” (p. 71). Compare this with the description of life with the Samanas. “Everything was a lie, everything stank, everything stank of lies, everything feigned meaning and happiness and beauty, and yet everything was decaying while nobody acknowledged the fact. The world tasted bitter; life was agony” (p. 21) Both seem quite similar, yet Siddhartha hadn’t considered suicide after leaving the Samanas. How is Siddhartha’s attitude and situation different now from before?
2. How did the “Om” save Siddhartha from suicide? What would have happened if his suicide attempt had been successful?
3. How did the meeting between Siddhartha and Govinda by the river serve a structural purpose within the novel? What do we learn of Govinda?
4. After Siddhartha’s long sleep by the river, he awoke with a new outlook and feeling about the world. What was this feeling and why was he feeling it now?
5. How does Siddhartha’s decision to stay by the river foreshadow the character of his future days?

Chapter Nine

1. This chapter is entitled, *The Ferryman*. How is the title of the chapter and Vasudeva's occupation symbolic to Siddhartha at this point in his journey?
2. Why do some people mistake Siddhartha and Vasudeva for brothers?
3. Explain the metaphor, "I looked at my life and found that it also was a river" (p. 84). What insight did Siddhartha gain from this realization?
4. Explain the theme of the passage below:

"No, there were no teachings that a person who truly sought and wanted to find could accept. But the one who had already found could approve of any teachings, every path and goal" (p. 86).
5. Explain how Siddhartha's observations of Kamala as she lay dying reinforced his belief that time does not exist.
6. Vasudeva observes, "You have experienced suffering...but I see that no sadness has entered your heart" (p. 89). Why has no sadness entered Siddhartha's heart?
7. Approximately how old is Siddhartha as he begins his life as a ferryman, and which of the Four Life Stages of Hinduism would Siddhartha now be entering?

Chapter Ten

1. Why does Siddhartha prefer “the suffering and worries of love over happiness and joy without the boy” (p. 92)? Is this the “right effort” for Siddhartha or is he wasting his time? Explain your answer.
2. Vasudeva asks the river what to do about Siddhartha’s son. In response, the river laughs. What is the river laughing at? What realization must Siddhartha come to? Why is this situation ironic?
3. Explain Vasudeva’s statement about Siddhartha and his son: “Don’t you shackle him with your love? Don’t you, every day, make him feel inferior, and make it harder on him with your kindness and patience?” (pp. 92-93).
4. After all of Siddhartha’s efforts, his son runs away in the end. What does Siddhartha gain/lose through the whole experience?
5. What did Siddhartha accomplish by following his son back to Kamala’s pleasure garden?
6. What is the state of Siddhartha’s “wound” at the close of the chapter? What are the possible outcomes and what are the consequences of each outcome?
7. At the end of the chapter, how does Vasudeva act as Siddhartha’s “guru”?

Chapter Eleven

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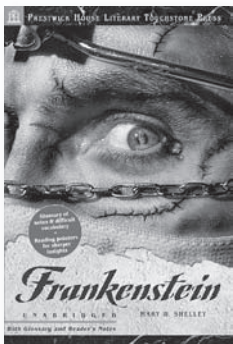
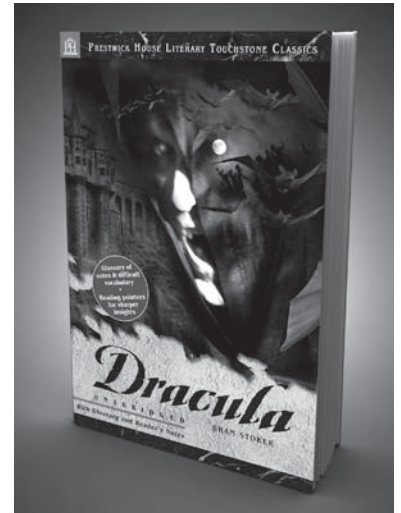
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Shipping 12% S&H (\$6.00 minimum) \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Shipping & Handling

For orders of \$50.00 or less, please add \$6.00 for shipping and handling charges. For orders from \$50.01 to \$799.99 add 12%. For orders of \$800.00 and more, add 10%.

Delivery Service

Most orders are shipped FedEx and you can expect delivery within 7-10 working days. Items in stock are usually shipped within one working day of receiving your order.

Expedited Delivery

for expedited delivery ask about the following options:

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- 2nd day air
- 3 Day Select