



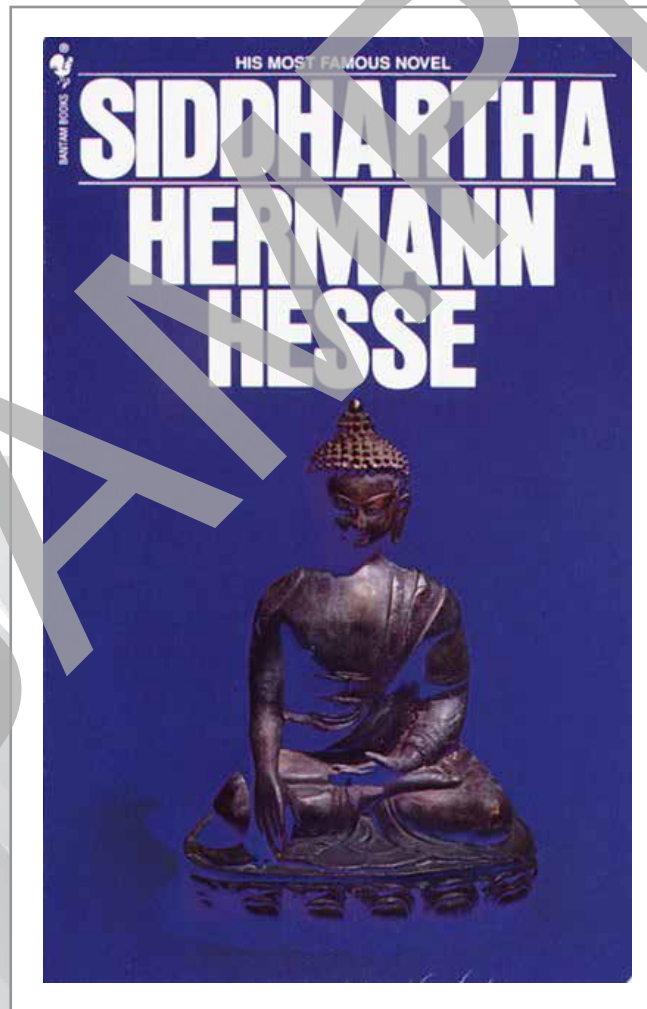
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 9-12

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

Siddhartha

Hermann Hesse



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

Siddhartha

Hermann Hesse

TEACHER GUIDE

NOTE:

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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Skills and Strategies

Writing

Poetry, compare/contrast,
sequel, movie critique

Vocabulary

Target words, definitions,
application

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, drama

Thinking

Research, compare/contrast,
analysis, current events

Literary Elements

Characterization, simile,
symbolism, metaphor,
allusion, plot development,
setting, theme

Comprehension

Predictions, cause/effect

Fine Arts

Art—collage, sketch;
Drama—skit, monologue;
Music—ballad

Genre: fiction

Setting: India

Date: approximately 500 B.C. (based on beginning of Buddhism)

Theme: self-discovery and knowledge; spiritual quest

Point-of-View: third-person omniscient

Conflict: person vs. self

Summary

Siddhartha is the story of a young man's spiritual quest. The protagonist, Siddhartha, leaves his home in search of his Self. He joins the ascetic Samanas and begins a life of meditation and self-denial. He leaves the Samanas after becoming bored and restless. He meets the Buddha and, although impressed with the man, rejects his teachings. During the next phase of his search, Siddhartha seeks fulfillment in fleshly pleasures and realms of business. During this time, he fathers a son. Failing to find the satisfaction for which he longs, he returns to his original quest. As he waits by a river, contemplating suicide, the ferryman, Vasudeva, appears to remind him that he must search for the meaning of life within himself. Siddhartha's son lives with him briefly after the death of his mother, but he rejects his father's values and lifestyle. Siddhartha's spiritual journey is complete when he, now an old man, looks into the river and sees the unity of all things.

Characters

Siddhartha: protagonist; handsome, intelligent Brahmin's son; searching for Self

Govinda: Siddhartha's best friend; joins him at first but eventually becomes a Buddhist monk

Siddhartha Gautama Sakyamuni (the Buddha): "The Illustrious One"; presented as a man, with emphasis on his reality, his humanity, and his peacefulness

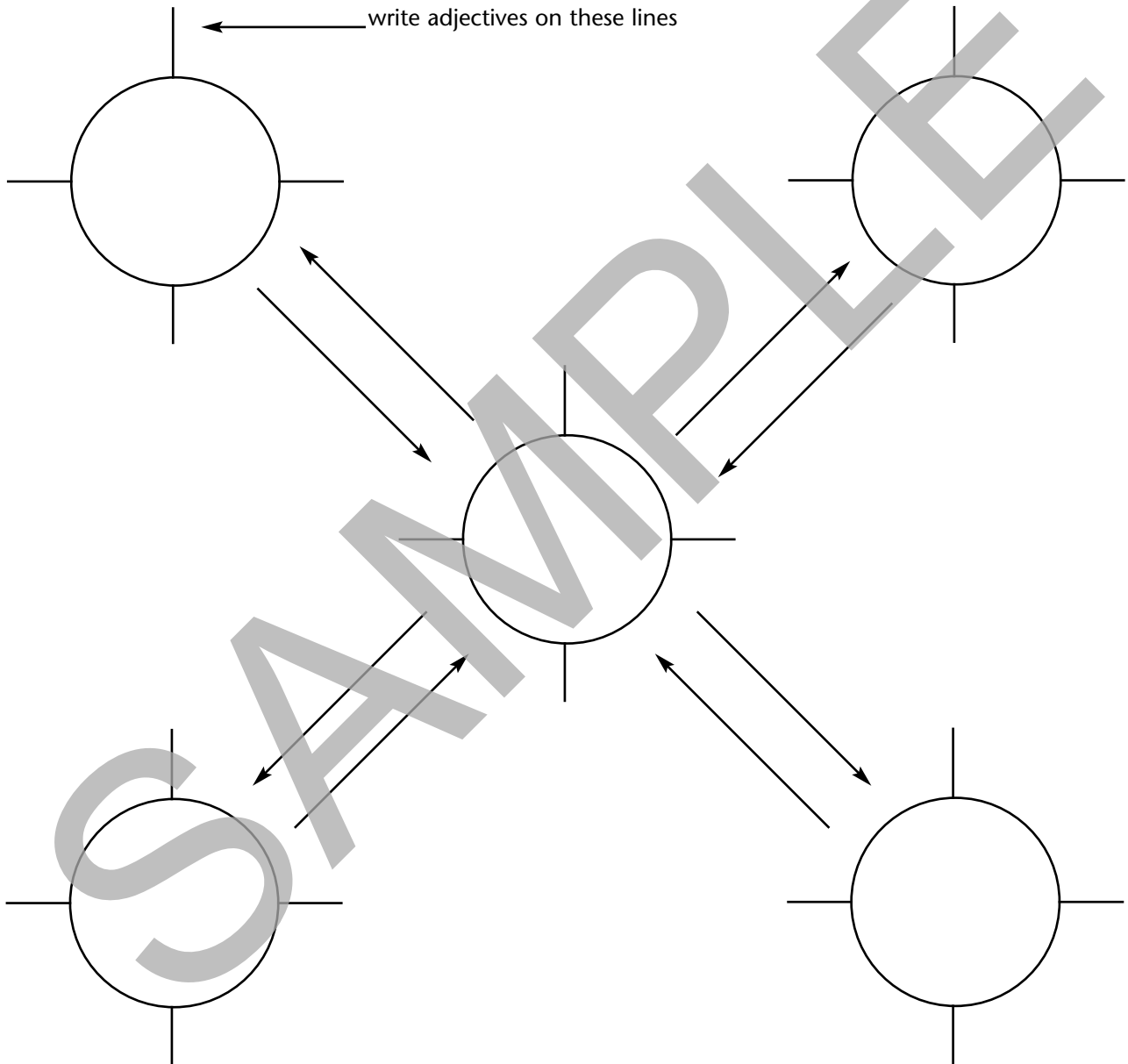
Kamala: courtesan (highly-placed prostitute) with whom Siddhartha falls in love; mother of his son

Vasudeva: ferryman; becomes Siddhartha's spiritual guide

Siddhartha's son: eleven years old; spoiled "mother's boy"; rebels against his father's lifestyle and values

Sociogram

Directions: Write the name of a different character in each circle. On the spokes surrounding each character's name, write several adjectives that describe that character. On the arrows joining one character to another, write a description of the relationship between the two characters. How does one character influence the other?



“The Brahmin’s Son,” Pages 3-12

Siddhartha and his best friend, Govinda, are introduced. Siddhartha begins his search for his Self. With his father’s reluctant approval, he leaves his home, and he and Govinda join the Samanas.

Vocabulary

ablutions (3)	contemplation (3)	meditation (3)	vocation (4)
avaricious (4)	atonement (5)	emanating (5)	transient (6)
ascetics (9)			

Discussion Questions

1. Identify Siddhartha and Govinda and discuss their relationship. (*Siddhartha—strong, handsome, intelligent, and thirsty for knowledge—is the Brahmin’s son. His mother and father are proud of him. Govinda, also a Brahmin’s son, is his best friend. He loves Siddhartha more than anyone else and envisions the great man he will become. pp. 3-4*)
2. Discuss Siddhartha’s problem. For what is he searching? Why? (*Problem: he is unhappy, with no joy in his heart, feels he has learned all the Brahmins can teach him; Search: for his Self because that is the only thing worth seeking and he must quench his eternal thirst. pp. 5-8*)
3. Discuss Siddhartha’s decision and its impact on his father; on Govinda. (*He decides to join the Samanas, a group of wandering ascetics. His father sits silent and motionless at first, then becomes displeased and doesn’t want to hear Siddhartha’s request again. Only after observing Siddhartha’s stoic refusal to accept “no” as an answer does he consent. Govinda becomes pale and distressed and announces that he, too, will join the Samanas. pp. 9-12*)
4. Analyze the symbolism of his father’s realization that Siddhartha “had already left him.” (*His father realizes that, in his heart and mind, Siddhartha has already left and, therefore, can no longer remain at home. He tells his son to become a Samana and, if he finds what he is searching for, to come back and teach it to him. If he finds disillusionment, return and they will offer sacrifices to the gods together. p. 12*)

Supplementary Activities

1. Have students paraphrase for today’s teenagers the instructions Siddhartha’s father gives him. Note universality of the father’s desire for Siddhartha to return home from his search, regardless of his success or failure (p. 12).
2. Analyze the literary devices: **Similes**—sages’ language pure as honey collected by the bees (p. 7); he [Govinda] became as pale as a dried banana skin (p. 9); **Metaphors**—Om: the bow; the arrow: the soul (p. 8); Samanas: lean jackals in the world of men (p. 9)

“With the Samanas,” Pages 13-24

Siddhartha and Govinda join the Samanas and begin a life of self-denial. Siddhartha becomes disillusioned. The two men leave the Samanas to search for the Buddha.

Vocabulary

contempt (13)

venerableness (19)

onerous (16)

mortification (21)

palliative (17)

austere (18)

Discussion Questions

1. Examine the changes in Siddhartha following his alliance with the Samanas. What is his one goal and what does he do to attain that goal? Discuss whether or not he is successful in his quest. *(He gives away all his clothes except his loincloth and one cloak. He eats only once a day and fasts for periods ranging from 14 to 28 days. He becomes emaciated, begins to have strange dreams, and looks with contempt at “worldly” scenes. His one goal is to become empty and let Self die, which he hopes to attain through self-sacrifice and self-denial, including meditation and conquering pain through enduring hunger, thirst, and fatigue. In spite of meditation and self-denial, however, he inevitably finds his Self again. pp. 13-16)*
2. Analyze Siddhartha’s disillusionment with the Samanas in the search for his Self. *(He feels that what he has learned from the Samanas he could have learned in places of vice such as prostitution and gambling. He believes meditation to be only a temporary escape from Self and that he is still far from wisdom and salvation. pp. 16-17)*
3. Contrast Siddhartha’s and Govinda’s views of their spiritual journey. *(Siddhartha: they are going in circles, never attaining knowledge or salvation, and he believes none of the Samanas will attain Nirvana. Govinda: they have learned much, they are going upward in their search, Siddhartha’s words trouble him, and they must not question the holiness of the Samanas. pp. 17-19)*
4. Discuss the description of Buddha and his effect on his world. *(Reports say he has conquered in himself the sorrow of the world and has brought to a standstill the cycle of rebirth. He wanders through the country, preaching his message and enlisting disciples. Two opinions emerge: (1) he is a wise benefactor who performs wonders, speaks with the gods, and conquers the devil; (2) he is an idle fraud who indulges in high living, scorns the sacrifices, and is unlearned in self-sacrifice. Rumors evoke hope in a sick world, but the eldest Saman rejects positive accounts of Buddha. pp. 20-21)*
5. Discuss Govinda’s hope and Siddhartha’s skepticism. *(Govinda: longs to hear teachings of Buddha, to learn from the “Perfect One”; Siddhartha: mocks Govinda’s desire to search for a “new path”, has little faith in teachers and distrusts learning; feels the best “fruit” of Buddha is his and Govinda’s enticement to leave the Samanas. pp. 22-23)*
6. Analyze what convinces Govinda that Siddhartha has absorbed the Samanas’ teachings. *(Siddhartha is able to conquer the eldest Samana’s thoughts and turn his anger into blessings and good wishes as they prepare to leave the Samanas. pp. 23-24)*