



UNION

Religious Worlds of New York • Curriculum Development Project

***Siddhartha* in Memphis**

Sammy Anzer, Kingsbury High School, Memphis, TN

Abstract

This curriculum project was designed to teach a literature unit on the novel, *Siddhartha*, written by Herman Hesse. This project will focus on the academic aspects of *Siddhartha* and include the lived religion aspect of a guest speaker. The unit was designed specifically for 9-10th grade high school students in the Title I schools of Memphis, Tennessee. Because of the practices of the school district, this unit needs to be heavily based on standards, adjusted for a 3 week maximum instruction, have a writing task as the cumulative assessment and because of a lack of diversity must assume no prior knowledge on behalf of the students.

Rationale

My hope for the curriculum project is that students can meaningfully engage with a style of thought, a tradition and people that are not their own. The way I can achieve that is by documenting their opinions with an anticipation guide, introducing them to the social and historical aspects of the formation of Buddhism and provide a meaningful human interaction for them through a guest speaker. The demographic of students served in Shelby county Schools are predominantly African American and Latino and have limited interactions with religions and traditions outside of Christianity or to a lesser extent the Abrahamic traditions. Because of this students will need to have completed the text and practice interview questions with accountable talk stems on each other before asking screened questions to the visiting representative for Buddhism. Students will combine standards by citing evidence from the text of *Siddhartha* to engage with the speaker.

Schedule

Note: Links to the materials and other resources are embedded into the text

Week 1- Anticipation guide, non-fiction strand & virtual temple visit, accountable talk introduction/reinforcement and by the end of the week the first half of first part of *Siddhartha* should be completed

Material

[Guest speaker](#)

[Buddhist temple virtual tour: Bagan Myanmar](#)

[Buddhist temple field trip](#)

[Audiobook](#)

[Full text](#)

[General](#)

[Siddhartha specific](#)

Anticipation guide

[Questions](#)

[Happiness](#)

[Materialism](#)

Non-fiction strand

[Carbon dating in a Buddhist temple](#)

[Biography of the Buddha](#)

[Spread of Buddhism](#)

[Introducing Herman Hesse](#)

[Preview difficult vocabulary](#)

[Accountable Talk](#)

Week 2- Second half of first part & first half of second part

Comparative assignment

[Into the Wild](#)

Week 3- Second half of second part, prewriting strategies, discussion, Optional viewing of Into the Wild

Essay prompts

1. Discuss the ways Siddhartha attempts to attain spiritual enlightenment. Which approaches are successful? Which ones are not successful, and which ones have limited effectiveness? Write an argumentative essay where you cite at least three pieces of specific evidence to support your point.
2. A theme is the main point of a story or the author's message about life that they convey to the reader. Define a major theme found in Siddhartha and identify at least three symbols in the novel that convey the theme you've selected through analysis and citation of at least three pieces of specific evidence.
3. Siddhartha offers commentary on a number of issues: relationships, desire, wisdom and teaching to name a few. Identify a subject that Hesse chose to study and respond to it – either affirming or rejecting Hesse's argument through analysis and citation of at least three pieces of specific evidence. For example, Siddhartha claims that wisdom cannot be taught; either agree or disagree with this, and prove why your view is correct using evidence from *Siddhartha*.

Standards

RL 10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL 10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL 10.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

RL10.6 Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.

RL 10.7 7. Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden's "Musée des Beaux Arts" and Breughel's "Landscape with the Fall of Icarus").

RI 10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

For information about the Religious Worlds of New York summer institute for teachers, and more resources to enrich your teaching on religious diversity, see: www.religiousworldsnyc.org.