

Siddhartha Discussion Guide
**** Answer in complete sentences! ****

Part I: pp. 3-42 (Maya)

Chapter 1

1. A central theme in the novella is the conflict between father and son. How realistically does Hesse describe the relationship between Siddhartha and his parents and the tensions involved when a young man leaves home?

Chapter 2

4. Note the extended simile beginning on page twenty: "Just as when a country..." The description of Buddha and his reception by the people conveys both uncertainty and paradox (contradictory ideas that still make sense). Note there are many rumors about Buddha and he has "enemies and doubters" as well as followers who believe he may "lead" the world. List the differing opinions from the novella about Buddha here.

5. Compare and contrast Siddhartha's departure from the Samanas with his departure from his father.

Chapters 3 and 4

6. On pages thirty-five to thirty-six, Hesse shares Siddhartha's response to his conversation with Buddha. a. What does Buddha's smile make Siddhartha realize and respect about Buddha? b. What has Buddha taken from Siddhartha and given to Siddhartha?

3. During the years Hesse was writing the novel (1919-1922), Mahatma Gandhi was leading the first of several nonviolent resistance movements against British rule in India. Are there any elements in this first chapter that suggest that Hesse may have been influenced by Gandhian tactics?

7. Two famous sayings from Western traditions are "Know thyself" (Ancient Greece) and "What will a man gain by winning the whole world at the cost of his true self?" (Christianity, Bible: Luke 9:25). How would you apply these sayings to Siddhartha's situation in the fourth chapter?