



FINDING NIRVANA: SIDDHARTHA PERSONALIZED

WRITING SITUATION:

In *The Power of Myth*, Joseph Campbell speaks of the hero's adventure as an archetype for our times. It is this "connecting thread", and the idea of the hero lurking within each of us, that you will explore in a personal narrative essay comparing your life's journey in search of "Nirvana" as a teenager with that of Siddhartha, the central character in Herman Hesse's novel of the same name.

Metaphorically speaking, human life is a quest to achieve Nirvana (supreme bliss). While this state may represent something uniquely different to each one of us, like Siddhartha, our search for Nirvana in our daily lives is often met with challenges, frustrations, and possibly only small glimpses of the level of personal contentment we ultimately hope to find in life.

WRITING DIRECTIONS:

As you look toward your future life as a teenager and the eventual independence of adulthood, what do you hope to accomplish by the end of high school in order to achieve happiness and a sense of personal satisfaction? Through a personal narrative essay, describe your own personal quest toward Nirvana and explain the various **paths, people, and outlets** you have explored and important decisions you have made or will make to achieve it.

First, come up with your own personal and concrete definition of Nirvana, a state of personal contentment that you hope to achieve by the time you leave high school. Consider what Nirvana will feel like as well as the tangible goals you think you must reach or achieve in order to experience Nirvana. Perhaps you have already found it and are ready to reveal your "secret" to the rest of the world.

Second, consider yourself as the **hero archetype** and identify the specific personal goals toward achieving Nirvana that you are in complete control of (e.g., sports, academics, entertainment).

Third, identify challenges or obstacles you have faced or will face due to circumstances that are beyond your control (e.g., divine intervention, parental pressures, peer influences, etc.).

Finally, draw specific connections between your life and the novel *Siddhartha* (e.g., characters, events, symbols, learning experiences, etc.). For example, consider the way in which Siddhartha's parents and his upbringing had an impact on his life decisions and the way your parents have or have not influenced your future plans. You will use the attached brainstorming sheet to note key events/characters/symbols in the book, along with your conversational roundtables, to draw parallels to your own life.



SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS AND FORMATTING YOUR PAPER

Your personal narrative essay should be a minimum of two pages in length, typed, double-spaced, using 12pt font. Your paper's header, heading, title, margins, and spacing should all adhere to the MLA format. Since this is a personal essay, you should write in the first person. Also, use descriptive language and vivid verbs to make your story come alive and clearly reveal the insight you have gained about life through your personal experiences. See the rubric for specific details on how your paper will be graded.

RESOURCES:

- **HANDOUTS:**
 - Hayakawa's Ladder of Abstractions
 - Hero's Journey Archetype
 - "THE SIX ARCHETYPES WE LIVE BY" CAROL PEARSON, FROM *THE HEROIC JOURNEY*
 - "THE NINE PERSONALITY TYPES" FROM *THE WISDOM OF THE ENNEAGRAM*, DON RISO AND RUSS HUDSON
 - Conversational Roundtables: chapters 1-4, 5-8, 9-12
 - Sagacity: Habits of Mind
- **NOTES:** Image Grammar
- **NOTES:** Lectures on *Siddhartha* Intro, Religious Contexts
- **ANNOTATIONS:** the novel *Siddhartha*; background information packet
- **ONLINE:** Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

BRAINSTORMING ORGANIZER FOR THE PERSONAL NARRATIVE ESSAY

AT HOME OR DURING CLASS, TAKE TIME TO RECORD PERSONAL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN MAJOR EVENTS, OR SYMBOLS IN THE NOVEL AND IN YOUR OWN LIFE.

KEY EVENTS / CHARACTERS / SYMBOLS IN <i>SIDDHARTHA</i>	PERSONAL CONNECTIONS TO MY LIFE
1. THE BRAHMIN'S SON	1.
2. WITH THE SAMANAS	2.
3. GOTAMA	3.
4. AWAKENING	4.
5. KAMALA	5.
6. AMONGST THE PEOPLE	6.
7. SAMSARA	7.
8. BY THE RIVER	8.
9. THE FERRYMAN	9.
10. THE SON	10.
11. OM	11.
12. GOVINDA	12.