

Instructions: Draw an image to represent the stages of the story. You will then need to put the story into your own words using the images as reference points.

The Story of Buddha's life and enlightenment

Siddhartha Gautama was born into a privileged life of royalty, in Lumbini, where he led a sheltered upbringing that shielded him from the suffering of others in the community.

Siddhartha was born into a Hindu family, and when he was old enough he had an arranged marriage before fathering a child.

After the birth of his child, Siddhartha decided to leave the palace confines where he saw much suffering, pain and misery amongst the people of Lumbini.

While travelling the roads outside of the palace walls Siddhartha saw an old man and soon realised that people get old.

Siddhartha later saw a sick man, which made him realise people were susceptible to illness and disease.

On a third trip Siddhartha saw a corpse being carried through the streets. On sight of the corpse, he also noticed the pain and suffering endured by the deceased's loved ones.

On his fourth venture from the palace Siddhartha met a monk. He began to contemplate the overcoming of suffering as this holy man seemed content and at peace with the world.



Siddhartha, troubled by what he saw and contemplating suffering, decided to leave the palace while his wife and child were sleeping. He knew he could not bear to leave them while they were awake.

After leaving the palace Siddhartha was living as a homeless holy man, travelling around in search for the ultimate answers to overcoming more of the suffering he continued to encounter.

Siddhartha met an Indian ascetic who encouraged him to lead a life of extreme self-denial and discipline. He is said to have limited himself to one grain of rice a day.

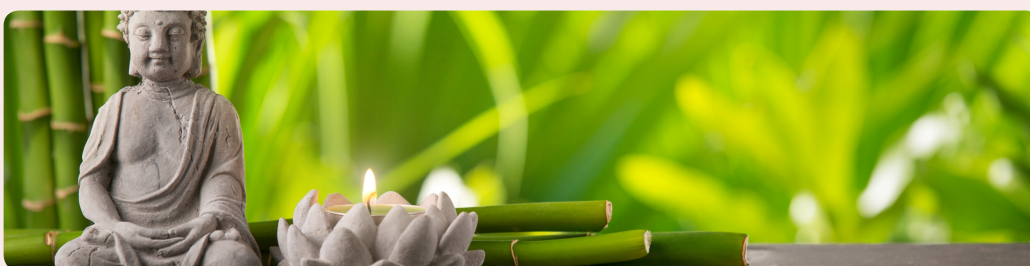
Siddhartha also meditated while in his state of self-denial but concluded that in themselves the highest meditative states were not enough.

After six years of living this lifestyle Siddhartha abandoned the extreme self-denial but would not turn to his life of luxury. Instead, he decided to pursue the middle way - neither luxury nor poverty.

One day, while sitting beneath the Bodhi tree, Siddhartha became deeply absorbed in meditation. He reflected on his experience of life determined to penetrate its truth.

While sat here, he finally reached enlightenment and became the Buddha.

He stayed at Bodhgaya for seven weeks pondering his future. He wondered whether he should become a religious teacher but was deterred by the difficulty of communicating the profound realisation he had attained.



Legend states that, at first, the Buddha was happy to dwell in the state of enlightenment, but Brahma, the king of the gods, asked that he should share his understanding with others.

The Buddha set on the road for Benares to find the five who turned their back on him when he rejected the path of asceticism. After some hesitation, and once they noticed the change in him, the five welcomed him back.

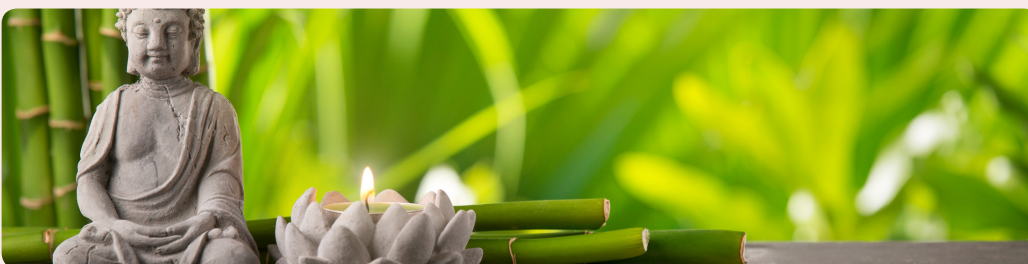
Buddha taught his first sermon, to be set as a discourse called 'Setting in Motion the Wheel of Dharma' which contains the essential teachings of Buddhism; the Four Noble Truths.

After hearing the sermon, the five men soon caught a glimpse of the truth and were subsequently ordained as bhikkhus in a simple ceremony. Upon hearing the Buddha's second sermon, the bhikkhus reached enlightenment.

Much of the Buddha's later life was spent travelling on foot through the towns and villages of North India, teaching the middle path to various audiences. The number of followers grew as a result.

The Buddha travelled on foot until he was 80 when his health began to fail him. It was at this time that a successor was discussed, and through conversations with his cousin, Ananda, he stated the dharma and Vinaya, the code of rules for monastic life, were to lead the Order. Not a human successor.

Buddha called the monks together and asked them if they had any more questions, none of them asked him anything and so it was felt his teachings were fully explained.



At this gathering, Buddha said “decay is inherent in all things: be sure to strive with clarity of mind”. While lying on his right side, between two Sal trees, he passed through several levels of meditative trance before entering final nirvana.

Before his death, Buddha instructed his followers that he was to be cremated and his ashes were to be enshrined in a bell shaped tower, known as a stupa, that could be used as a site of offerings and devotion.



Extension

Once you have drawn your images you can cut them out and test your friends to see if they can put the story into the correct order. Or have a go at the tasks below:

1. Highlight words and key terms that are new to you and create a glossary. You can research these using a dictionary, the internet or reference books.
2. What do you think was the most important part of the story and why?
3. Explain what message the conversation with Ananda teaches a follower.
4. Explain the significance of Siddhartha's early life in relation to his becoming the Buddha.

Questions to consider (focusing on The Four Sights):

1. What 3 sights might you see that you think demonstrate suffering in society today? Give reasons for your answers.
2. The Prince saw a Holy Man who looked at peace despite the suffering and pain in the world around him. What sight might you see that you think could offer a sense of “hope”? Give reasons for your answer.
3. Upon seeing the holy man, the Prince cut off his hair, swapped his robes and bade a silent farewell to his wife and small child as he vowed not to return to the palace. Think of reasons why some may believe this was a selfish decision on his behalf and one reason why others may consider it to be a selfless act on his behalf. Give reasons to support your answers.
4. The Prince left behind a wife and a young son named Rahula. One translation of this name is “fetters” or “chains”. What do you think is the significance in this choice of name? What do you think the name infers about the Prince's state of mind at the time?