Introduction:

This text set is meant for use in 9th grade World History I for the SOL unit on Buddhism. Eight text set items (seven books and one documentary) represent different aspects of Buddhism. Siddhartha Gautama, an Indian prince, shed his title and became a monk. He started the religion of Buddhism. Characteristics include The Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. Buddhism spread through Asia with the help of Asoka. Tibet, China, India and Japan are just a few countries known for practicing Buddhism. This text set focuses on Siddhartha Gautama as a person and as the creator of Buddhism, the spread of Buddhism and the characteristics of the religion. It also focuses on the geography of Buddhist Asia, Buddhist culture and several primary documents written by Buddhists. The point of this text set is to help students understand what Buddhism is and how it came to be.

This text set will teach students about Buddhism through careful reading of the books. Primary documents (like in the Teachings of the Buddha) and fables from Buddha Stories will help students understand what Buddhists believe. Buddhist Inspirations and Introducing Buddha will help students to understand how Buddhism was established as a religion, some of its beliefs and how it spread. Journey Into Buddhism will show students some important geographical landmarks in Buddhist Asia and give them a picture of Buddhist culture. Buddha or Bust and Zen and the Art of Faking It both bring Buddhism into the 21st century. Each discusses Buddhism in relation to life today. Buddha: A Story of Enlightenment discusses Siddhartha Gautama both as a person and as the Buddha. Together, these books will give the students a better understanding about what Buddhism really is.

Note on the Readability Sections:

Where the Flesch-Kincaid grading scale has been used- selections from at least five parts of the book have been typed in to the computer and the Spelling and Grammar tool has figured up the readability.

Where the Fry Readability Graph has been used - for shorter books, I used three selections of 100 words and for longer books, I used at least five selections of 100 words to figure up readability.

SOL Connection is on the next page.
1. Teachings of the Buddha
   Grade: Varies
   Poetry Anthology

A) Introduction and Summary:

Teachings of Buddha is a book made up of poems from the time of Buddha to the present. These poems help students to achieve the essential skill to “interpret primary and secondary sources to make generalizations” from SOL Standard WHI.4d. The book also contains an Editor’s Preface which briefly outlines how Buddhism was started and the continuation of the religion. For students, it is an easy-to-understand explanation of the beginning of Buddhism.

The book starts off with an Editor’s Preface that gives a brief accounting of the start and continuation of Buddhism. It is short, to the point, and informative. The book consists of many passages written in either poetry or paragraph form. Most could be considered poems, while others could be called directions for Buddhist thinking. These passages vary in the subjects that they cover; the subjects of wakefulness, virtue, the heart and practice of meditation are all covered within the book. These poems, written by Buddhists, offer a look at the characteristics of Buddhism.

B) Rationale:

This text will engage students because it is completely different from the texts that they are expected to read for school. This book is mostly written in poetic form. Reluctant learners may be engaged because this text is so different. The poems are mostly short and either tell a story or share some insight into the matter of life. Since most of these articles are short, the students do not have to spend a lot of time reading through dense material. The shortness of the article will help to encourage students to read it. Hopefully, the students will find the articles interesting enough to think about them. All students may be engaged because this text is about an interesting topic and they will get to think in philosophical and analytical ways about the reading.

C) Usage of Text:

This text could be used in two different ways. The Editor’s preface is written so that it is very understandable. Students could be given this to read this on their own at the beginning of the Buddhism unit, either in class or at home. This building of background knowledge would be part of the preparation step in PAR. It would give them a simple understanding of how Buddhism started. The articles within the book vary in readability. Students would be able to understand some, but some may be too complex or different in language for the students to understand. It would be best to have a read-aloud. This way articles could be chosen that would enhance learning, but I could help the students in understanding the meaning. Also, the variety of articles within the book would allow for making changes in the articles used based on the abilities and interests
of the students in each class. The articles within the book could be used during the Assistance step of PAR.

D) Readability:
According to The Flesch-Kincaid grade scale, the Editor’s Preface to the book is on the grade level of 8.5. There are also some words dealing with Buddhism that need to be defined for the students before reading. The Preface should most likely be read during class or with the help of a parent, so that help is available if the students need it. The poems within the book differ in grade level. Using the Flesch-Kincaid grade scale on a small sample of poems, I found levels ranging from 2.2 to 6.5 and 7.9. After distributing a cloze made up of a longer article to a fellow student, I found that article to be in her frustration level. These articles can be chosen for classes based on the estimated reading level of the class and can be adjusted based on need.

According to Bader’s Textbook Analysis, Teachings of the Buddha’s readability level for linguistic factors and writing style are average. Some passages introduce unfamiliar vocabulary words. Conceptual factors range from excellent to average. Each passage is about a main idea and each passage develops its own main idea. Organization and format are hard to analyze because the book is made up of passages from different authors and time periods; each passage is organized in a different way.

E) Reference:

2. Buddha Stories
   Grade: 5
   Moral Tales
   A) Introduction and Summary:
   The book, Buddha Stories, is a book of moral tales/fables. It also contains beautiful Buddhist artwork. This book helps to answer the SOL STANDARD WHI.4d essential question, “How did Buddhism spread?” One way that Buddhism spread is through oral stories, like the ones in this book. The artwork throughout the book also illustrates the Buddhist painting style; the art is based on a style from 600 A.D..

   This book is made up of 11 Buddhist fables, each with words of wisdom beneath the story. These stories were originally told by Buddha 2500 years ago and have been passed down since that time. They focus on the danger of lies, kindness, promises, deception, family and humility. These stories focus on what Buddha tried to teach his “children.” They illustrate Buddhist culture and artwork. Each story is about one page long.

   B) Rationale:
These stories will engage the most reluctant learners because these stories are like short fairy tales. They are similar to fables that children in the U.S. read. For this reason, students will feel more like they are reading a story for fun, but they will be learning about Buddhism at the same time. Also, since each story is relatively short, they are easy to get through. These stories will also be good for all students. Students can think beyond what is said in the text. Each story comes with words of wisdom at the bottom and each story has special meaning beyond the literal. More advanced students can still stay involved by focusing on the metaphorical meaning.

C) Usage of Text:

These stories could be read by the students either at home or in groups in the classroom. These stories would be good to read and answer questions about in the Reflection stage of PAR. Students could work together to answer questions like “What was the story actually saying?”, “What was the lesson?”, “What did we learn from the story?”, “Is the story important for us to learn?”, “Why have these stories survived for so long?” etc. Through reading these Buddha Stories, the students could decide for themselves the meaning of the stories and how important they are to Buddhism. We could even compare Buddhist fables to American ones to show similarities and differences across religion and culture.

D) Readability:

According to the Fry readability graph, this book is at the 5th grade reading level. Each story within this book is made up of easily decoded words. However, the stories are not just for child readers. Since the stories are fables, they appeal to a wider audience. This book is especially helpful for struggling readers, because it is something they will be more able to read. It is at a much lower reading level than the grade it will be taught at, so this book could very easily be read at home by students.

According to Bader’s Textbook Analysis, Buddha Stories is an excellent source. Linguistically, it uses easily decodable words with familiar vocabulary. Conceptually, each story presents one idea and develops it. The writing style is clear yet captivating. The format of the book also includes pictures that complement each story and provide examples of Buddhist art.

E) Reference:

3. Introducing Buddha
Grade: 10
Historical Graphic Novel

A) Introduction and Summary:

Introducing Buddha is a history book that appeals to a younger audience. It teaches facts, but uses comics to do so. The books helps with SOL Standard WHI.4d in that discusses the life of Siddhartha Gautama and his
founding of Buddhism, it introduces the Four Noble Truths and it discusses the spread of Buddhism and Asoka’s role in it.

This book covers the life of Siddhartha Gautama and the origins of Buddhism. It also covers what Buddha taught (including the Four Noble Truths), different branches of Buddhism and the spread of Buddhism. The entire book is made up of short passages in between pictures and comics. The layout of the book allows for visual learning.

B) Rationale:

This book will engage the reluctant reader because it is written in a style that is more appealing to adolescents. The arrangement of passages around pictures not only adds another way for the reader to decode the passage, but lets the reader get more involved in the story. Pictures can make reading more interesting. It will allow them to learn more fully about Buddhism because the information is portrayed in a way similar to that of books adolescents read for fun. This book will engage all students because of the unique and straightforward way it is written. Students will be able to glean information both from the written words and the pictures within the book.

C) Usage of Text:

This text could be used either inside or outside the classroom, depending on the reading levels of the students in my classroom. Students could be assigned different chapters to read (about Siddhartha’s life, the beginning of Buddhism, the spread of Buddhism and his teachings) and then summarize the chapters to the rest of the class. The illustrations could be used by the students to help tell the story to the rest of the class. This would be a good text for the Assistance stage of PAR because it allows students to build comprehension about Buddhism. It would also be good to use a KWL chart with this text because students can learn a lot about Buddhism very easily from this text.

D) Readability:

The Flesch-Kincaid grade scale put this book at grade level 10. However, I would have to disagree with this assessment. There are a few words that would need to be explained to the kids before reading the book. However, the passages are short and most of them do not appear to be written in confusing language. According to the Fry graph, this book is in the 14th grade level range. I think this is because the sentences are so long and certain words used over and over again (like Buddhism) have multiple syllables. These tests are labeling this on a higher grade level because of the sentence structure, not the content.

Using Bader’s Textbook Analysis Chart, Introducing Buddha received excellent scores in the areas of Conceptual factors, organizational factors, writing style and format. This book presents Buddhism from its beginning to today in a way that is understandable to students without a lot of prior background knowledge. The Buddhist concepts are developed through both
words and pictures. The chapters are clearly labeled, so the reader knows what each one is about. The writing style of the author is very straightforward and most of the words should be recognizable by the students (except for some Buddhist words which will be defined before reading). The book is an appropriate size and includes plenty of illustrations to aid the student in learning.

E) Reference:

4. **Buddha or Bust**
Grade: 8.9
Travel/Spiritual Journey/History

A) Introduction and Summary:
*Buddha or Bust* is a book written by a reporter who travels throughout Asia in order to understand what Buddhism is all about and to learn its history. This book helps teach the SOL Standard WHI.4d in that it helps to answer the Essential Question, “How did Buddhism spread?” by traveling and getting answers. He also takes in the cultures of the places he visits. Under Essential Skills, this book helps to “analyze the physical and cultural landscapes of the world and interpret the past.”

This book is about a reporter, Perry Garfinkel, who travels mostly around Asia to try and understand both the history and meaning of Buddhism. He includes both Buddhist quotes and his own observations. He even interviews the Dalai Lama. This book is about real experiences and real people. It is interesting because while reading, it feels like he is just having a conversation with you. His anecdotes provide entertainment, even while he is explaining history. He also includes a glossary of Buddhist words that may be unfamiliar to the reader.

B) Rationale:
This text will engage reluctant learners because it offers a fresh look at Buddhism. It is not written solely to inform; it is written to create some sort of reaction. Reluctant readers can learn about Buddhism through funny stories and the interactions the author has with people. The way that the author writes, like he is having a conversation with the reader, makes it easier to understand and get involved with the book. This text will engage all learners for the same reasons. They will feel like they are a part of everything going on in the book. They will feel more like participants than bystanders.

C) Usage of Text:
This book would be used for in class activities. It could be used as a Read-Aloud, a book for more advanced readers or as a DR-TA. I would use this book in class because it has a higher grade reading level. This book could be used in the Reflection Stage of PAR because the students
would have to decide what they thought of the reading. They would have to evaluate what the author said about his experiences and determine how valid the points he makes in the book are. They would also have to think about the Buddhist beliefs observed in the book and how that fits in to their overall picture of Buddhism. It is also a good book to separate fact from fiction. It could correct some misconceptions that students may have about Buddhism.

D) Readability:
The Flesch-Kincaid Readability scale put this book at level 8.9. Honestly, I think the book is a little harder than that, but I think it is still on a high school reading level. The author talks to the reader in an open way, like there is a conversation going on. That makes the book easy to read. However, there are some words that may be unfamiliar; also, the author is an experienced reporter and writer who writes for a higher audience.

Bader’s Textbook Analysis Chart finds this book to be average in linguistic factors because of the advanced vocabulary of the author. Some of the students many not understand all of the words and phrases that he uses. He has an excellent writing style because the way he writes is very appealing to readers. He expresses his thoughts clearly and he writes very well. Conceptual factors are excellent to average because he hits on various topics throughout the book, developing them through the chapters. However, his main ideas are not always highlighted in the text.

E) Reference:

5. Buddhist Inspirations
Grade: 11
History/Philosophy/Art

A) Introduction and Summary:
This book is a collection of the history of Buddhism, important figures, art and philosophy. It is helpful in understanding SOL Standard WHI.4d because it offers yet another look at the founding of Buddhism and its characteristics. It also discusses Asoka (alternative spelling-Ashoka) and the Eightfold Path to Enlightenment. It also used Buddhist art to give the reader a sense of the culture of ancient Buddhists.

*Buddhist Inspirations* is a book that uses short, concise, yet interesting language to answer the questions of how Buddhism started, what its major beliefs are, how it spread, etc. It interlaces text with colorful Buddhist art that keeps the reader engaged. The book covers Buddhist practices, like mediation and chanting. It also provides information on Buddhist architecture (temples)
and gardens. The book includes a glossary at the end that defines unfamiliar Buddhist words.

B) Rationale:

This text will be used to engage reluctant learners because Buddhism is presented in a way that it is easy to follow. The information is organized into different sections that explore different facets of Buddhism. The reader can explore the sections that interest them the most. The artwork that appears every page or so will also encourage the student to keep reading to find out what it is about. This text will engage all learners because it provides helpful background knowledge about Buddhism.

C) Usage of Text:

This book will be used in class during the Preparation stage of PAR because of the background knowledge it contains. It is a good starting place for students to learn about what Buddhism is and how it got started. I could use a Read Aloud to teach the students about the history of Buddhism and then let the students decide (either as a class or in groups) on what other sections of the book to read, based on what they are interested in and would like to learn more about. ReQuest would be a good activity to go along with this book, because it would make sure that the students are getting all of the information. It will also keep them engaged with the text.

D) Readability:

On the Fry Readability Graph, Buddhist Inspirations scores within the 11th grade reading level. Therefore, this book should be read and discussed in the classroom so that students with lower reading comprehension skills can practice their reading, but still get the opportunity to understand the concepts. This book is not overloaded with unfamiliar vocabulary, but there are some unfamiliar terms. The book also tends to use longer sentences.

According to Bader’s Textbook Analysis Chart, this book has excellent scores for conceptual factors, organizational factors and format. This book is broken up into sections and subsections covering each topic. It is very thorough. Format wise, it has many pictures that are appealing. Linguistically, the book does use unfamiliar vocabulary, but it does have a glossary in the back. For the writing style, it uses plain language that the students will understand.

E) Reference:


6. Zen and the Art of Faking It
Grade: 4.6
Teen Fiction
A) Introduction and Summary:

Zen and the Art of Faking It is a fiction novel about Zen Buddhism. It is written for a teenage audience. It will help to explain the SOL Standard WHI.4d of the characteristics of Buddhism. It will help students to understand the beliefs and culture of Buddhists. They will also be able to see cultural interaction between a Buddhist and the rest of the world (well, a middle school).

This book is the story of a boy named San Lee, who moves to a new middle school in Pennsylvania. San tells the story from his point-of-view. He knows he cannot fit in, so he decides to make himself stand out from everyone else. He pretends to be a Zen Buddhist master, but then he has to actually start learning about Buddhism to keep everything from unraveling. He deals with family problems, a crush and a bully. Throughout the book, the reader can see the journey he takes to discovery of what Buddhism is actually about.

B) Rationale:

This book will appeal to the reluctant learner because the experiences are so similar to real life. All of the students will have experienced life in middle school. Some will have even experienced moving to a different school. This book will help them to learn about Buddhism because it places it in an environment that is familiar to them. This book will appeal to all learners because it is a book written specifically for teens. It’s on a subject that is familiar to them with events that happen (or could happen) to them all the time. They will be able to relate and to get into the story, so they will be more likely to learn from it.

C) Usage of Text:

The book is 264 pages, but it has a regular font and it is double-spaced. It could be read by the students at home over a period of a week or two. It could also be read partly at home and partly in class, depending on the reading levels of the students in the class. This book could be used for the Assistance stage of PAR, because through reading it they will build onto their comprehension of Buddhism. Besides the students reading the book, it would be discussed in class. That could be part of the Reflection stage of PAR, since the students would be answering questions about how relevant the book is to Buddhism and what they learned about Buddhism from the book.

D) Readability:

The Flesch-Kincaid Reading level of Zen and the Art of Faking It is 4.6. The book is written in language familiar to teens and even makes use of teen slang, like “Oh, snap!” and “problemo”. The double-spacing of the text also makes the book easy to read. Although the reading level is 4.6, this book is appropriate for higher levels. It is easy to read, but the content is more for older adolescents. Events like having a crush and problems with classes are things that these kids will relate to and read the book.
Conceptually, this book is on the excellent end of Bader’s Textbook Analysis chart. The concepts of the book are related to what these students go through every day. It introduces Buddhism, while talking about school and problems teens go through all the time. Linguistically, this book is excellent because the words used are words that these students see all the time, or they are easily decodable. The writing style of this book is average because it does not always properly follow grammatical rules. However, the unique structure does not make it harder to understand.

E) Reference:

7. *Journey Into Buddhism*
   Grade: N/A
   Documentary

A) Introduction and Summary:
   *Journey Into Buddhism* is a set of 3 documentaries that allow a glimpse into the world of Buddhist Asia. These DVD’s will help with SOL Standard WHI.4d by allowing the students to “identify major geographic features important to the study of world history) and give the students a look at the architecture, geography and culture or ancient Buddhist civilizations.

   This DVD documentary set allows the students to learn many different things about Buddhism. They can see the places that Buddhism started, important ancient temples and civilizations, and the landscape of Asia, including jungles, rivers, and the Himalayan Mountains. They can also catch a glimpse of Buddhist culture through seeing festivals and listening to music. The students will get to see the lost ancient societies and huge Temples that represent Buddhism.

B) Rationale:
   These DVD’s will engage the most reluctant learners because it is a different form of learning. For those who have trouble reading or just do not like to read, this experience will offer them a chance to learn about Buddhism that they either did not have or would not take from reading. Watching the breathtaking scenes from the DVD’s will also give them more of an understanding of the culture and development of Buddhism. This activity will engage all learners because it is a chance to see Asia, when all or most of the students will never get to go there. They can learn about a different place, just by sitting there and watching it on a screen. The context of their environment may help students to understand what the Buddhists were writing about.

C) Usage of Text:
   This is not a written text, but I would use it in class. The class would watch certain clips; they might even get to choose ones that interest them the
most. During the movie, the students will have a checklist with ideas and places on it, so that they can be paying attention to the journey that the DVD is taking them on. This activity would be a part of the Reflection part of PAR because afterwards they could think about what effects the environment and geography had on the development of Buddhism. They could also think about how relevant the movie itself is to the unit on Buddhism.

D) Readability:
This is a movie, so they will not be reading anything. There is no booklet with the documentaries. They are in English, so the students should be able to understand what is being said.

Organizational factors and learning aids are the only Bader’s Textbook Analysis chart categories I see that would fit with this documentary. The three DVD’s are organized into different categories: Sky, Earth and River. They each talk about different Asian places and Buddhist ideas. These DVD’s could be considered a learning aid because they are helpful in teaching students to understand the unit on Buddhism.

E) Reference:

8. **Budha: A Story of Enlightenment**
   Grade: 9
   Historical Fiction

A) Introduction and Summary:
This fiction novel is about the life of Siddhartha Gautama, from the time that he was a prince to his death. This novel will help students to understand SOL Standard WHI.4d how Siddhartha Gautama founded Buddhism and the culture of the time that it started. It will also help students to understand the characteristics of early Buddhism, as taught by the Buddha himself.

This book is based on Siddhartha’s real life. However, the story is told as though Siddhartha was a fictional character in a novel. The author gets into human feelings. The reader becomes a part of the story because of the richness of description given by the author. The students will be pulled in to the time period where Buddhism started. They will feel what Siddhartha felt when he realized life was not all good and wanted to do something about it. The book goes through Siddhartha’s life as a prince, his transformation into a monk and his enlightenment (becoming the Buddha).

B) Rationale:
This book will engage the most reluctant learners because it goes into the life of Siddhartha Gautama in a way that draws the reader in. It is not just a listing of what he did, but an in-depth story about his life, how he felt and what he did. It will engage reluctant learners because it will pull them into the
story and show them the human side of him. This book will engage all learners because it is like reading a novel for fun. Since it is written like a novel, students will be able to learn about the life of Siddhartha Gautama while reading a book that holds their interest. The imagery in the book will help non-readers to enjoy the scenes in the book.

C) Usage of Text:

This book is written in a higher grade level, so it should be read with assistance. I think there are several ways to do that. First, short passages could be given to students to take home and read. This way, they only have to worry about understanding a portion of the material at the time. If the students do this, there should be a short discussion in class as to what the passage contained to make sure all the students understood it. Also, students could be put into groups, with each group being responsible for reading and presenting a chapter to the rest of the class. This way, students can help each other to understand the text and they will get a better grasp of understanding through teaching it to the rest of the class. This would also be a great book for advanced readers who like a challenge.

D) Readability:

According to the Fry Readability Graph, Buddha is on a 9th grade reading level. I would argue that the reading level is actually a little bit higher. Parts of the book are very easy to understand, but certain parts are more difficult to understand. Also, the lack of pictures to separate the text might make reading the book tedious for some students. I would not want to take a chance that my students would not be able to easily read the whole book if I gave it to them. I could give them easier passages to read at home, or give them slightly harder one to work on in groups.

On Bader’s Textbook Analysis Chart, the format of the book is average. The book is an appropriate size, but there are no pictures to help with learning or break up the text. The writing style is excellent because the author uses vivid language to paint a picture for the reader. This language is also pretty well understood, so linguistic factors would be excellent to average. As with the other books, there could be some unfamiliar vocabulary that needs explaining. The book is organized into the stages of the Siddhartha’s life, but there is no Table of Contents letting the reader know that. Organizational factors are, therefore, average.

E) Reference: