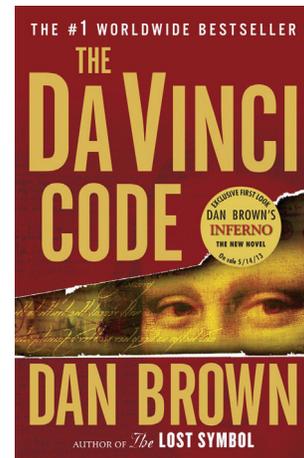


# *The Da Vinci Code*

by Dan Brown



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**480 pages | \$14.95**

## **Note to Teachers**

*The Da Vinci Code* is a captivating, suspenseful novel that is ideal for use in the high school classroom. Robert Langdon, a Harvard art historian, and Sophie Neveu, a French cryptologist, cross paths when the curator of the Louvre is found murdered inside the museum. Langdon and Neveu soon find themselves confounded by riddles and a number of symbols embedded in the works of Leonardo da Vinci. As they attempt to solve these puzzles and evade their adversaries, they become immersed in the pursuit of one of mankind's greatest secrets. Their exciting journey incorporates a variety of dynamic characters and spans a number of historical settings in countries such as France, England, and Scotland. Their interactions with other characters provide students with invaluable opportunities to examine characterization, theme, and conflict, and their travels allow students to engage in their own exploration of famous locations, artwork, secretive organizations, and the legends surrounding each. The book can be read in a variety of curricular areas including history, art history, math, mythology, world religions, and English Language Arts. This guide was written with the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards in mind, and you will find a variety of related questions and activities within designed to help students engage in rich, meaningful study of the text and its many associated themes and subjects.

## **About the Author of the Book**

Dan Brown is the author of numerous #1 bestselling novels, most recently *Inferno*. *The Da Vinci Code* is one of the bestselling novels of all time. His other books include *The Lost Symbol*, *Angels & Demons*, *Deception Point*, and *Digital Fortress*. Mr. Brown was named one of the World's 100 Most Influential People by Time Magazine. He has appeared in the pages of *Newsweek*, *Forbes*, *People*, *GQ*, *The New Yorker*, and other notable publications. His novels are published in over 50 languages around the world.

## **Teaching Ideas**

This guide features discussion questions, thematic activities and questions, and a variety of extension activities to deepen student analysis. A related resources section is also included at the end of the guide. Note that many of the activities here can be used for both individual and collaborative study of the book, and activities and questions are easily scaled and modified to suit various classroom settings. Lastly, the guide's content does conform to several Common Core State Standards:

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1**

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

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2**

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 text according to [corestandards.org](http://corestandards.org).

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3**

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.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5**

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.7**

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*).

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2**

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.3**

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.5**

Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

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**Discussion and Writing Questions**

This section includes a number of questions designed to provoke critical analysis. These questions can be posed to the entire class to generate discussion, or students could respond individually through writing, in paired conversations, in small groups, etc.

**Prologue-Chapter 5**

1. In what ways does the prologue create suspense and generate reader interest?
2. "Last month, much to Langdon's embarrassment, Boston Magazine had listed him as one of that city's top ten most intriguing people" (p. 8). What do you think his embarrassment reveals about his character?
3. On p. 12, how do Silas' physical description, living quarters, and dialogue characterize him?
4. Chapter Three references several famous French locations. What could the author's purpose be for mentioning such well known locations?

5. What adjectives would you use to describe the conversation between Fache and Langdon in Chapter Four? Why?
6. Compare and contrast Bishop Aringarosa's views of Opus Dei, as stated in Chapter Five, with those held by the media.

### Chapters 6–10

1. "Saunière had drawn a simple symbol on his flesh—five straight lines that intersected to form a five-pointed star" (p. 35). What is the significance of this symbol? How does Langdon's explanation of the pentacle contrast with popular culture's view of it?
2. How do Sister Sandrine's thoughts regarding Opus Dei (p. 41) indirectly characterize Bishop Aringarosa?
3. How do the passages in Chapter Eight regarding Leonardo da Vinci contribute to the chapter's overall mood and extend the scope of the narrative?
4. "She was moving down the corridor toward them with long, fluid strides...a haunting certainty to her gait" (p. 50). Based on the ensuing physical description of her and her initial interactions with Langdon and Fache, how would you describe Sophie's personality?
5. Why does the author include Silas' backstory in Chapter 10? What effect does this have on the reader?

### Chapters 11–15

1. "This is the Fibonacci sequence," she declared, nodding toward the piece of paper in Fache's hand" (pp. 60–61). What exactly is this sequence? What additional information can you locate about it?
2. How does Chapter 12 present a plot twist for both Robert Langdon and the reader?
3. In Chapter 13, how does the information revealed during her conversation with Langdon give Sophie's character increased depth?
4. "Not surprising, Collet thought. Fache needs this arrest desperately" (p. 71). Why does he "need" the arrest? Do you view Fache as a villainous character for pursuing Langdon? Why? Why not?
5. Despite the pistol available to him, Silas does not bring it into the church (p. 73). How does this detail, and others, characterize Silas as a contradictory figure?

### Chapters 16–20

1. Explain the complex feelings Sophie has about her grandfather. Do you believe her feelings are justified? Why? Why not?
2. How does the mention of Sophie's family's death (p. 76) affect the reader's perception of Sophie's relationship with her grandfather?
3. Take a close look at the writing in Chapter 18. How do specific passages contribute to the section's frenetic pacing and suspenseful mood?
4. How do the events and dialogue in Chapter 19 create dramatic irony? Cite specific passages in your explanation.
5. "As he moved, Langdon felt like he was trying to assemble a jigsaw puzzle in the dark" (p. 91). What does this mean? In what ways is this simile effective?
6. What is the significance of PHI?

### **Chapters 21–25**

1. Why do you think the author included the flashback of Sophie and her grandfather's visit to the Mona Lisa in Chapter 21?
2. What is the significance of Saint-Sulpice's architectural layout (p. 105)? Why is the Rose Line an important feature?
3. What is the Priory of Sion? How does the group connect to both Leonardo da Vinci and Sophie's grandfather?
4. "You are not the only one with secrets, she thought" (p. 115). What does Sister Sandrine's thought mean?

### **Chapter 26–30**

1. Why do you think the author includes abundant background information about the Mona Lisa in Chapter 26?
2. "Sophie looked baffled in the glow of the message scrawled across the Mona Lisa's face. SO DARK THE CON OF MAN" (p. 124). How exactly does this message refer to Langdon's subsequent explanation?
3. Despite his religious conviction, Silas removes his cloak and batters the floor of the church (p. 127). How do you imagine Silas justifies these actions to himself?
4. "Sophie realized that Leonardo da Vinci, for the second time tonight, was there to help" (p. 133). What is meant by this statement?

### **Chapters 31–35**

1. "A sudden explosion of rage erupted behind the monk's eyes. He lunged, lashing out with the candle stand like a club" (p. 136). Are you surprised by Silas' vicious attack on Sister Sandrine? Why? Why not?
2. "The participants took a step inward and knelt. In that instant, Sophie could finally see what they all were witnessing" (p. 143). What do you think Sophie observes here?
3. How does the design of the key's head differ from the "traditional long-stemmed Christian cross" (p. 145)? How do the different designs differ in a symbolic sense?
4. What sort of issues does Bishop Aringarosa have with the Vatican?
5. What does Langdon reveal on the back of the cross? Why could this be important?

### **Chapters 36–40**

1. Summarize the history of the Priory of Sion. What sort of relationship did they have with the Knights Templar?
2. What does the "story of the Sangreal" (p. 161) refer to?
3. Explain the significance of the Holy Grail as both a physical object and a symbol.
4. What does Leonardo da Vinci have to do with the search for the Holy Grail?

### **Chapters 41–45**

1. How does the setting of Castel Gandolfo contribute to the mood of Chapter 41?
2. Compare and contrast the architecture of the bank with that of several other locations mentioned thus far in the book.

3. Why would Saunière use the Bank of Zurich?
4. Why does Vernet assist Sophie and Langdon? Do you think he has a hidden agenda? Why? Why not?
5. Describe the object that Langdon and Sophie retrieve from the bank.

### **Chapters 46–50**

1. How would you describe the relationship between Silas, the Teacher, and Bishop Aringarosa?
2. In Chapter 47, how does the author build suspense for the opening of the mysterious box?
3. What exactly is a cryptex? Describe its characteristics and origin.
4. What is the keystone, and why is it important to Langdon and Sophie?

### **Chapters 51–55**

1. “Sophie wondered if finding out was worth her life” (p. 216). Do you think it is? Should Langdon and Sophie abandon this “grail quest”? Why? Why not?
2. As he did, an alluring whiff of Sophie’s perfume filled his nostrils, and he realized how close they were” (p. 220). Does this passage alter the reader’s view of Sophie and Langdon’s relationship?
3. Upon first impression, how would you describe Teabing?
4. In Chapter 55, how do Teabing’s statements about the Holy Grail contrast with popular conceptions of it?
5. “The Bible did not arrive by fax from heaven” (p. 231). What does Teabing mean by this statement?

### **Chapters 56–60**

1. In Chapter 56, how does the inclusion of actual symbols in the text affect the narrative?
2. Why is the chalice significant? How does it connect to other symbols mentioned thus far?
3. “As it turns out, the Holy Grail does indeed make an appearance in The Last Supper” (pp. 242–43). What exactly is Langdon referring to here?
- 4) What is a “scotoma” (p. 243)? How does it pertain to The Last Supper?
- 5) What is the significance of Mary Magdalene? How does her existence, according to Langdon and Teabing, challenge traditional Christian doctrine?

### **Chapters 61–65**

1. What point is Langdon making by referencing Walt Disney’s films? What could be a reason for the author including this reference?
2. According to Teabing, why does the Church feel threatened by the Priory and the information they protect?
3. “Tonight has become the strangest and most magical night of my life” (p. 273). Why does Teabing think this?

4. Why does Collet defy Fache's orders to not enter Teabing's estate?

### **Chapters 66–70**

1. Teabing, Langdon, and several other characters leave the estate. Where do they wish to go and why?
2. "Silas feared he had failed the Teacher and the bishop forever" (pp. 287–88). Why does Silas feel this way? Is it surprising to see Silas in such a disadvantageous position? Why? Why not?
3. What does the flashback at the start of Chapter 68 reveal about Langdon's connection to Saunière?
4. Teabing tells Sophie "you must either fully embrace this responsibility . . . or you must pass that responsibility to someone else" (p. 294). What do you believe Sophie should do? Why?

### **Chapters 71–75**

1. At the beginning of Chapter 71, the inscription under the box lid is printed on the page for the reader to see. Why would the author include the actual text here?
2. What is iambic pentameter? Why does it matter in this context?
3. What exactly was the sex rite that Sophie witnessed?
4. Does Sophie's flashback in Chapter 74 affect how you perceive her grandfather? Why? Why not?

### **Chapters 76–80**

1. Why is Sophie's name significant?
2. Describe the mood of the first part of Chapter 78. How does the author establish this mood?
3. Collet and his men find an old document in Teabing's home? What is it and why is it important?

### **Chapters 81–85**

1. In Chapter 81, how does Teabing deal with the chief inspector? What does this reveal about his character?
2. What could the poem on p. 337 allude to? Construct your own theories.
3. "The comment sounded more pragmatic than romantic, and yet Langdon felt an unexpected flicker of attraction between them" (p. 340). How does Langdon and Sophie's partnership continue to evolve?
4. "What do you think we should do with the Sangreal documents if we ever find them?" (p. 341). What do you think they should do? Support your argument with specific reasons.

### **Chapters 86–90**

1. "Langdon raised the cryptex high over his head. 'I will not hesitate to smash this on the floor and break the vial inside'" (p. 358). Do you believe Langdon cares enough about Teabing and Sophie to go forward with this threat? Why? Why not?

2. What do Collet and his men find back in Chateau Villette? What are the implications of this?
3. Are you surprised by Fache's admission of his mistake (p. 368)? Why? Why not?
4. Who were the individuals being bugged? Why is this revelation important?

### Chapters 91–95

1. Why is Silas intensely disappointed by the Teacher's request that Remy deliver the keystone to him?
2. Who is being manipulated by the Teacher? Remy? Silas? Or both?
3. What evidence of foreshadowing can you locate on p. 383?
4. What happens to Remy? Was this expected or unexpected? Why?

### Chapters 96–100

1. In the College Garden, how does the setting reflect the sacred feminine?
2. How did Teabing capitalize on Saunière's greatest fears?
3. Given his actions in this latter section of the book, do you believe Teabing is the true villain in the story? Why? Why not?
4. What does Aringarosa decide to do with his briefcase of money? Does this redeem his character? Why? Why not?
5. Who does Sophie meet during her visit to Rosslyn Chapel?
6. "With a sudden upwelling of reverence, Robert Langdon fell to his knees" (p. 454). What do you believe Langdon does with his knowledge of the grail's location? Why?

## Exploring the Themes

This section features a variety of questions and activities pertaining to five of the text's central themes.

### The Holy Grail

1. "The true nature of the Grail? Sophie felt even more lost now. . . . 'The Holy Grail is the Cup of Christ,' she said. 'How much simpler could it be?'" (p. 162). Examine the text and explain how Teabing and Langdon challenge and expand Sophie's initial understanding of the Grail. What are the larger implications of these new revelations about the Grail? How could they challenge existing institutions and religious understandings?
2. "With a quiet smile Langdon pulled a piece of paper from the pocket of his tweed coat and handed it to Faulkner. The page listed a biography of over fifty titles—books by well-known historians, some contemporary, some centuries old—many of them academic bestsellers" (p. 163). Perform your own research and locate several different texts that explore the meaning and significance of the Grail. Share your findings with the class.
3. "The only certainty is that the hidden M is no mistake. Countless Grail-related works contain the hidden letter M—whether as watermarks, underpaintings, or compositional allusions" (p. 245). Research and locate artwork featuring the Holy Grail and/or its associated symbols, such as the letter M and the chalice, and share your findings with the class.

4. Examine various Grail quests in literature and film and compare/contrast them with the quest for the Grail in *The Da Vinci Code*.

### The Sacred Feminine

1. Throughout the book, Robert Langdon discusses how the sacred feminine has been marginalized by various forces and groups throughout history. According to the text, which factions are primarily behind this devaluing of the sacred feminine, and why do these groups perceive it as a threat?
2. Go back through the text and locate several different symbols that represent the sacred feminine. While researching the historical significance of these symbols, create or locate digital representations of them (a Google Image search could locate images, and <http://slimber.com/> could be used to create them) and present them to the class. Which symbols did you choose to locate? Why? How old are these symbols? What sort of meanings do they have? Have the meanings changed throughout time? If so, how?
3. In Chapter 58, Langdon mentions the word “scotoma,” which is essentially a form of visual and cognitive blindness (p. 243). Consider the many female characters in the book and examine how both the reader and other characters are blind to their true identities and capabilities. Which female characters are undervalued? Which aspects of their identities are concealed? Which preconceived notions conceal them? Unveil your findings to the class through an oral presentation.
4. In Chapter 61, Langdon explains how some Disney movies are infused with the sacred feminine (p. 261). Through your own symbolist lens, examine several mainstream films, Disney-produced or otherwise, and identify allusions and metaphors related to the sacred feminine. Locate several specific film clips that you can show and discuss with your classmates.
5. How does Sophie’s actual name connect to the sacred feminine ideal? Also, in what ways could she be considered a heroine?

### The Meaning and Power of Symbols

1. “[U]sing his own blood as ink, and employing his own naked abdomen as a canvas, Saunière had drawn a simple symbol on his flesh” (p. 35). Examine the appearances, both literal and figurative, of blood in the text. How does blood function as a symbol in *The Da Vinci Code*?
2. How do various characters in the text function as “symbols” with their own concealed truths? Use a simple T-Chart (located here: [http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/pdf/tchart\\_eng.pdf](http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/pdf/tchart_eng.pdf)) to place the headings “Inner” and “Outer” on opposite sides in order to analyze one of the following characters and discuss the contrast between his or her outer appearance and inner countenance: Bezu Fache, Leigh Teabing, Sophie Neveu, Bishop Aringarosa, or Jacques Saunière.
3. *The Da Vinci Code* focuses extensively on the ways in which artwork can feature powerful symbols, but what other codes are present in the text? Consider both the language-based and mathematical patterns/symbols mentioned in the novel and discuss their implications. What are other important symbols or patterns, consisting of letters or numbers, outside of the text that you can identify and analyze? Write a short, coherent essay unpacking these questions.

4. In Chapter 61, Langdon explains that the arts served as “discreet channels . . . channels that supported metaphor and symbolism” (p. 261). Consider this statement and access the following resource: <http://www.cnn.com/2011/11/17/world/europe/uk-hidden-messages-art/>. After reading the article and examining the included images, create your own artwork that contains at least two hidden symbols mentioned in *The Da Vinci Code*, such as the chalice, pentacle, etc. Be prepared to present your artwork to the class.
5. In what ways do the book’s many symbols and codes generate suspense, affect mood, and advance the plot of the novel? Choose specific examples and explain.
6. An archetype is a sort of universal symbol that can be found in many works of literature. These include character types, literal symbols, situations, and patterns. Search for evidence of several archetypes such as the hero, the villain, the mother figure, or the quest in *The Da Vinci Code*. What evidence can you find of their existence? Share your findings with your classmates.
7. Research some of the mathematical concepts mentioned in the novel such as PHI, the Divine Proportion, and the Fibonacci sequence. What are these concepts? Why are they important both in the novel and in the world?.

### **The Subjectivity of History**

1. During his conversation with Sophie Neveu, Teabing states, “History is always written by the winners. When two cultures clash, the loser is obliterated, and the winner writes the history books—books which glorify their own cause and disparage the conquered foe. . . . By its very nature, history is always a one-sided account” (p. 256). Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why? Also, how is Teabing’s statement about history reflected in other parts of the book?
2. Consider the many historical locations mentioned in the book. Choose a setting, such as King’s College, the Temple Church, Westminster Abbey, Rosslyn Chapel, etc., and perform outside research to examine its historical background and associated legends. Analyze how its background is discussed in *The Da Vinci Code*, and also examine how various characters in the text, if applicable, supplement/alter your chosen setting with new historical information. Finally, create a PowerPoint, Google Slides, or Prezi (<http://www.prezi.com>) presentation to share your findings with the class.
3. How do various characters in the book confirm, challenge, or complicate traditional religious ideas and tenets? Use a graphic organizer such as a Describing Wheel ([http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/pdf/wheel\\_eng.pdf](http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/pdf/wheel_eng.pdf)) to analyze how various characters interpret religious history and doctrine.
4. Despite the book’s fictional status, a “Fact” page is included at the beginning of the book. How does the information on this page affect the reader’s perception of the rest of the novel?
5. How does Sophie’s perception of her own history change throughout the book?

### **The Significance of Religious Groups and Secretive Organizations**

1. Select several main characters and trace how their individual narratives are shaped by, and intersect with, some of the religious organizations in the text. How do the Vatican, Opus Dei, and the Priory affect and influence the main characters in *The Da Vinci Code*?
2. What are some of the rituals practiced by the various religious groups in the novel? What purposes do these rituals and practices have?

3. Secretive organizations mentioned in the book include the Priory of Sion, Opus Dei, and the Knights Templar. Choose an organization and closely examine its depiction in *The Da Vinci Code* from the perspective of an investigative reporter. While drawing on applicable passages from the text, design a website for your chosen organization that reports on its central mission, details its history, provides information about related characters in the novel, and includes other pertinent information. Each website must contain text, images, and video. Google Sites (all Google resources mentioned in this guide are available with a free Google account), <http://www.weebly.com>, or <http://www.wix.com> are all free resources that can be used for this activity.
4. Langdon exclaims, “The Priory believes that Constantine and his male successors successfully converted the world from matriarchal paganism to patriarchal Christianity by waging a campaign of propaganda that demonized the sacred feminine.” (p. 124). According to the text, how did the Priory, and specific members such as Leonardo da Vinci, promote the sacred feminine and push back against patriarchal Christianity? Cite specific passages as you formulate your response.
5. How do Bishop Aringarosa, Silas, Opus Dei, and the Vatican interpret Catholicism? Compare and contrast the religious viewpoints of these different characters and organizations.
6. Examine the practice of corporal mortification. Analyze how it is portrayed in the book and how groups such as Opus Dei view and utilize it in reality.

### Extension Activities

This section includes activities/projects that are designed to extend student analysis of the novel. Note that many of these can be used in either individual or grouped configurations. Also, while many of the activities here are primarily designed for use after students finish the book, several activities can be used during reading as well.

#### 1. Student Generated Questions (QAR)

Allow students to take ownership of inquiry through this activity. QAR refers to Question-Answer Relationships:

- **Right there questions:** answers to these questions are found explicitly in the text.
- **Think and search questions:** the answer lies in the text, but it may only be found by examining several different sections and piecing it together.
- **Author and you:** answers connect the text and personal experience.
- **On my own:** answers do not require text; personal experience is privileged.

Have students work independently to generate one question, per category, for a specific section of the book (Teabing, Langdon, and Sophie’s conversation inside Chateau Villette, Langdon’s experiences in the Louvre, or any later chapter in the book would work well for this). Tell students to record their questions on a separate sheet of paper. After these questions are generated, teachers have several options:

- Have students submit questions on notecards, and randomly select several for a quick assessment.
- Have students trade and answer each other’s questions in writing or through paired conversation.
- Have students select one question to expand upon in an extended, written response (“Right there” questions do not work well for this).

For more information on this strategy, consult this resource:  
<http://www.readingquest.org/strat/qar.html>

## 2. Character Study through Concept Maps

A Concept Map allows students to display their analysis in an organized, visual manner. This graphic organizer works particularly well with *The Da Vinci Code* as the book features many dynamic character relationships. Concept Maps can be used in several different ways. First, students can select one character to occupy the center of the map, and linked sections can specify character traits along with textual support. Second, students can feature two characters, one on each side of the diagram, and they can list similar and contrasting characteristics on different sides. Lastly, students can feature multiple characters within the same map, and linked sections of the map can identify how each character truly views yet outwardly behaves toward the other (linking Teabing to Langdon would highlight the discrepancy between Teabing's true intentions and his contrived, outward behavior).

- For examples of these maps, consult this resource: <http://tinyurl.com/concmaps>
- For a simple online Concept Map creator, go here: <http://www.nwmissouri.edu/library/courses/research/conceptMap.html>

## 3. Open Mind Symbology Activity

In this activity, students select a character and make inferences about what resides within his or her mind. Have small groups of students select a character and construct a list of his or her personality traits, fears, goals, desires, and other notable characteristics. Next, have students represent these things visually through symbols (for example, one symbol for Langdon might be a magnifying glass, to symbolize his curiosity and propensity for close examination).

Once they have several symbols, have students cut out (or create on a digital canvas) a profile of their character's head and arrange the symbols inside. Students can use traditional art supplies (construction paper, markers, magazines, etc) or digital resources such as <http://www.queeky.com/app>. On the back, or underneath the character profile, have students explain the reasoning for their symbols, and require them to cite specific text from the novel as justification. Have them present their visual project to the class.

## 4. Paideia Discussion

A Paideia Seminar is a student-centered, Socratic discussion. In it, the teacher serves as facilitator by providing students with open-ended questions, prompting students to respond, and by linking student comments. There are three main question categories: opening questions, core questions, and closing questions. Opening questions identify main ideas from the text (Why is Leonardo da Vinci featured in the book's title?). Core questions require students to analyze textual details (In what specific ways are Langdon and Sophie alike and different? How do specific settings impact the book's mood and affect reader interest?). Finally, closing questions personalize textual concepts (What sort of lessons can be learned from the book? How do you explain the book's immense popularity?). Construct multiple questions like these, and have students gather in a large circle.

Establish group goals for the discussion and have students create individual goals as well. Some group goals could include practicing active listening strategies, disagreeing constructively, and having each participant express at least two thoughts. Individual goals could include referring to specific passages, building on another's comment, and making consistent eye contact with others. Facilitate the

conversation and concentrate on eliciting student responses. When the discussion concludes, have students self-assess and provide feedback on the seminar. Note that many of the discussion questions in this guide can be used in this activity.

For more information, consult <http://www.paideia.org/>

## 5. Film and Text Comparison

Ron Howard's 2006 *The Da Vinci Code* film is interesting and accessible to students: <http://www.sonypictures.com/movies/thedavincicode/>

Have students view the film after finishing the book. Give them a graphic organizer, such as a double-column chart, and have them list similarities and differences (one category per side) between the film and book while they watch. Have them pay close attention to dialogue, plot, and how various scenes are constructed (how are different characters positioned in each shot? Is the setting highlighted or deemphasized? How does music influence the mood and pacing of various scenes?) After viewing, have students participate in a debate during which they compare and contrast the two mediums and make an argument for which version more effectively conveys the central themes of the story.

## 6. The Louvre Da Vinci Code Trail

Have your students follow in the footsteps of Robert Langdon and Sophie Neveu by having them take the virtual Louvre Da Vinci Code tour:

<http://www.louvre.fr/en/routes/da-vinci-code>

This online tour (this route can also be followed in person) consists of Louvre locations and artwork featured in *The Da Vinci Code*. As students navigate the route, in a written response, have them compare and contrast the artwork and locations featured during the tour with their associated descriptions in the text.

## 7. Blog as a Character

To encourage students to think more deeply about the world depicted in *The Da Vinci Code*, have them blog from the perspective of a character in the book. To begin, have students select a single character. To make it more challenging for students, have them select a minor character.

Students should write multiple entries from their selected character's perspective that refer to various events in the book. Have them write in first person, and encourage them to be reflective and creative as they compose. For example, a student writing as Teabing could provide a detailed account of his hidden motives; Jacques Saunière could provide backstory to the book through his personal entries. This activity should inspire students to think critically about the text and compose in a creative fashion. To add more depth to the assignment, have students include images and videos in their blog entries. Lastly, students (as characters) could comment on each other's blog posts to introduce another imaginative layer.

Either of these resources would work for this assignment:

- Google Blogger: <http://www.blogger.com/>
- WordPress: <http://wordpress.com>

Students could of course draft their entries on paper, but one advantage of digital composition is that students write for an authentic, interactive audience, and teachers may find that this provides extended discussion and reflection.

## 8. Gallery Walk

A gallery walk requires students to circulate around the room while thoughtfully observing and analyzing visual content. To prepare, first select five *Da Vinci Code* related images that you believe will provoke students to reflect and think critically. The following website can be used for this:

<http://tinyurl.com/davinciwalk>

After you select the five images, display each image on its own designated laptop or print each out in color. Place each image at a different location in the room, and arrange desks so that students can walk around and visit each image station. Encourage students to spend time reflecting on each image, and as they do so, have them respond to the following questions on a piece of paper:

- What would a good title for the image be? Why?
- What do you notice about the figures and/or setting featured in the image?
- How does the image make you feel? Explain.
- In what ways can you connect the image to the text?

Have students share their responses in small groups or with the entire class.

## 9. Film and Produce a Book Trailer

This activity requires students to make creative decisions as they collaborate, storyboard, and film a book trailer for *The Da Vinci Code*. To begin, break students into groups of four–five, and have each group select one of the themes mentioned in this guide:

- The Sacred Feminine
- The Meaning and Power of Symbols
- The Subjectivity of History
- The Significance of Religious Groups and Secretive Organizations
- The Holy Grail

Next, direct each group to locate passages that pertain to their theme. After this, explain to students that each group will be designing a “book trailer” for *The Da Vinci Code* which functions much like a traditional movie trailer would. Each trailer must give the viewer a sense of the book’s plot, include original footage, music, and text, and it must reflect the group’s assigned theme. Lastly, students must film and act in their group’s trailer.

Have each group first storyboard their trailer (an online template can be found here: <http://www.storyboardthat.com/>), and have them plan for a video around two minutes long. If students have access to Apple devices, they should be able to use iMovie for the assignment, as it includes a trailer template. Other video editing software, of course, could also work. After they film and edit, have students show their trailers to the class.

## 10. Google Maps Da Vinci Code Activity

Using Google Maps have your students locate and display important locations from the novel to get a sense of how the book's narrative spans multiple countries, cities, and historical settings. Also, have students click on individual locales and zoom in using Google's satellite view. In a journal response, have them analyze the significance of several settings and their roles in the book. If your school has access to Google Earth, you can create a *Da Vinci Code* tour using this website.

## 11. Virtual Tours

To encourage students to take a closer look at some of the physical locations in the book, have them access or research several of the following virtual tours. For each, have students maintain a travel diary, either in print or digital form, in which they discuss the historical significance (they may need to access additional sources for this) of each location and provide a detailed description of its architectural features:

- The Louvre: <http://www.louvre.fr/en/visites-en-ligne>
- Westminster Abbey: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-12819684>
- Rosslyn Chapel: <http://archive.cyark.org/rosslyn-chapel-virtualtour>
- Opus Dei national headquarters: <http://opusdei.ie/en-ie/article/a-virtual-tour-of-the-opus-dei-us-headquarters/>
- The Temple Church
- Saint-Sulpice Church

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## 12. Unpacking Genre

*The Da Vinci Code* has been variously described using several different, but related, genres: mystery, detective fiction, conspiracy fiction, and thriller. Break the class into groups and have each one choose a specific genre to research. Ask groups to consider these questions as they work: What are the central features of your chosen genre? What are several literary works representative of your genre? Based on what your research has revealed, how do *The Da Vinci Code*'s style, mood, conflict, and plot reflect your selected genre? Have each group report to their peers, and have the class compare and contrast each genre.

## 13. Leonardo da Vinci KWL Activity

Use this activity to familiarize students with Leonardo da Vinci and his creative

works. First, have them create a KWL chart by folding a piece of paper into three columns. From left to right, have students title each column as follows: What I Know, What I Want to Know, and What I Learned. Have students respond to the first two columns, and have them share their responses with the class. Next, have students access the following resource and explore other links which examine the life and work of Leonardo da Vinci:

- <http://www.history.com/topics/leonardo-da-vinci>

During and after their research, have them respond in the final column. Here, they should discuss what new information they learned about Da Vinci. Have students write what they believe to be the most important information about him on post-it notes, and have them stick their notes on the board to provide basis for a whole-class discussion.

#### 14. Trailer Analysis

Show students the trailer for *The Da Vinci Code* film starring Tom Hanks:  
<http://www.sonypictures.com/movies/thedavincicode/>

While students watch, have them jot down adjectives to describe what they see. After they conclude their viewing, have them elaborate on a few adjectives in writing or through class discussion. Additionally, ask them to consider the following questions:

- What were some of the adjectives you wrote down? Why?
- How would you describe the mood of the film?
- What types of conflict did you notice?
- Which parts of the book did you notice in the trailer?.

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#### Related Resources

The following resources could complement a reading of *The Da Vinci Code*.

##### Internet Resources:

- <http://www.randomhouse.com/doubleday/davinci/>
- <http://www.danbrown.com/the-davinci-code/>
- <http://www.beliefnet.com/Entertainment/Movies/The-Da-Vinci-Code/An-Interview-With-Dan-Brown.aspx?p=1#>

##### Further Reading:

- *Codes, Ciphers, & Other Cryptic and Clandestine Communication: Making and Breaking Secret Messages from Hieroglyphs to the Internet*  
By Fred B. Wrixon
- *The Code Book: The Science of Secrecy from Ancient Egypt to Quantum Cryptography*  
By Simon Singh
- *The Book of Symbols: Reflections on Archetypal Images* by Archive for Research in Archetypal Symbolism (ARAS)
- *Wordplay: Ambigrams and Reflections on the Art of Ambigrams*  
By John Langdon
- *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art*  
By James Hall and Kenneth Clark

- *What Is History?*  
By Edward Hallet Carr
- *The Science of Leonardo: Inside the Mind of the Great Genius of the Renaissance*  
By Fritjof Capra
- *Math and the Mona Lisa*  
By Bulent Atalay
- *The Gnostic Gospels*  
By Elaine Pagels
- *The Thirty-Nine Steps*  
By John Buchan
- *The Dante Club*  
By Matthew Pearl
- *The Club Dumas*  
By Arturo Pérez-Reverte

**Books on Teabing's shelf:**

- *The Templar Revelation: Secret Guardians of the True Identity of Christ*  
By Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince
- *The Woman with the Alabaster Jar: Mary Magdalene and the Holy Grail*  
By Margaret Starbird
- *The Goddess in the Gospels: Reclaiming the Sacred Feminine*  
By Margaret Starbird

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Ralph Ellison, <i>Invisible Man</i>	0-394-26952-7
Ernest J. Gaines, <i>A Lesson Before Dying</i>	0-676-51467-7
Kaye Gibbons, <i>Ellen Foster</i>	0-394-26673-0
David Guterson, <i>Snow Falling on Cedars</i>	0-676-79702-4
Lorraine Hansberry, <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i>	0-394-26674-9
Latoya Hunter, <i>The Diary of Latoya Hunter</i>	0-394-26671-4
Charlayne Hunter-Gault, <i>In My Place</i>	0-394-26458-4
Franz Kafka, <i>The Trial: A New Translation</i>	0-676-58683-X
Randall Kennedy, <i>Nigger</i>	0-676-80843-3
William Maxwell, <i>So Long, See You Tomorrow</i>	0-676-53180-6
Cormac McCarthy, <i>All the Pretty Horses</i>	0-676-52047-2
Gloria Naylor, <i>Mama Day</i>	0-394-26672-2
Art Spiegelman, <i>Maus</i>	0-394-26528-9
Piri Thomas, <i>Down These Mean Streets</i>	0-676-53181-4
Piri Thomas, <i>Por estas calles bravas</i> (Spanish edition)	0-676-53182-2
Opal Whiteley, <i>Opal: The Journal of an Understanding Heart</i>	0-676-52048-0

