



Student Interactive Chart for the Three Teachings—Teacher Rubric

This chart is designed to help students gain a basic understanding of the **Three Teachings**. Students can work individually or in groups to complete the chart. The column on the left lists a number of ideas of characteristics that are contained within one of more of the teachings. Students should fill in yes or no in the boxes beneath each of the teachings to indicate whether it is a component of that teaching. In the final box they should fill in a line of from one of the poems which exemplifies this idea wherever it is possible to find an example.

Note To Teacher: Depending on how much time you have and the proficiency level of your students you may wish to have students find only an example in the poems of only one of these elements, or one example for each. There is a certain amount of overlap between the Three Teachings, and it may not always be possible to discern whether the simplicity is 'Buddhist' or 'Taoist'. However, seeking instances where the aesthetic of simplicity exists in the poem might be a helpful way of reminding students of the influence of these teachings on art and culture in Tang China, and of grounding the poetry in its cultural context. The following chart can be used as a guide. There are numerous examples in the poetry, and the examples given are not necessarily the only possible answer.

	Taoism	Buddhism	Confucianism	Poetry example
Order and harmony in nature, living in harmony with nature	Yes	No	No	<i>A fine lady has taken refuge in this forsaken valley. She is of good family, she says, but her fortune has withered away; now she lives as the grass and trees.</i> —Du Fu The woman has taken <i>refuge</i> in nature (in a valley, like the grass and trees) —it is the only comfort she is offered
Strict adherence to social roles	No	No	Yes	<i>When they leave home, the village headman has to wrap their turbans for them; when they come back, white-haired, they're still guarding the frontier.</i> —Du Fu These lines note the obligations of citizens to protect the country, and the social roles that must be filled, although he is lamenting the losses that these obligations incur.
Focus on the fleeting nature of all things	No	Yes	No	<i>(let's) Not pity the flowers fallen!</i> —Wang Wei
Importance of immediacy of experience—being in the here and now	Yes	Yes	No	<i>We sit together, the mountain and me, until only the mountain remains.</i> —Li Bai Best to enjoy the moment now, for the moment will not last forever

	Taoism	Buddhism	Confucianism	Poetry example
Simplicity and a distancing from worldly desires	No	Yes	No	<i>Her husband is a fickle fellow who has a lovely new woman.</i> —Du Fu This poem focuses on the pain that is brought on by worldly desires. He cannot be satisfied with what he has and is thus condemned to the constant search for satisfaction. It will also cause his wife misery.
Cultivation of 'character' and the fulfillment of obligation	No	No	Yes	<i>But he has eyes only for his new woman's smile, and his ears are deaf to his first wife's weeping.</i> —Du Fu This poem offers a lesson on the cultivation of character by showing a man who has not fulfilled his obligation and the suffering it brings
Capturing natural beauty in art	Yes	No	No	<i>Sharp wind, towering sky, apes howling mournfully; untouched island, white sand, birds flying in circles.</i> —Du Fu
Simplicity and understatement	Yes	Yes	No	<i>The autumn hills hoard scarlet from the setting sun. Flying birds chase their mates,</i> —Wang Wei The simple and measured word choice still evokes a vivid mental image.
Friendship, Parenthood and Filiality	No	No	Yes	<i>Oh, go and ask this river running to the east If it can travel farther than a friend's love!</i> —Li Bai