

Summer Reading and Writing Assignment for English 10H

Read Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*.

I. Interpretive: Create a **One-Pager** (directions on the last page) that addresses the questions below. Rest assured, doing the work will help you prepare yourself for writing the essay portion of the assignment to be completed in class. Be prepared, by the first day of class meeting, to hand in your work.

ONE-PAGER QUESTIONS: All of your answers to these questions are your personal interpretations. I should **not** see the same reactions from multiple students nor should your responses be similar to those found on Shmoop or other websites. One way to organize would be to somehow separate my page into 5 sections to include all characters, leaving the largest section for Santiago. (25 points)

- Display three positive and three negative character traits for Santiago. What do these traits show you about the kind of person the boy is?
- Display at least three specific character traits for four of the following: the gypsy woman, the king, the crystal merchant, the thief, the Englishman, Fatima, and the alchemist. What do each of these traits say about their characters?
- Examine each of the boy's "teachers" throughout his journey. What lesson does he learn from each?

II. CRITICAL: Answer four of the following questions found in a document that will be submitted to Schoology. Make sure you use textual support in your responses. Rest assured, doing the work will help you prepare yourself for writing the essay portion of the assignment to be completed in class. Be prepared, by the first day of class meeting, to submit your work. (25 points)

CRITICAL READING QUESTIONS:

1. Explain how Langston Hughes's poem "[A Dream Deferred](#)" relates to *The Alchemist*. What are both authors suggesting about dreams?
2. Explain the connection between the myth of Narcissus and *The Alchemist*. Why do you suppose Paulo Coelho selected this myth as a prologue to his tale?
3. Explain the five obligations from the Koran that are expected of every Muslim. What do these obligations show about the culture of the people? How does the crystal merchant honor his obligations?
4. Explain the following Biblical allusions: Joseph of Egypt, The Roman Centurion, Creation, The Treasure of the Heart, Urim and Thummim.
5. Explain the symbolism of the boy's dream.
6. Explain the main theme of this novel. What is Paulo Coelho's message to his readers?

III. CRITICAL/PERSONAL RESPONSE: The following questions will be used in a Socratic Seminar class on the second day of class. You will need a copy of the novel and any written notes that will aid your answering these questions in the seminar. (25 points)

1. What do you suppose might be the source of Santiago's discontent in the seminary that eventually leads him to become a shepherd? What does he hope to learn? What is significant about the boy's choice of occupation?
2. Consider the way that simple edits in the plot can have significant impact on the book overall. Pick one of the following edits and explore the consequences that might logically come about if the author had made them.
 - a. Compare Santiago's response to the dream in Spain with that of the marauder at the Pyramids. How might the story have been different if Santiago had responded as the marauder?
 - b. Suppose that Santiago had decided to have Fatima accompany him on his journey instead of leaving her to wait for his return. How might the story been different?
 - c. Suppose Santiago decided to stay with the crystal merchant instead of pursuing his Personal Legend. What aspects of the plot would have been changed?
3. Did you enjoy this novel? Why or why not?
4. Did you feel challenged when reading this novel? What types of challenges may have come forward for you?
5. Which of the characters do you identify with the most? Why?

If you have any questions on this assignment, please email the me at hoganj@canisiushighschool.org.

