

Incoming 8th grade students
Summer Reading Assignment

Please read *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho and complete the following assignments in preparation for your 8th grade year. The assignments will be collected the first day of school and further discussion and assessment of the novel will take place the first week of school. **Summer reading books must be annotated.** Please see page below for detailed explanation on how to annotate a text.

- Annotation means “Note Taking” in the margins of the text. Highlighting only is NOT considered annotating.
- Annotation of fictional work consists of identifying (highlighting/underlining) and commenting (written comments in margins) on: characterization, figurative language, symbols, motifs and themes found throughout.
- Annotation of non-fiction works consists of identifying and commenting on: significant ideas expressed by the author/speaker, important definitions, rhetorical strategies (ethos, pathos, logos, structure, purpose, tone, etc.) concepts and examples.

The Alchemist Anticipation Guide

PART 1:

Directions: For each of the following statements decide whether you agree or disagree. For each statement, write *strongly agree*, *agree*, *disagree* or *strongly disagree* in the “Me” column depending on your opinion. **Do not use *unsure*.** Look for evidence in *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho that either supports or doesn’t support each statement. Write *agree* or *disagree* under the *The Alchemist* column. In the far right column record the chapter and page number to support your findings.

Me	Statement	<i>The Alchemist</i>	Text Evidence Chapter and page numbers
	Fear can prevent people from pursuing their dreams.		
	People control their own fate or destiny.		
	People who follow their dreams are more likely to achieve great happiness.		
	There is magic in the world.		
	Attaining your dreams or goals requires either suffering or sacrifice and sometimes, both.		
	Success in life is dependent on the decisions a person makes.		
	The simple things in life are often the most difficult to understand.		
	Love should never hold us back from pursuing personal dreams.		
	Status in society should be our first consideration when choosing a life’s work.		
	Achieving great happiness requires traveling to far off places.		

The Alchemist Writing Assignment

PART 2

Directions: Read the following writing assignments. Choose **two out of the five** options to complete. Each written piece should be **one page** in length and should demonstrate your abilities in critical thinking, synthesis, and creativity, as well as your complete understanding of the assigned text. A few of the assignments ask you to choose a statement from the anticipatory guide. Please use each statement only once. This assignment is meant to understand you as a person, your writing abilities, and your abilities to think creatively and critically.

Each response must be typed, double-spaced, and in 12 point Times New Roman font. All analysis must be supported using properly (APA) cited quotes from the text. See example below on how to correctly cite in-text quotations (Pay extra attention to the punctuation used in the page number).

Example: “When we love, we always strive to become better than we are. When we strive to become better than we are, everything around us becomes better too.” (Coelho, p. 40).

Personal narrative – Using **one** of the statements from the anticipatory guide as a springboard, write a personal narrative in which you describe a moment or event in your life that parallels or is similar to an event from the reading (remember that a narrative is a collection of events that tells a story) . Bring your narrative to life, being careful to use sensory details. Please be sure to include events or lines from the assigned text to illustrate how the two intersect.

Letter – In every great literary work, a character undergoes immense change, whether it be through a physical journey or through a journey within oneself. Select a main character from the literary work—one that has obviously changed as a result of the plot—and write a letter to yourself from the view point of that character. What would the character, after all he/she has experienced and learned, say to you about your current situation in life? What advice would he/she offer? As the character, use specific examples from the events of the story in order to support “your” viewpoints. To the best of your ability, within the scope of the letter embody the voice of the character.

Persuasive Piece – Select one of the statements from the anticipation guide. In an essay, argue for or against the statement, using specific examples from the text, as well as from your personal experiences to support your argument. Please do not use “I” within the essay. Please be sure to use ample examples from the text.

Expository – Find a news article that captures the meaning of one of the statements from the anticipation guide. In an essay, explain how the news article connects to both the statement and events in the assigned text. Be sure to use specific examples from, both, the article and the literary text.

Comparison: Many spiritual quests involve a journey into the desert. Jesus went into the desert and survived 3 temptations from Satan. Santiago’s journey took him through the desert where he found many signs/omens which helped clarify things for his journey in search of his Personal Legend. Santiago is encouraged to read signs/omens. What do signs and omens have to do with his quest? What similarities do you see in Santiago’s Question and Jesus in the desert and/or the Israelites in the wilderness (Exodus). Last compare the story of Santiago to this Bible Verse: “FOR WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS, THERE ALSO WILL YOUR HEART BE.” MATTHEW 6:21 (New American Bible revised edition). What parts of Santiago’s story share in similarity to this Bible verse? why?

*You can find an explanation of these writing genres at <http://www.thewritingsite.org/resources/genre/default.asp>

How to Annotate a Text

Marking and highlighting a text is like having a conversation with a book – it allows you to ask questions, comment on meaning, and mark events and passages you want to revisit.

Below are some suggestions that will help with annotating.

- Use a pen, pencil, post-it notes, or a highlighter (although use it sparingly!).
- Summarize important ideas in your own words.
- Add examples from real life, other books, TV, movies, and so forth.
- Define words that are new to you.
- Mark passages that you find confusing with a ???
- Write questions that you might have for later discussion in class.
- Comment on the actions or development of characters.
- Comment on things that intrigue, impress, surprise, disturb, etc.
- *Note how the author uses language. A list of possible literary devices is attached.*
- *Note symbolism, motifs, themes*
- Draw a picture when a visual connection is appropriate
- Explain the historical context or traditions/social customs used in the passage.
- **Diction** (word choice): the denotative and connotative meanings of words
 - different words for the same thing often suggest different attitudes (e.g., happy vs. content)
 - denotative vs. connotative (e.g., dead vs. passed away)
- **Images:** Vivid appeals to understanding through the five senses
- **Details:** Facts that are included or those that are omitted
- **Language:** The overall use of language such as formal, clinical, informal, slang, syntactical structure
- **Sentence Structure:** How the author's use of sentence structure affects the reader

Suggested methods for marking a text:

- * Use sticky notes if you cannot write in the book
- * Color code your annotations by using different color post-its, highlighters, or pens.
- * Use brackets if several lines seem important, just draw a line down the margin and underline/highlight only the key phrases.
- * Place an asterisk (*) next to an important passage; use two if it is really important.
- * Use the space in the margins to make comments, define words, ask questions, etc. (marginal notetaking)
- *Underline/highlight: Caution! Do not underline or highlight too much! You want to concentrate on the important elements, not entire pages (use brackets for that).
- *Use circles, boxes, triangles, squiggly lines, stars, etc. to mark important elements such as figurative language

Literary Term Definitions:

1. Alliteration – the practice of beginning several consecutive or neighboring words with the same consonant sound: e.g., “The twisting trout twinkled below.”
2. Allusion – a reference to something outside the text such as a mythological, literary, or historical person, place, or thing to make a connection for the reader: e.g., “He met his Waterloo.”
3. Flashback – a scene that interrupts the action of a work to show a previous event.
4. Foreshadowing – the use of hints or clues in a narrative to suggest future action
5. Hyperbole – a deliberate, extravagant, and often outrageous exaggeration; it may be used for either serious or comic effect: e.g., “The shot heard ‘round the world.”
6. Idiom – an accepted phrase or expression having a meaning different from the literal: e.g., to drive someone up the wall.
7. Imagery – the words or phrases a writer uses that appeal to the senses.
8. Irony – there are three types; -

Verbal irony – when a speaker or narrator says one thing while meaning the opposite; sarcasm is a form of verbal irony: e.g., “It is easy to stop smoking. I’ve done it many times.”

Situational irony -- when a situation turns out differently from what one would normally expect; often the twist is oddly appropriate: e.g., a deep sea diver drowning in a bathtub is ironic.

Dramatic irony – when a character or speaker says or does something that has different meaning from what he or she thinks it means, though the audience and other characters understand the full implications: e.g., Anne Frank looks forward to growing up, but we, as readers, know that it will never be.
9. Metaphor – a comparison of two unlike things not using “like” or “as”: e.g., “Time is money.”
10. Mood – the atmosphere or predominant emotion in a literary work.
11. Oxymoron – a form of paradox that combines a pair of opposite terms into a single unusual expression: e.g., “sweet sorrow” or “cold fire.”
12. Paradox – occurs when the elements of a statement contradict each other. Although the statement may appear illogical, impossible, or absurd, it turns out to have a coherent meaning that reveals a hidden truth: e.g., “Much madness id divinest sense.”
13. Personification – a kind of metaphor that gives inanimate objects or abstract ideas human characteristics: e.g., “The wind cried in the dark.”
14. Rhetoric – the art of using words to persuade in writing or speaking.
15. Simile – a comparison of two different things or ideas using words such as “like” or “as”: e.g., “The warrior fought like a lion.”
16. Suspense – a quality that makes the reader or audience uncertain or tense about the outcome of events.
17. Symbol – any object, person, place, or action that has both a meaning in itself and that stands for something larger than itself, such as a quality, attitude, belief, or value: e.g., a tortoise represents slow but steady progress.
18. Theme – the central message of a literary work. It is expressed as a sentence or general statement about life or human nature. A literary work can have more than one theme, and most themes are not directly stated but are implied: e.g., pride often precedes a fall.
19. Tone – the writer’s or speaker’s attitude toward a subject, character, or audience; it is conveyed through the author’s choice of words (diction) and details. Tone can be serious, humorous, sarcastic, indignant, etc.

20. Understatement (meiosis, litotes) – the opposite of hyperbole. It is a kind of irony that deliberately represents something as being much less than it really is: e.g., “I could probably manage to survive on a salary of two million dollars per year.”