



10th Grade Summer Reading  
*The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho  
Google Classroom Code: kzd4c37

<https://classroom.google.com/c/NDc5NzcxMzlwMTEx?cjc=kzd4c37>

Your summer assignment is to read *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho and complete the guided-reading questions. This assignment is due on the first day of school in August. I have created a Google classroom to provide you with resources, including a PDF of the novel, access to the teacher, and a Google doc form of the questions. You can only join through your school email account (mcnairy.org). If internet access is a problem, paper assignments will be accepted.

### **BEFORE READING:**

Research and become familiar with the following terms: ARCHETYPE, THEME, MOTIF, SYMBOLISM, and ANTHROPOMORPHISM.

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## **PART I: PROLOGUE AND PART ONE**

### **Discussion Questions**

1. When the lake speaks in the Prologue, which literary element listed above comes into play?
2. What hints does the Prologue provide about the story ahead?
3. What might the empty, abandoned church symbolize?
4. Why did the boy decide to drop out of the seminary and become a shepherd at age 16? How old is he as the story begins?
5. How does the boy view his sheep? What do you make of his disturbing thought that he could decide to kill all of his sheep?
6. How do the sheep function as a motif?
7. Why does the dream interpreter demand one-tenth of the boy's future fortune, knowing she would not get paid for her consultation that day? After hearing the woman's interpretation of his dream, the boy thought he had wasted his time with her. Had he?
8. Melchizedek tells Santiago a story about a shopkeeper's son and a wise man. The wise man says, "The secret of happiness is to see all the marvels of the world, and never to forget the drops of oil on the spoon." Which literary element(s) described above does this passage illustrate?
9. How does Melchizedek function as an archetype in this story?
10. At the end of Part One, the narrative includes the line, "There was a moment of silence

so profound that it seemed the city was asleep.” What does this silence symbolize?  
11. Who is Melchizedek? Do you think he is who he says he is? Why or why not?

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## PART II: PART TWO

### Discussion Questions

1. What is beginner’s luck and how does it figure in Santiago’s work for the crystal merchant?
  2. Why doesn’t the merchant really want to go to Mecca?
  3. How does the word *maktub* function as a motif in this story?
  4. Identify at least two hints that Melchizedek is intervening in Santiago’s life at critical moments.
  5. The Englishman says to the boy, “Imagine if everyone went around transforming lead into gold. Gold would lose its value.” Why is that?
  6. How does the Englishman’s approach to learning compare to Santiago’s?
  7. Compare the camel driver’s attitude about life with that of the sheep.
  8. When Santiago sees Fatima for the first time, he immediately realizes he is in love. How does love function as a theme in this story?
  9. Identify the archetypal elements in the scene where the alchemist first appears before the boy.
  10. Which literary element is this passage an example of? “...the desert tests all men: it challenges every step, and kills those who become distracted.”
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## PART III: PART TWO AND EPILOGUE

### Discussion Questions

1. Santiago’s heart speaks to him about the role the heart plays in a person’s search for treasure. “We, people’s hearts, seldom say much about those treasures...” it says. What literary element does this passage illustrate?
2. Throughout the book, Santiago has to conquer his fear. How does this relate to one of the book’s themes?
3. How does Santiago prepare for the moment when he will have to turn himself into the wind or die?
4. On the third day of his preparation, the desert begins to speak to Santiago. Why does the author use anthropomorphism at this point in the story?
3. How does Santiago turn himself into the wind?
6. How is the full moon an archetype in this tale?
7. How do dreams function as a motif in this story?
8. In the Prologue, the story of Narcissus spoke of vanity. How does that motif finally figure in Santiago’s story, now that it is near the end?
9. In the Epilogue, when Santiago shouts to the sky, “You old sorcerer...,” to whom is he speaking?
10. In the Epilogue, why is Santiago so sure he will never again see the old king Melchizedek?
11. How does alchemy function as a symbol in this story?