

Incoming 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Students  
Summer Reading Assignment

**Please read *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho** and complete the following assignments in preparation for your 8<sup>th</sup> 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.

## 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

## 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?